



NEW JERSEY OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF

**HIGHER
EDUCATION**

‘Some College, No Degree’ Community of Practice

SPRING 2026 VIRTUAL CONVENING

April 24, 2026

AGENDA

- » **Opening Remarks** Acting Secretary Margo Chaly
- » **Re-enrollment as a Workforce Solution** ReUp Partners
- » **NJ Career Accelerator** Nikki Bailey
- » **Closing Remarks** Stefani Thachik

OPENING REMARKS



Margo Chaly, Esq.
Acting Secretary of Higher Education

A close-up photograph of a person's hand reaching for a book on a library shelf. The background is blurred, showing rows of books and a window. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Re-enrollment as a workforce solution: Engaging New Jersey's stop-out population

Friday, April 24, 2026

Agenda

Spring convening topics

- ✓ **ReUp overview and outcomes to date**
- ✓ **Re-engaging adult learners to close the talent gap**
- ✓ **Re-enrollment as workforce development: An institutional action playbook**
- ✓ **Questions**



Corey Edwards

Managing Director, Government
Partnerships



Marcella Yaniz

Sr. Manager, State Partner
Operations



Hannah Oganeku

Director of Partner Success



ReUp and New Jersey

ReUp and OSHE's partnership has boosted re-enrollment, advanced degree attainment, and enhanced the state's economic vitality.

1st

first ReUp state partnership

38%

of New Jersey's SCND population reached

22

partner institutions



SHEEO Exceptional Agency Award 2025

The impact of the SCND marketplace

FOR THE STATE

- **Workforce and talent development:** Expand the pipeline of skilled workers to close statewide skills gaps.
- **Economic competitiveness:** Reduce annual loss in sunk costs from stopout learners and recapture tuition dollars that currently leave the state through out-of-state or online enrollment.
- **Access and opportunity at scale:** Create a coordinated, statewide infrastructure that ensures underserved learners, including those from underrepresented backgrounds, have pathways to return and complete their education.

The impact of the SCND marketplace

FOR INSTITUTIONS

- **Targeted enrollment growth:** Gain access to a large pool of qualified adult learners, increasing enrollments sustainably in the face of declining traditional pipelines.
- **Actionable insights:** Leverage data analytics and re-engagement reports to understand and serve adult learners more effectively.
- **Institutional innovation:** Receive tailored recommendations to update policies, financial aid rules, and degree pathways that better meet the needs of adult learners.
- **Shared infrastructure:** Benefit from a centralized marketplace and statewide marketing reach, lowering the individual cost and effort of outreach while amplifying collective impact.

The impact of the SCND marketplace

FOR LEARNERS

- **Personalized support:** Gain access to one-on-one success coaching, multi-channel outreach, and customized re-enrollment pathways designed to fit life circumstances.
- **Flexible options:** Explore programs across participating institutions through ReUp's learnerfacing Wayfinder platform, with the ability to compare options side-by-side and find the best fit.
- **Barrier reduction:** Receive guidance on overcoming financial and time constraints, including access to scholarships, debt review, and time-management strategies.
- **Career mobility:** Achieve credentials of value that directly connect to better jobs, higher earning potential, and greater long-term stability.

ReUp's partner institutions in New Jersey



1. Sussex County Community College
2. Ramapo College of New Jersey
3. William Paterson University of New Jersey
4. Passaic County Community College
5. County College of Morris
6. Montclair State University
7. Saint Elizabeth University
8. New Jersey Institute of of Technology
9. Essex County College
10. Rutgers University - Newark
11. Hudson County Community College
12. New Jersey City University
13. Kean University
14. UCNJ Union College of Union County, NJ
15. Middlesex College
16. Thomas Edison State University
17. Rowan College at Burlington County
18. Rowan College of South Jersey
19. Camden County College
20. Rowan University
21. Salem Community College
22. Stockton University

Performance metrics in New Jersey

Since all 22 institutions launched, ReUp has conducted outreach, engaged with learners on their pathways back to school, and drove meaningful re-enrollment outcomes.



