

NJDOL Announces \$1.5M in Available Grants to Increase Awareness, Access to Worker Benefits, Protections

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 01, 2023

TRENTON – The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDOL) has released \$1.5 million in available funding under the Cultivating Access, Rights, and Equity (CARE) grant program.

First launched in [March 2022](#), the CARE grant promotes outreach, education, and support aimed at expanding access to New Jersey’s many generous benefits and protections for eligible workers, including paid family and medical leave benefits, earned sick leave, and related work rights. This current round of CARE grant funding has expanded its focus to raising employer awareness of these programs and enhancing their capacity to support employees taking leave. There is additional one-time funding for outreach and education on Unemployment Insurance to workers and service providers.

“Our workers deserve to be supported at all times – not expected to sacrifice their livelihoods during difficult or transitional points in their lives, whether it be for health, job loss, or a growing family,” said Labor Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo. “I am thrilled NJDOL can offer this funding to engage our partners across the state with the common goal of ensuring employers are aware of their obligations, and every New Jersey resident has the knowledge and opportunity to utilize the benefits to which they’re entitled.”

The grant program seeks community-based partners that can help drive equitable access to these programs and work rights. The focus will be on workers, and their employers, who are less likely to have meaningful access to paid leave, such as low-wage workers, workers of color, immigrants, women, refugees, veterans, survivors of domestic/sexual violence, and youth workers. Additionally, the program will focus on reducing disparities related to race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation and gender identity that can impact workers’ and employers’ awareness of – and access to – New Jersey’s laws and benefits.

“CARE grant funding has helped Jefferson Park Ministries reach the Haitian population via outreach and live education sessions on Temporary Disability and Family Leave Insurance, and Earned Sick Leave,” said Woody Philippe, Executive Director of CARE grantee Jefferson Park Ministries in Elizabeth. “We’ve been able to connect with more than 1,200 Haitian people in Union County.”

Miranda Christ, Director of Development and Communications for the Latin American Legal Defense and Education Fund (LALDEF), added: “LALDEF is sincerely grateful for this funding, which has enabled us to empower the low-income Latino and immigrant community with information about Earned Sick Leave and related workers’ rights. We can now disseminate linguistically and culturally responsive resources on these topics, and last quarter alone, we were able to reach more than 1,000 community members through workshops, community events, and one-on-one outreach.”

[Paid family and medical leave benefits](#), known in New Jersey as Temporary Disability and Family Leave Insurance, are available to eligible employees who stop working to care for their own or a loved one’s physical or mental-health condition; for pregnancy and childbirth recovery; to bond with a new child; or to cope with domestic or sexual violence.

The [NJ Earned Sick Leave Law](#) covers nearly all workers and requires employers of all sizes to provide up to 40 hours per year of paid sick time so employees can care for themselves and loved ones, cope with domestic or sexual violence, or attend a meeting at their child’s school. Workers can also use their earned sick leave for COVID-19 testing, quarantine and vaccination.

[Unemployment Insurance](#) provides partial wage replacement to people who lose their jobs through no fault of their own. New Jersey was awarded an [Unemployment Insurance Equity Grant](#) by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL), and chosen by USDOL and the U.S. Digital Service as a [pilot state](#) for modernization and improvement of the federal unemployment insurance system. As NJDOL works to



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“Workers dedicate a significant portion of their lives to their careers, and they deserve to be protected financially while expressing their legal right to strike over wages, benefits and workplace conditions.”
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NJ's labor participation rate approached 65% in March, a rate not seen in nearly 10 years, as more

make this service easier to access and use, grantees focusing on Unemployment Insurance education and outreach will also support the department’s customer experience goals by facilitating user testing and feedback, and hosting focus groups.

Eligible grant applicants must demonstrate their role as a trusted partner within their focus communities, as well as their capacity, experience, and history of success providing outreach, education, technical assistance and/or support. Public and private nonprofit organizations, faith-based organizations, state-recognized tribal governments with 501(c)(3) status, and government entities may apply. Applicants can submit proposals as individual organizations or as a collaborative with a lead agency.

CARE grant awards are expected to range between \$50,000 and \$150,000, but NJDOL may consider applications above or below this range where appropriate justification is provided.

Key dates:

- **March 15:** Noon is the deadline to [pre-register](#) for virtual technical assistance (TA) sessions (applicants strongly encouraged to attend)
- **March 15, 5:30 - 7:00 pm** and **March 16, 10:30 am - noon:** TA sessions
- **March 31:** Letter of Intent due by 5:00 pm
- **April 10:** Application due by 11:59 pm

View complete details and the full Notice of Grant Opportunity [here](#).

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Department of Labor and Workforce Development

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