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TRENTON – As the Murphy Administration celebrates eight years of progress, the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDOL) is highlighting the major advancements made since 2018 to strengthen worker protections, expand benefits, modernize critical systems, and prepare New Jersey’s workforce for the jobs of the future. Backed by landmark bipartisan legislation, rigorous enforcement, and significant investments in training and career services, New Jersey has emerged as a national leader in worker support and customer-centered innovation.

During this period, a record 120 new laws were added to NJDOL’s purview, expanding its abilities to protect New Jersey’s workforce, strengthen businesses, and promote the dignity of work.

“Over the past eight years, we have worked closely with the Department of Labor and Workforce Development to deliver historic advancements for New Jersey workers,” **said Governor Murphy**. “Through landmark legislation and major investments, we have strengthened worker protections, expanded benefits including paid sick and family leave, and enhanced workforce development opportunities. These efforts have been essential to building a stronger economy while ensuring fair treatment and equal pay for New Jersey workers. In the face of unprecedented challenges during the pandemic, the labor systems we have modernized reflect our commitment to supporting the working families and labor unions who make our state strong.”

“Even as we triaged historic levels of unemployment claims during a once-in-a-century pandemic, our department never stopped pushing forward. We modernized our systems, expanded worker protections, improved customer service, and built lasting capacity that will benefit New Jersey for decades,” **said Labor Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo**. “Delivering record benefits was a milestone, but so was everything we achieved alongside it. And the teams at this labor department are not done yet. This mission isn’t about the work of one administration but rather maintaining progress so our workers and employers have the strong, reliable support they deserve.”

Expanding Worker Protections and Benefits

New Jersey has enacted some of the strongest, bipartisan [worker protection](#) laws in the country. This includes statewide earned sick leave, an expanded suite of Temporary Disability and Family Leave benefits, and significant increases in the minimum wage. Workers now have greater access to enhanced wage-replacement rates; and more flexible paid leave options to care for themselves or their families without sacrificing their livelihood. Additionally, New Jersey’s [minimum wage rate](#) will increase to \$15.92 in January 2026, which not only raises workers’ income, but typically reduces poverty and stimulates the economy through increased spending.

Strengthening Enforcement and Combating Worker Misclassification

The Administration has prioritized fair treatment for workers and accountability for employers. NJDOL has implemented a gold-standard enforcement strategy to eliminate wage theft, protect legally earned benefits, and prevent the misclassification of employees as independent contractors. NJDOL created new oversight units, issued over 200 stop-work orders across multiple industries, and secured major settlements that returned tens of millions of dollars to workers. These actions hold violators accountable while ensuring a level playing field for responsible employers.

As a result, NJDOL’s Divisions of Wage and Hour Compliance and Employer Accounts have helped put \$100 million back into the pockets of workers.

Modernizing Unemployment and Improving the Customer Experience

Building on improvement efforts spotlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the state delivered nearly \$40 billion in [unemployment benefits](#), NJDOL has continued modernizing its Unemployment Insurance system. Recent upgrades include a redesigned application portal, improved communication tools, and a more responsive call-center platform. With the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund restored to its strongest level in more than two decades, the state has also reduced UI tax burdens for employers.

In May 2024, NJDOL launched a completely rebuilt online UI application. The new version uses simplified language, conditional logic, and fewer questions. According to users, it is also now easier to complete on mobile devices, tablets, or desktops. These improvements alone have dramatically reduced the time needed to complete the application – saving applicants as much as 45 to 47 minutes compared to the legacy

system. A modern, cloud-based phone system was also implemented in 2024 reducing callback times from up to an hour to around 90 seconds, drastically improving customer service for those who still need to speak with UI agents.

Protecting New Jerseyans Through Fraud Prevention

As part of modernization, NJDOL deployed a new UI fraud-prevention solution. Recognized by the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) with the [2025 Merrill Baumgardner Innovation in Information Technology Award](#), the system leverages advanced analytics to detect and mitigate fraudulent claims while protecting public funds.

