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NJDOL Celebrates Apprenticeship Month, 100% Increase in Registered Apprenticeship Programs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TRENTON – Today marks the start of the United States Department of Labor’s (USDOL) recognition of National Apprenticeship Week from November 13-17, with the entire month of November commemorated as Apprenticeship Month in New Jersey following a proclamation issued by Governor Phil Murphy.

The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDOL) is celebrating both occasions alongside business, trade, educational, and vocational organizations, with the Department’s leaders attending events with Baron-Queen Inc., net.America, Eastern Atlantic States Carpenters Technical College Hammonton Campus, the New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission, Pathways to Apprenticeship, and Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory (PPPL), which today held a graduation ceremony for its first class of apprentices.

Since Governor Murphy took office in January 2018, the state has invested \$50 million in developing apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship, and work-based programs, contributing to the creation of 622 new Registered Apprenticeship programs – a 100 percent increase – and the onboarding of 16,789 new apprentices. The state currently has 8,788 active apprentices in 1,233 programs, which span a wide range of occupations, including in health care, human resources, information technology, manufacturing automotive, and furthering fusion energy research at PPPL, among many others.

“Apprenticeships offer New Jersey residents the chance to learn relevant skills within the fields in which they seek to build a career while simultaneously bolstering our state’s workforce,” said Governor Murphy. “Understanding the importance of apprenticeships to families and businesses throughout New Jersey, my Administration has worked to meaningfully expand these opportunities over the past several years. I look forward to seeing the continued benefits these efforts will have for many years to come.”

“From the start, the Murphy Administration recognized apprenticeship as a strong and reliable method of building our workforce, and one that can be applied to virtually any field, as we’re proving here in New Jersey,” said Labor Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo. “Through the vital investments dedicated by the state to growing apprenticeship programs over the past five years, the number of these worthwhile opportunities has doubled, and this significant progress will have a decades-long impact on our workforce.”

Commissioner Asaro-Angelo this morning attended PPPL’s first graduation ceremony for apprentices funded through the financial assistance of NJDOL’s Growing Apprenticeship in Nontraditional Sectors (GAINS) grant, one of the department’s several grant programs that seek to grow registered apprenticeship programs in the state.

“With over four years of on-the-job training, our apprentices work alongside our experienced staff learning skills that are critical to this mission while attending classes in their fields. We are so proud of our first group of four graduates, all of whom have become full-time employees at Princeton, and we are grateful to our partners at the federal and state level for their support,” said Diana Adel, program manager for the Apprenticeship Program at the U.S. Department of Energy’s Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory. “At the Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory, we are focused on solving one of our country’s greatest challenges – the development of clean, safe, carbon-free electricity. To do so, we need a highly skilled technical workforce, and our first-in-the-nation registered apprenticeship program in fusion energy and engineering is designed to do just that.”

In Fiscal Year 2023, NJDOL distributed \$12,094,318 through three grant programs to support the growth of Registered Apprenticeship across the state. The individual grant funds and the totals distributed through each program are: Growing Apprenticeship in Nontraditional Sectors (GAINS), which awarded \$4,963,267; Pre-Apprenticeship in Career Education (PACE), which awarded \$5,131,051; and Youth Transitions to Work (YTTW), which awarded \$2,000,000. In total, this funding has supported 40 programs in the recruitment of 1,761 apprentices.

These grants are part of a suite of apprenticeship programs under Governor Murphy’s New Jersey Apprenticeship Network, an initiative that positions the Garden State as a leader for apprenticeship programs nationwide and provides options for all New Jerseyans to build meaningful careers across a wide range of employers.

Last week, NJDOL announced another \$8 million in available funding through the GAINS and PACE programs for Fiscal Year 2024. For complete information on how to apply for either grant, visit the NJDOL’s Grant Opportunities website.

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The Growing Apprenticeship in Nontraditional Sectors (GAINS) program seeks to develop new and existing apprenticeship programs and create Registered Apprenticeship programs in high-growth industries. Currently, more than half of GAINS apprentices are in the health care sector.

The GAINS grant program has provided unprecedented opportunities for women and people of color, with more than two-thirds of GAINS grantees being women or minorities, which is twice the average among all apprenticeship programs in the state. Women account for about half of GAINS apprentices, greater than five times the statewide average. The GAINS program alone has more than doubled the number of women enrolled in Registered Apprenticeship programs in New Jersey.

The Pre-Apprenticeship in Career Education (PACE) program was developed primarily to alleviate economic barriers that hinder upskilling. PACE programs provide job readiness, essential skills, and occupation-specific training, and funding can be used to offer stipends to offset costs of supportive services, such as childcare and transportation.

Pre-apprenticeship programs funded through PACE provide education and training to prepare participants for placement into a Registered Apprenticeship program, into a post-secondary college or occupation-specific career training program, or into the workforce. PACE programs must be partnered with at least one Registered Apprenticeship program sponsor. Together, the programs expand career pathways with industry-based training and classroom instruction, leading to better-paying positions and advanced credentials.

Youth Transitions to Work (YTTW) recruits, screens, and facilitates effective transitions of high school juniors, seniors, and out of school youth (ages 16-24) to high-skill, high-wage employment in labor-demand occupations, with long-term career potential and opportunities for occupationally relevant lifelong learning, thereby motivating youth to achieve greater success in secondary and post-secondary education.

YTTW establishes programs in new apprenticeship occupations or industries, links secondary and higher educational institutions to existing USDOL apprenticeship programs, reactivates registered programs not currently in use, and increases the number of high school graduates entering Registered Apprenticeship programs in New Jersey.

To see current notices of grant opportunity, please visit: <https://www.nj.gov/labor/research-info/grants.shtml>

For more information on the New Jersey Office of Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning, please visit: <http://apprenticeship.nj.gov>

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