



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



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Central Jersey Region Awarded \$5.1 Million in Federal WIRED Funds For Workforce Development Efforts Supporting Life-Science Industries

TRENTON, June 20, 2007 – New Jersey today received a \$5 million investment in Governor Jon S. Corzine's economic growth strategy from the U.S. Department of Labor. The investment is being provided to the Central New Jersey Bio-1 regional partnership through the federal Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) program.

The WIRED seed money will be used to transform a rich array of existing bioscience education and training and economic development initiatives into a cohesive workforce-development system. The Middlesex County Workforce Investment Board will spearhead the five-county Bio-1 partnership, named for the Route 1 corridor from Rutgers to Princeton around which most of Central New Jersey's biotech firms are clustered. The region includes Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth and Somerset counties.

"Central New Jersey is the birthplace of the global pharmaceutical industry and it is home to a diverse array of life science companies and some of the world's leading research universities," said Governor Jon S. Corzine. "This WIRED funding will be a catalyst to create a self-sustaining, high-skill ecosystem for the life sciences industry workforce."

New Jersey Labor Commissioner David J. Socolow said, "The life sciences industry sectors are a vital part of the innovation economy in New Jersey. Life science employers will continue to produce high-skilled, high-wage jobs for residents of our state as long as the skills of our workforce remain top notch. This WIRED grant will help us develop the education and training initiatives we need to keep our talented workforce up to date with the changing knowledge and skill sets required for these cutting-edge jobs."

The BIO-1 partnership consists of key education and industry members in Central New Jersey involved in building the bioscience cluster. Members include:

The region's Workforce Investment Boards, the State's Department of Labor and Workforce Development, New Jersey's Commission on Higher Education and Economic Development Authority.

New Jersey's two main employer organizations in the bioscience sector—the Healthcare Institute of New Jersey (HINJ) and the Biotech Council of New Jersey (BCNJ) – along with leading individual firms.

Education providers including county colleges, middle and high schools as well as Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey; Princeton University; Robert Wood Johnson Medical School; University of Medicine and Dentistry New Jersey; the Cancer Institute of New Jersey; the Stem Cell Institute of New Jersey; Monmouth University; Rider University and the College of New Jersey.

In order to develop a, high-skill, life sciences ecosystem, the Bio-1 Partnership will work to achieve:

- An enhanced biotechnology curriculum for K-12 students across the region, with expanded programs targeted at under-represented groups;
- Clear articulation agreements created by a new biotech educators consortium to enable smooth student progression through different levels of the education system;
- A one-stop bioscience career site that allows companies and individuals to quickly identify bioscience internship, mentoring, job, and education and training opportunities, along with the latest labor market information on the sector;
- Industry-focused bioscience education from middle school through graduate education, including expanded internships and cooperative education;
- A new set of professional master's degrees tailored to the needs of bioscience workers;
- A retraining program – Flak jackets to Lab Coats -- to enable individuals (e.g. displaced workers and returning veterans) to prepare for careers in the bioscience sector;
- Services to support bio-entrepreneurs, including development of business plans, free customized training, specialized incubation facilities, and access to finance; and
- Enhanced global partnerships and attraction of international bioscience companies to establish a US presence in CNJ, close to its world-leading pharmaceutical firms.

The U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration's federal WIRED Initiative stresses the critical role that talent development plays in creating effective regional economic development strategies. WIRED investments are provided to regional partnerships recognizing that labor markets often transcend political and geographic boundaries.

This is the third WIRED investment in New Jersey's workforce development system. The state is part of the Delaware Valley Innovation Network which received \$5.1 million to develop and integrate education and training initiatives for the life sciences in Southern New Jersey, South Eastern Pennsylvania and Delaware.

In addition, the North Jersey Economic Innovation Alliance (NJEIA), a consortium of eight northern New Jersey counties and the cities of Newark and Jersey City, received \$5.1 million in WIRED funding to strengthen training and education for transportation and other key sectors of its regional economy.

In addition to federal WIRED investments, New Jersey has invested nearly

\$12.5 million in High-Growth Workforce Development Training Grants to 87 employers in key industry sectors. These employers invest their own resources to match the State's investment to provide training to their own workers in the skills and business process to enable them to grow and thrive in the global competition.

Information on training partnerships and initiatives including High-Growth Workforce Investment Grants is available on the Department of Labor and Workforce Development website at www.nj.gov/labor or by contacting the Department's Office of Grants Operations at 609-984-9414.

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