315,000+
outreached



31,000+
engaged



15,700+
enrolled



1,900+
graduated

Re-engaging adult learners to close the talent gap

"Currently, I'm working in an accounts payable role. As I've progressed professionally, I'm realizing there's not going to be much further I can climb the career ladder without a degree. [My long-term goal is] climbing the professional ladder in higher accounting roles. The short-term, taking an accounting or business class or two so that I will have a better understanding of financial practices as it ties into what I'm doing everyday."

—Ramapo College Learner

New Jersey faces a growing skills shortage

Nationally, 72% of jobs will require postsecondary training by 2031, leading to a shortage of 5.25 million skilled workers. New Jersey's economic futures depend on building a skilled, credentialed workforce aligned to industry needs.



149

occupations in New Jersey are in-demand, especially in high skill sectors like healthcare and data science.



37,900

jobs added between December 2023 through December 2025.



49%

of the labor force in New Jersey have a credential of value.

Adult learners represent a large but underutilized talent pool

SCND individuals are college-ready, already have credit, and can get credentialed to fill workforce gaps faster than any other population. Jobs increasingly require postsecondary education and a stronger alignment between academic experiences and labor market needs. When institutions integrate career exploration and employment pathways into their strategies, they can improve student persistence, boost completion rates, and expand economic mobility.

Sources: National Student Clearinghouse



840,000

NJ residents have some college but no degree, (SCND, or “stopouts”)



21,000

more NJ residents stopped out last year

"I currently am a Pre-K teacher of eight years with a teaching certification. I would like to finally finish my associate degree in Biology so that I may transfer to NJIT or Rutgers and have a B.S. in Biology. Once I have my degree, I will be able to truly do what I want and love, teach STEM."

—Middlesex College Learner

Learner insights: Workforce motivations

51%

of New Jersey learners are motivated by career advancement and creating a better life.

64%

of stopped-out learners left their institutions in good academic standing with GPAs over 2.0.

46%

of re-enrolled learners are 25-35 as they often view returning as an investment in their career.

50% of returning learners pivot to a different program than the one they left.

In New Jersey, these re-enrollments are increasingly concentrated in high-demand fields.

Learner insights: Re-enrollment programs

Top five industries in-demand

- Health care and social assistance
- Retail trade
- Professional, scientific, and technical services
- Manufacturing
- Finance and insurance

Re-enrollment programs

- Business administration
- Liberal arts/General studies
- Nursing
- Allied health/health sciences
- Computer and information sciences

Learner insights: Top programs of graduated learners

When students graduate from high-demand pathways offered through New Jersey's SCND marketplace, the benefits extend well beyond individual achievement to strengthen the state's overall economy.

Top programs of graduated learners	
2-year	4-year
Liberal arts/General studies	Liberal arts/General studies
Business administration	Business administration
Nursing	Nursing
Computer and information sciences	Computer and information sciences
Criminal justice	Psychology

"I've been doing pharmacy since 2017. I love the healthcare field. I've always wanted to be a nurse. You can do a bunch of things under the title pharmacy tech, but unless you're going to be a pharmacist, there's not as much growth as far as learning and [financially]. I really want to be this change in myself so I can do more within the healthcare profession, helping people more, but also income wise."

—Union College of Union County, New Jersey (UCNJ) Learner

**Re-enrollment as workforce
development: An institutional
action playbook**

Institutional action playbook

ReUp is pleased to present our **Re-Enrollment as Workforce Development** playbook, detailing institutional best practices for career aligned re-enrollment

Adult learners balance work, caregiving, and financial pressures. When career pathways are unclear or disconnected from coursework, persistence and completion decline. Career-aligned advising, skill development, and faster completion pathways improve retention, stabilize enrollment amid declining traditional student populations, and better prepare graduates for employment and advancement.

The result: stronger student outcomes, graduates who remain engaged alumni, stronger institutional reputation, greater regional economic impact.

Re-Enrollment as Workforce Development:

**An Institutional
Action Playbook**

Best practice: Micro-internships & experiential learning

1

What it is:

Micro-internships and experiential learning are short-term, flexible, paid work-based opportunities that allow learners to apply classroom knowledge in real-world settings while building practical skills and professional experience.

