



News Release
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New Jersey Joins Degrees When Due, A Nationwide Completion Initiative to Strengthen Pathway to College Degree for Adult Learners

TRENTON, NJ - New Jersey has been selected to expand its participation with the second cohort of Degrees When Due, a national initiative of the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP), to help students who have some college credits complete their degrees. New Jersey has just over one million residents who attended college, but left without obtaining a degree. Last week, the Governor announced *Jobs NJ*, a talent development plan that sets a goal of at least 25,000 additional adults enrolling and graduating with a high-quality credential by 2025. This initiative will help increase the number of qualified workers with skills needed to be successful in today's Innovation Economy, a vital component of the Governor's plan for building the skilled workforce New Jersey's employers need.

Participating institutions will learn best practices for increasing adult completion and gain access to a variety of resources in order to provide targeted support to re-engage students in their postsecondary studies. In addition to technical assistance from national experts at IHEP, the initiative will receive staff support from the New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education and the New Jersey Council of County Colleges. Community colleges participating in the second cohort in New Jersey, include: Atlantic Cape Community College, Bergen Community College, Camden County College, Essex County College, Hudson County Community College, Mercer County Community College, Middlesex County College, County College of Morris, Ocean County College, Passaic County Community College, Raritan Valley Community College, Rowan College at Burlington County, Salem Community College, and Union County College.

“We've heard New Jersey employers speak out about their urgent need for talent, and this program will help meet that need,” **said Governor Phil Murphy**. “In turn, these adult learners will obtain a high-quality credential that leads them to a rewarding career that benefits their families and communities.”

“The State remains focused on providing support to our students and institutions in order to close attainment gaps. This program puts us on the path to obtaining our goal of 65% of New Jerseyans with a high-quality credential or degree by 2025,” **said Secretary of Higher Education Zakiya Smith Ellis**.

“New Jersey’s community colleges are excited to work with the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education and the Institute for Higher Education Policy to ensure that more adults have pathways to credentials and degrees that lead to jobs and careers with family-sustaining wages,” **said Dr. Aaron Fichtner, President of the New Jersey Council of County Colleges.** “This effort, a key initiative of our Vision 2028 Framework for the Future of Community Colleges, is critical to addressing attainment and equity gaps throughout the state and ensuring that our state has a skilled and innovative workforce to propel economic growth.”

“Our Degrees When Due institutional and state partners are building a strong pathway to degree attainment for all students, including by providing an on-ramp for those who have paused their studies or ‘stopped-out,’” **said IHEP President Michelle Asha Cooper, Ph.D.** “IHEP enthusiastically welcomes the selected institutions and states to this effort. Through this initiative, they will increase student success, serve a diverse set of student populations, and join us in addressing one of higher education’s most pressing challenges: degree completion.”

For additional information about the national Degrees When Due initiative, visit:

<https://degreeswhendue.com/>.

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