Investing in Workforce Development and Apprenticeship Growth

New Jersey has increased [apprenticeship programs](#) in the state by 155 percent over the previous administration through \$100 million in investments. DOL-recognized programs have been expanded into a wide variety of occupations such as construction, early childhood education, registered nursing, pharmacy technicians, stagehands, water treatment plant operators, fiber optic technicians, and more. This funding has also helped onboard nearly 23,000 new apprentices. The state currently has approximately 9,500 active apprentices in about 1,460 programs.

Meeting New Jersey Workers Where They Are

The Department has expanded access to its services and strengthened community outreach through several key initiatives. Career services are now offered in person, virtually, and by phone, ensuring jobseekers can get support in whatever way works best for them. New tools like [SkillUp NJ](#), providing free online training, and [My Career NJ](#), an AI-powered platform offering personalized recommendations on jobs, training, and career transitions, make it easier for residents to navigate today's labor market.

Through the Office of Strategic Outreach and Partnerships, the Department is also engaging employer organizations, worker advocates, and community groups to broaden awareness of workplace rights and responsibilities. NJDOL's [Cultivating Access, Rights, and Equity \(CARE\) program](#) grantees have already connected with more than a quarter million workers and employers, extending vital information to communities that need it most.

Protecting Vulnerable Workers Through New Authorities

NJDOL established protections for [temporary](#) and [domestic workers](#) to address their vulnerability to exploitation. Temporary worker protections ensure fair treatment, including transparent employment terms, equitable wages, and safe conditions. Domestic worker protections safeguard the rights of those in private households, focusing on fair compensation, reasonable hours, and a respectful work environment. These measures underscore New Jersey's commitment to worker rights and the unique needs of these often underrepresented labor groups.

Partnering with New Jersey's Industry Leaders

Launched in the early days of the Murphy Administration, [New Jersey's Industry Partnerships](#) program is a business-led, sector-focused initiative run that brings together employers, educators, workforce and economic-development partners to collaboratively address industry needs and strengthen regional economies. Organized by key sectors such as manufacturing, health care, energy, life sciences, and transportation, the partnerships rely on industry leaders to identify workforce challenges and priorities, while public partners align training, education, and resources to support those needs. This results in a responsive talent pipeline, improved coordination across agencies, and relevant training and career pathways to help New Jersey industries remain competitive.

Bridging Opportunity Gaps

Throughout the Murphy Administration, NJDOL awarded more than \$19 million in [New Jersey Builder's Utilization Initiative for Labor Diversity \(NJBUILD\) funding](#) to support the training of approximately 1,559 women, minorities, and veterans in the construction trades. This is a part of a larger effort that seeks to eliminate economic barriers commonly associated with investing in skills training and work readiness and connect minority populations and women to quality career and training opportunities in the building and construction industry.

The Growing Apprenticeship in Nontraditional Sectors (GAINS) grant program has provided unprecedented opportunities for women and people of color, with more than two-thirds of participants being women or minorities – twice the average among all apprenticeship programs in the state. Women account for 67 percent of GAINS apprentices, greater than seven times the statewide average of female apprentices when Governor Murphy took office in January 2018. The GAINS program has doubled the number of women in Registered Apprenticeships throughout the state.

Advancing Prosperity, Jobs, and Opportunity

These efforts represent a portion of the state's expansive worker-focused agenda that reflects its commitment to building a future in which every New Jerseyan can earn competitive wages, feel safe and protected when providing for their families, and find meaningful opportunities for professional growth through the Garden State.

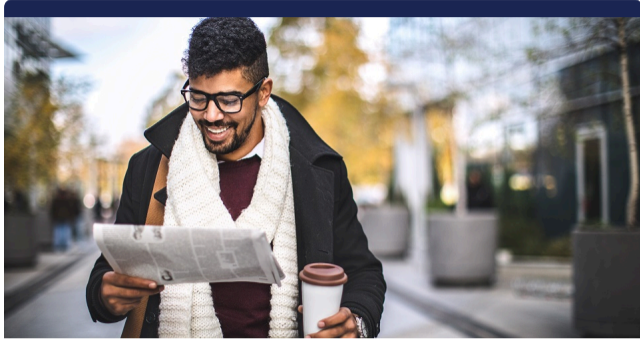
For more information about the mission of the Department, visit:

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