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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TRENTON – With school construction projects ramping up, the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDOL) is reminding school districts and local governments to comply with the state’s prevailing wage law. To help meet these obligations, NJDOL urges them to use the NJ Wage Hub – a free platform that verifies contractor registration, tracks certified payrolls and ensures workers are compensated fairly.

“For school districts and local governments gearing up for summer construction, the NJ Wage Hub makes wage compliance simple,” **said Acting Labor Commissioner Kevin D. Jarvis**. “This free tool ensures workers are paid what they deserve, creating a level playing field for contractors competing for public work and safeguarding taxpayer dollars.”

What Schools Need to Know

When school districts undertake construction or renovation projects using taxpayer dollars, state law requires that workers are paid prevailing wages – the standard rate for their specific trade or craft. These requirements, established under the New Jersey Prevailing Wage Act and the Public Works Contractor Registration Act ([N.J.S.A. 34:11-56.25 et seq.](#)), ensure fair compensation for workers and create a level playing field for contractors competing for public work.

How NJ Wage Hub Helps School Districts and Local Governments

NJDOL built the NJ Wage Hub to make it easier for public entities managing construction projects to be in compliance with state laws. The platform provides:

- **Contractor Verification** – Before awarding bids, districts can check whether contractors are properly registered and review the debarment list to avoid ineligible bidders.
- **Centralized Project Management** – Officials can monitor all prevailing wage projects in one place, using filters to organize information and track project status.
- **Digital Payroll Access** – The system stores certified payroll records submitted by contractors, eliminating paper files and making records easier to organize, retrieve, and review.
- **Informed Decision-Making** – Access to comprehensive contractor data to help facilitate better decision-making during the bid award process.

Public Bodies Have Clear Legal Responsibilities

State law places specific obligations on public bodies, like school districts, when contracting for public works projects:

- All contracts must include language referencing the Prevailing Wage Act and Public Works Contractor Registration Act.
- School districts must ensure that all vendors offering public work services, such as construction and/or maintenance, through a cooperative hold a valid Public Work Contractor Registration Certificate at the time of bid and contract execution.
- Contracts must specify the appropriate wage prevailing for the work being performed.
- School districts must collect weekly certified payrolls from contractors for all work covered by the Prevailing Wage Act.
- Before awarding any contract, districts must verify that contractors and subcontractors are registered and eligible through the NJDOL website.
- School districts must maintain certified payroll records accessible to the public and NJDOL.
- When bids come in significantly low (more than 10 percent below the next lowest bid), districts must obtain certification that prevailing wages will be paid.

In addition, as of August 15, 2024, contractors involved in public work **must** submit certified payroll records via NJ Wage Hub. For details, refer to the [N.J. Local Public Contracts Law and Regulation Reference Guide](#), updated as of April 2024.

[Since launching in August 2023](#), NJ Wage Hub has registered more than 4,500 contractors and 800 public bodies. The platform now houses nearly 582,000 payroll records from approximately 48,000 public works projects, all available for public access.

The Bigger Picture: Investing in New Jersey's Workforce

Prevailing wage requirements do more than protect workers on individual projects — they support New Jersey's growing workforce development system. Since 2019, state law has required all contractors working on public projects to participate in the USDOL Registered Apprenticeship programs. This creates pathways for New Jersey residents to enter skilled trades, earning wages while they learn. New Jersey has seen a nearly 170 percent increase in [registered apprenticeship programs](#) since 2018.

Collaboration to Compliance

NJDOL works in cooperation with the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs and the New Jersey Department of Education to provide guidance and resources on these laws including an annual letter distributed to public bodies along with events, meetings, and webinars for schools and communities statewide.

"The state's prevailing wage and public contracting laws were established to provide good paying job opportunities and apprenticeship programs for New Jersey residents," said **New Jersey Department of Community Affairs Commissioner Jacquelyn A. Suárez**. "When local governmental units like school districts, municipalities, and counties are getting ready to start capital projects in their communities, the NJ Wage Hub is a tool they can use to ensure they are complying with these important laws. At DCA, we're doing our part to inform and encourage local governments to strengthen fair wage practices by using the NJ Wage Hub."

"School districts are balancing a great deal as they prepare buildings for a new school year, and having clear, practical tools can make that work more manageable," said **Dr. Lily Laux, Education Commissioner**. "The Department of Education supports the Department of Labor's efforts to help districts carry out summer construction projects responsibly and in full compliance with state law, ensuring our schools are ready to serve students when the new school year begins."

In 2025, these efforts reached well over 2,000 in-person attendees and nearly 55,000 total members across organizations including, but not limited to:

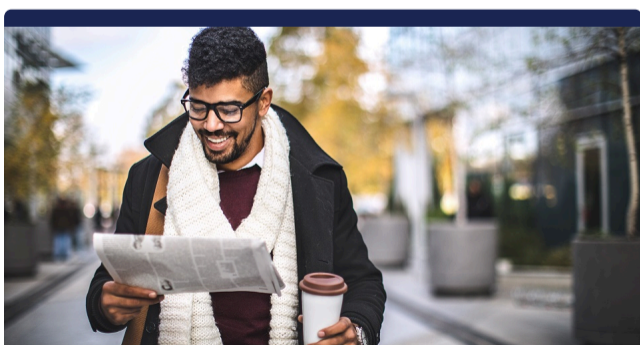
- Educational Services Commission of New Jersey
- Government Purchasing Association of New Jersey
- Municipal Clerks Association of New Jersey
- New Jersey League of Municipalities
- New Jersey Municipal Management Association
- Rutgers University
- School Development Authority
- South Jersey Chapter of the National Institute of Governmental Purchasing

For more on NJ Wage Hub, visit [NJWages.nj.gov](https://www.nj.gov/labor/lwdhome/press/2026/20260407_school_construction.shtml).

For more on New Jersey's worker benefits and protections, visit [MyWorkRights.nj.gov](https://www.nj.gov/labor/lwdhome/press/2026/20260407_school_construction.shtml).

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