



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



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GOVERNOR ANNOUNCES \$5.1 MILLION FEDERAL WIRED GRANT FOR NORTHERN NEW JERSEY

NEWARK- Governor Jon S. Corzine today announced the North Jersey Economic Innovation Alliance (NJEIA), a consortium of eight northern New Jersey counties (Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Morris, Passaic, Sussex, Union and Warren) and the cities of Newark and Jersey City, in partnership with the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development and regional higher education institutions.

"The United States Department of Labor has recognized the potential of this region and I am pleased to welcome them as investors in its revitalization," said Governor Corzine. "This grant will help develop an innovative approach to preparing present and future workers with the skills that will meet the demands of the North Jersey economy."

The newly-formed collaborative effort has attracted significant federal funding to the region. The U.S. Department of Labor awarded New Jersey a \$5.1 million WIRED (Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development) grant which will be used by the state to expand the North Jersey region's implementation of Governor Corzine's economic growth strategy.

"Under Governor Corzine's leadership, New Jersey is investing in the talent of our workforce," said Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development David J. Socolow. "We will work in partnership with businesses that invest in the skills of their own workers to help them successfully compete in a global economy."

Federal funding through the WIRED grant will help augment and expand state-funded partnerships and initiatives of Governor Corzine's economic growth strategy. These include two initiatives that are successfully under way: the Innovation Partnership Institutes and High-Growth Workforce Investment grants.

"The Newark Alliance knows first-hand how powerful a community can be when it combines government and private resources to address critical issues. This is precisely the assumption underlying the WIRED grants," said Al Koepp, President/CEO of the Newark Alliance. "And there is no question in my mind that a thoughtful focus on workforce development will enable our men and women to be a formidable competitive force in the regional and global marketplace."

Three state agencies: the Commission on Higher Education, the Department of Education, and the Department of Labor and Workforce Development have invested \$450,000 in creating Innovation Partnership Institutes in the areas of Financial Services, in the Biotechnology and Pharmaceutical sectors and in Information Technology. The Innovation Partnership Institutes are collaborations between businesses in these key sectors and New Jersey's colleges, universities and vocational technical schools, to develop cutting edge curricula to meet the evolving training needs of businesses.

"Northern New Jersey's WIRED leaders bring established partnerships and demonstrated know-how to diversifying this vibrant region's economy," said Deputy Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training Douglas F. Small. "The U.S. Department of Labor looks forward to working in Newark and beyond to build this area's many competitive assets."

In another state initiative, the Department of Labor and Workforce Development is focusing up to \$18 million in matching training grants to strengthen the workforce of companies in seven high growth sectors of New Jersey's economy. These competitively-awarded High-Growth Workforce Investment Grants will promote expansion in Pharmaceuticals and Biotechnology, Energy, Science and Technology, Logistics, Finance, Information Technology, and Hospitality and Tourism.

So far, the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development has awarded \$5.5 million in state funding to companies including Princeton Biomedtech in Newark and Precision Technology in Norwood, SGS U.S. Testing Co. in Fairfield and Verizon in Newark to train more than 17,000 workers.

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