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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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*Program Encourages College Credit Support for Registered Apprenticeship Participation*

**TRENTON** – The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDOL) has released a Notice of Grant Opportunity (NGO) in the amount of \$2 million to encourage higher education institutions to award college credit for work-based learning and related instruction by pairing apprenticeship program partners with credit-bearing post-secondary degrees. In 2004, NJ PLACE was developed to remove barriers between the academic content of vocational education and other forms of postsecondary education. In January 2010, the state Legislature formally established NJ PLACE as a function of NJDOL. NJ PLACE 2.0 is part of Governor Murphy’s JOBS NJ initiative, a talent-focused economic development strategy that will help re-establish New Jersey’s leadership in the innovation economy.

The NJ Pathways Leading Apprentices to a College Education (NJ PLACE) program, announced today at the Essential Skills Summit at Middlesex County College, is designed to provide financial assistance for students participating in a U.S. Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeship program while the apprentice is simultaneously enrolled in a degree program.

The “Degree Apprenticeship” model will promote a new approach to solving the workforce needs of employers and jobseekers by further integrating work-based learning with post-secondary education. Degree Apprenticeship programs developed under this grant will allow student apprentices to earn college credits and an apprentice wage at the same time – thus removing the difficult choice between working to support themselves or attending class to further their career.

“Investing in New Jersey’s economy and its residents is critical in our efforts to making New Jersey stronger and fairer,” said **Governor Murphy**. “With this new program, we are equipping our rising workforce with the skills they need to compete for careers in a 21st century economy.”

“We’re excited to offer our partners in the educational community an incredible opportunity to discover all the benefits of apprenticeship as a means to develop our future workforce,” said **Labor Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo**. “The NJ PLACE 2.0 program reaffirms apprenticeship as a viable path to a lifelong career and a college education. Being an apprentice should no longer be viewed as an either/or decision when it comes to receiving a college education.”

“We have been working hard, partnering with members of the educational community, as well as business leaders, and our partners in Education and Higher Education, to carve out smart, symbiotic, long-term career pathways together,” said **Senator M. Teresa Ruiz (D-29)**. “The investments we are making today are a part of building our state’s workforce of tomorrow. It is critical that we connect our underrepresented communities to our high-growth industries.”

“Every student should have the opportunity to apply what they learn in the classroom to a real-life work experience and understand how it connects to their career path,” said **New Jersey Secretary of Higher Education Zakiya Smith Ellis**. “NJ PLACE provides that opportunity and ensures that students will earn college credit for doing so. I am proud that New Jersey is seeding new degree apprenticeship pathways to foster more work-based learning opportunities that pay, and establishing an innovative model for other states to follow.”

Many participants in the original NJ PLACE model were skeptical of the value the program offerings had on their job mobility and career advancement. NJ PLACE 2.0 affords colleges and students more options to integrate work-based learning with post-secondary education.

With a growing need for skilled workers in high demand fields, and a decline in college enrollment, employers are seeking individuals who possess both theoretical and applied knowledge, skills, and abilities. The concept of a Degree Apprenticeship is a fairly new model that combines postsecondary education with paid on-the-job learning experiences through USDOL Registered Apprenticeship programs.

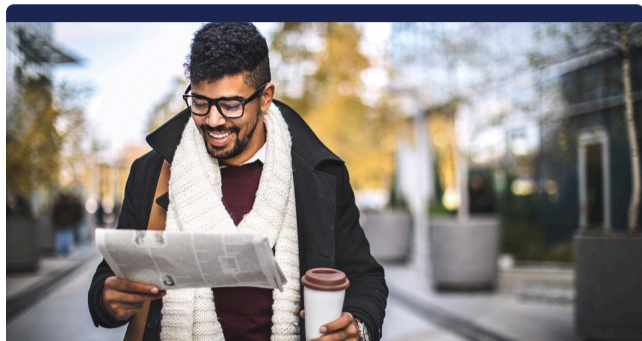
Applicants interested in applying for the NJ PLACE 2.0 program must submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) to express interest in the grant opportunity. NJDOL will host technical assistance workshops for interested parties on February 18 and March 2. For more information, email [apprenticeship@dol.nj.gov](mailto:apprenticeship@dol.nj.gov) or visit [apprenticeship.nj.gov](https://www.nj.gov/labor/programs/grants/19023_njplace2.0.pdf). The deadline for applications is April 3.

To read the full NGO, please go to [https://www.nj.gov/labor/programs/grants/19023\\_njplace2.0.pdf](https://www.nj.gov/labor/programs/grants/19023_njplace2.0.pdf).

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