



NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 18, 2019

NJ Labor Department Announces \$3.9M to Fund Job Training in Counties Hardest-Hit by Opioid Crisis

TRENTON – The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development has awarded \$3.9 million in funding to six organizations that will provide training and support services to people whose work trajectories have been interrupted by the opioid epidemic.

The Opioid Recovery Employment Program, also known as Pathways to Recovery, is part of Gov. Phil Murphy's multi-faceted, multi-agency strategy to combat the state's worsening opioid crisis. In January, the Governor announced he would dedicate \$100 million from the FY2019 budget to fight the opioid crisis. He is proposing to again appropriate \$100 million for these programs in FY2020.

"As the opioid epidemic continues to impact countless families across our state and the nation, we must support affected individuals and provide them with vital resources and information that will get them on the path to recovery," **said Governor Murphy**. "This funding will expand opportunities for those facing

addiction and enable them to access meaningful work, an essential part of restoring their lives for long-term recovery.”

Labor Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo added, “Recognizing that steady employment is one determinant of long-term recovery, we are proud of these efforts to coordinate the physical and mental health needs with the workforce needs of those affected by opioids.”

New Jersey had 3,163 drug overdose deaths in 2018, the most recorded in one calendar year. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported New Jersey had one of the highest increases of fatal overdoses in the country, up 21 percent from January 2017 to January 2018.

The six hardest-hit counties – Atlantic, Camden, Essex, Middlesex, Monmouth and Ocean – all saw greater numbers of overdose deaths last year than in 2017.

The grants were awarded to agencies that agreed to partner with other community-based organizations to deliver employment opportunities to 600 opioid-affected individuals. Participants include people who are in recovery as well as those who were directly impacted by addiction, as relatives, friends, or caregivers. The participants will receive work-readiness assessments, career coaching, peer support, and, ultimately, placement in jobs for which there is a high demand.

These grants are supporting a new approach in New Jersey to combine recovery and employment opportunities.

The Pathways to Recovery grant recipients are:

- *Jewish Family Services of Atlantic County, Inc. – Atlantic County*
- *Center for Family Services, Inc. – Camden County*

- *Blessed Ministries, Inc. – Essex County*
- *Township of Woodbridge – Middlesex County*
- *Monmouth County Division of Workforce Development – Monmouth County*
- *County of Ocean, Department of Human Services – Ocean County*

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