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NJDOL Announces Expansion of Governor Murphy's Return and Earn Incentive Program

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 31, 2023

TRENTON – The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDOL) has announced the expansion of the Murphy Administration's Return and Earn program, which provides a \$500 incentive to unemployed workers reentering the workforce and receiving job training from businesses with 500 or fewer employees, up from the previous 100 or less when it [first launched in September 2021](#).

Return and Earn, facilitated by NJDOL's Business Support Unit, utilizes New Jersey's existing On-the-Job Training infrastructure to provide wage reimbursement to New Jersey employers that hire dislocated workers with identifiable skills gaps.

"The expansion of the Return and Earn program ensures we're reaching every corner of the workforce, providing workers with training for a rewarding career and employers with the resources to grow and thrive," said Labor Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo. "This investment further demonstrates the Murphy Administration's unwavering dedication to building a stronger and fairer economy."

Employers are reimbursed for 50 percent of the wages paid for regular hours worked during the contracted employer-provided training period up to six months, up to the cap of \$20,000 per Return and Earn employee and limited to a total Return and Earn subsidy across all employees of \$200,000 – an increase from \$10,000 and \$40,000, respectively, from the previous iteration of the program.

The general process and eligibility criteria are as follows:

- NJDOL works with interested employers to identify prospective candidates for available positions.
- The employer provides substantive On-the-Job Training at their location or, depending on circumstances, utilizes approved virtual training, that results in skill badges or industry-recognized credentials.
- Eligible applicants are private and not-for-profit employers with up to 500 full-time employees.
- Candidates must be New Jersey residents working full-time (minimum 32 hours per week).
- The positions must pay at least \$16 per hour.
- Seasonal, temporary, part-time, commission-based, or 1099 positions are not eligible.
- Additionally, many workers are eligible for supportive services like childcare and transportation reimbursement, which have been barriers for many re-entering the workforce.

Through the program, NJDOL, New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA), and other state entities provide targeted outreach to employers in industries hardest-hit by COVID-19 (particularly manufacturing, transportation, supply chain /logistics, healthcare, retail, and leisure/hospitality), as well as employers in traditionally underserved areas or industries. Priority in recruitment and job matching will be given to disadvantaged populations, such as veterans, returning citizens, and under-employed individuals.

Employers can visit [NJ.gov/labor/returnandearn](https://nj.gov/labor/returnandearn) to express interest in this program and receive application information as it becomes available.


Prospective employers must receive NJDOL approval for their training plan in order to be eligible for the wage reimbursement.

Supportive or wraparound services will be made available to employees at the point of hire. Costs for supportive services will be combination of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds.


For more information on Return and Earn, please click [here](#).


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"Workers dedicate a significant portion of their lives to their careers, and they deserve to be protected financially while expressing their legal right to strike over wages, benefits and workplace conditions."
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