2

Why it's important:

They strengthen learner outcomes and economic mobility while helping employers build a more prepared and job-ready talent pipeline.

3

What it looks like:

This can include co-designed curricula, embedded internships and applied learning experiences, and clear employer-to-employment pathways supported by ongoing industry or employer collaboration.

Passaic PROSPER Program

- PROSPER delivers flexible, paid micro-internships (25–100 hours) and short-term experiential learning opportunities, allowing students to gain real-world experience during academic terms or breaks.
- These hands-on placements with New Jersey employers help students build practical skills, expand professional networks, and access pathways to employment—without sacrificing income.
- **Result:** The program boosts student persistence and degree attainment while strengthening the state’s talent pipeline through deeper connections between education and industry.

Best practice: Early advising, early career intervention and elevation

1

What it is:

Integrated advising that combines academic guidance with **early career intervention** as often and as early as possible.

2

Why it's important:

Early exposure to career pathways increases motivation, improves decision-making, and supports persistence, while institutions have opportunities to outline ROI potential.

3

What it looks like:

Advisors can introduce career conversations early, highlight key milestones, share labor market insights, discuss career in orientation, and connect coursework to real-world skills.

Rutgers University - Newark

- The importance of re-enrolled learners and the role of career motivation in driving engagement.
- Rutgers Newark's approach and examples to early career intervention and career elevation.
- “Learners can do hard things.”

“Before on my journey here, I never used the career support offered, now I’m like, if you have the support (and it’s visible)...then why don’t you use it, and that is what I have done since I came back.” - Rutgers Learner

Best practice: Make career skills explicit and articulable

1

What it is:

Making career-relevant skills explicitly visible, teachable, and easy for students to articulate to employers.

2

Why it's important:

When students can clearly identify and communicate their skills, they are more competitive in internships, interviews, and career outcomes.

3

What it looks like:

Embedding skill language in coursework, teaching resume translation, and integrating career reflection into advising and early major experiences.

Union College of Union County, New Jersey (UCNJ)

Early Skill Identification

- UCNJ equips students with career tools that support exploration, major selection, and early identification of in-demand skills aligned with NACE Career Readiness Competencies, enabling intentional skill development throughout their college journey.

Hands-On Career Preparation

- Through a guided, hands-on approach to experiential learning, UCNJ supports students in searching, preparing for, and securing opportunities—ensuring they can confidently articulate their skills and compete in today's labor market.

Targeted Adult Learner Support

- UCNJ addresses barriers faced by adult learners through dedicated orientation programming, using RE Up testimonials to foster open dialogue and connect students to critical supports from the start.



Questions

**RE
UP**

**RE
UP**

Career Accelerator Internship Grant Program

Re-engaging Talent:
Expanding Work-Based Learning for
'Some College, No Degree' Learners

NIKKI BAILEY,
INTERNSHIP PROGRAM MANAGER

BARRIERS TO WORK-BASED LEARNING

Traditional Internship Models were designed for:

- Full-time students
- Daytime availability
- Lower financial pressure

But SCND Learners Require:

- Flexible or nontraditional schedules
- Immediate income
- Clear connection to career advancement

System design is the barrier, *not* student ability.

CAREER ACCELERATOR INTERNSHIP GRANT PROGRAM: CAIGP

Expanding access to meaningful, paid work-based learning

- Provides funding to employers to offer paid internships
- Engages employers across industries statewide
- Connects multiple institutions to shared opportunities
- Emphasizes structured, skill-building experiences

Learn more, visit: <https://www.nj.gov/highereducation/internshipgrantprogram.shtml>

WHERE EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION NEEDS TO EVOLVE

FROM

- Fixed Schedules
- Enrollment-based access
- Flexibility varies by employer and role
- One-off experiences
- Minimal support

TO

- Flexible, work-compatible formats
- Skills-first access
- Connected pathways
- Integrated coaching

