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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 08, 2025

TRENTON – The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDOL) has announced a \$5 million investment to support a pioneering statewide Apprenticeship Degree Initiative through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Thomas Edison State University (TESU). This three-year initiative aims to develop college-credit pathways for registered apprenticeship programs, integrating workforce training with academic credentials like an associate’s or bachelor’s degree.

“This partnership will provide vital resources and pathways for individuals seeking both technical expertise and academic achievement,” said Labor Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo. “By integrating college credit with apprenticeship programs, we are breaking down barriers and empowering our workforce with the skills and knowledge necessary to thrive in a rapidly evolving job market.”

As part of this three-year initiative, TESU will conduct thorough evaluations of registered apprenticeship programs, examining both technical instruction and on-the-job training to determine how they translate into college credits. The initiative plans to establish multi-credential pathways that enable apprentices to leverage their training for academic advancement. The MOU between TESU and NJDOL is in effect from May 2025 through April 2028.

“This collaboration is a powerful step forward for New Jersey’s workforce,” Dr. Merodie A. Hancock, president of TESU, said [in a prior press release](#). “By recognizing the value of workplace learning and linking apprenticeships to college degrees, we’re not only expanding opportunity for individuals – we’re building a smarter, more adaptable workforce for our state.”

Under the parameters of the MOU, TESU will enroll apprentices into degree or certificate programs, offering scholarships to cover the difference between credits awarded for training and those required to complete academic programs. Additionally, enrolled apprentices will benefit from a comprehensive support system, including educational guidance and life coaching.

NJDOL and TESU previously partnered through the [NJ Pathways Leading Apprentices to a College Education \(NJ PLACE\)](#) grant, through which TESU awarded nearly 4,000 credits to apprentices in the program.

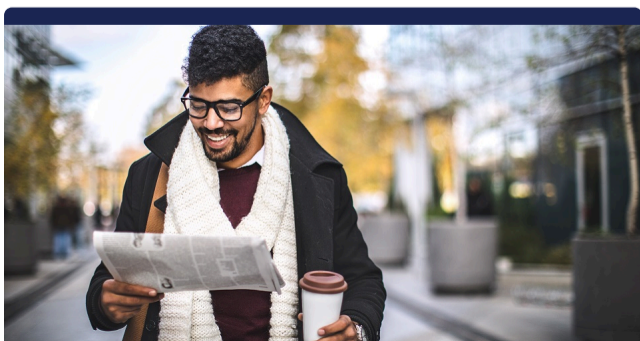
“Overall, TESU believes the program has been a success and continues to innovate in the area of higher education and apprenticeship training,” added Dr. Jeff S. Harmon, who directed the NJ PLACE grant and who will oversee the new Apprenticeship-Degree Initiative. “This new \$5 million MOU between TESU and the NJDOL is a reflection on how critical apprenticeship training and the joint pursuit of a college degree are to the future of the N.J. workforce.”

For more information about TESU’s workforce and apprenticeship initiatives, contact Dr. Jeff S. Harmon at jharmon@tesu.edu.

For more information on apprenticeship opportunities in New Jersey, visit apprenticeship.nj.gov.

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