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NJ Labor Department Announces First Recipient of New Innovation Research Fellowship Grant

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 5, 2019

TRENTON – The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDOL) has announced the first recipient of the New Jersey Innovation and Research Fellowship Program (IRFP) grant to support technological research and the state’s growing innovation ecosystem.

Dr. Peter Worthington of Jersey City will receive a \$115,000 grant stipend over two years to further his research with Visikol, a biotechnology company in Hunterdon County.

“This is a first-of-its-kind research opportunity that will help reaffirm New Jersey’s historic role as a state of innovation,” said Labor Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo. “We are proud to financially support these fellows, as their educational journeys are vital to our innovation workforce.”

The IRFP was designed to help startups and established businesses drive innovation, and encourage the Ph.D. candidates, doctoral degree recipients, and companies who hire them to remain and do business in New Jersey.

“We have been very fortunate to be able to build our company in New Jersey,” said Dr. Michael Johnson, CEO of Visikol, which was founded at Rutgers University. “Through this grant, we have been able to support Dr. Worthington, an expert in his field, whose advanced research will allow us to help pharmaceutical companies reduce the cost and time to develop life-saving therapeutics.”

As a scientist at Visikol, Worthington has focused on designing and implementing humanized cell-based models, enabling the company to study the effectiveness of drugs and to evaluate risks associated with new medicines, while minimizing reliance on animal studies.

“New Jersey has long been known as a leader in the pharmaceutical space,” Worthington said. “It is gratifying to know that in a state filled with innovation, the work I am doing at Visikol was selected as worthy of award.”

The 24-month grants are meant to cover the salaries of the fellows. First-year fellows are funded at a rate of up to \$65,000, while second-year fellows will be paid up to \$75,000, with the costs split between the grant, which pays two-thirds of the salary, and the company employing the fellow, which pays one-third. In this case, Dr. Worthington will receive \$50,000 in grants in his second year, and Visikol will pay him \$25,000.

For additional information, including eligibility requirements, visit:

https://www.nj.gov/labor/forms_pdfs/Programs/NGO/FY19/19002_njonjinnovationandresearchfellowshipprogram.pdf

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Aug 19, 2021



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As of the latest reporting, more than \$33 billion in unemployment benefits have been sent to Garden State workers. With federal benefits set to expire on September 4, we encourage everyone to check your email and visit [MyUnemployment.nj.gov](https://www.nj.gov/unemployment/) for updates and available resources.



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