DESIGNING FOR SCND SUCCESS

- Flexible formats (part-time, project-based, hybrid)
- Skills-first approach to hiring and selection
- Clearly defined learning objectives and outcomes
- Wraparound supports-coaching, advising and basic needs

Access + Design + Support = Meaningful Outcomes

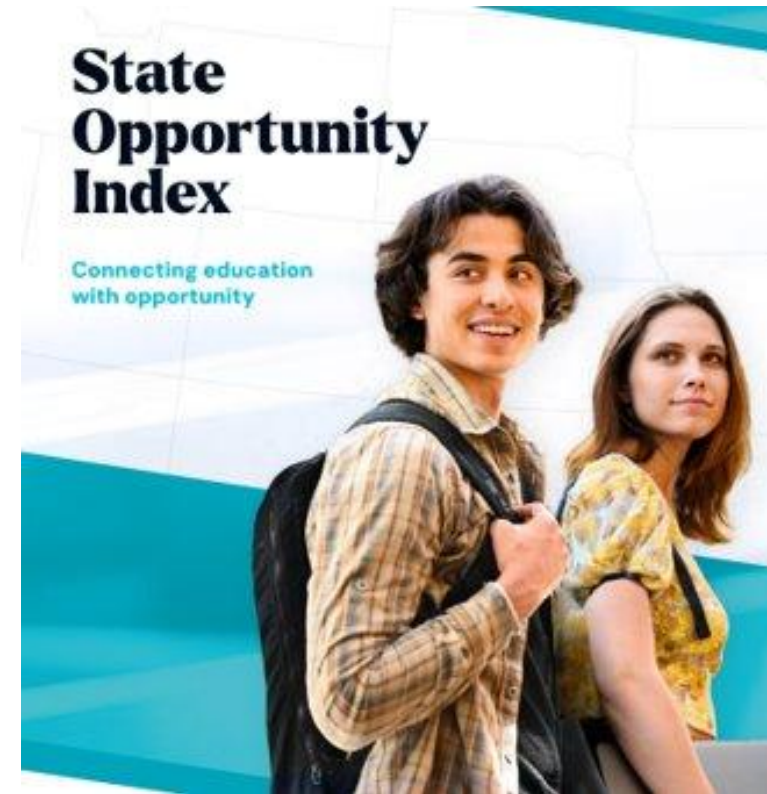
OPPORTUNITY FRAMEWORK: STATE OPPORTUNITY INDEX

A Framework for Measuring Opportunity:

- Access to education and training
- Progress toward credentials
- Completion and attainment
- Economic mobility outcomes

5 Key Drivers:

- Clear outcomes
- **Quality coaching**
- Affordability
- **Work-based learning**
- Employer alignment



Learn more: Strada Education Foundation

[HTTPS://WWW.STRADA.ORG/STATE-OPPORTUNITY-INDEX](https://www.strada.org/state-opportunity-index)

MEASURING WHAT MATTERS

Defining Success for SCND Learners:

- Re-enrollment in postsecondary education
- Progress toward and completion of credentials
- Wage growth and employment stability
- Alignment between education and career pathways

QUALITY COACHING



Quality Coaching as a Critical Support

- Helps learners navigate career and education options (Advising + Career Services)
- Connects work-based experiences to long-term goals
- Provides ongoing guidance during transitions

Experience → Pathway

Learn more, visit: Strada SOI, [New Jersey Profile](#).

A SYSTEM APPROACH TO SUPPORTING SCND LEARNERS

- Career Accelerator expands access to paid experiences
- State Opportunity Index provides a framework for accountability
- Coaching supports persistence and progression

Alignment across systems drives better outcomes.

VIRTUAL SPRING MENTAL HEALTH CONVENING: “THREE YEARS IN BLOOM”

- Get updates on statewide telemental health partnership progress
- Discuss with campus colleagues successful impacts and hot topics
- Hear from NJ agencies on statewide mental health updates

Free and Open to All!

[Register here!](#)

Date: 4/30/2026

Time: 10am – 11:30am



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Questions or Feedback?

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