

# New Jersey Blueprint for Talent Development

New Jersey is committed to using the implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) as a catalyst for the creation of a talent development system, focused on ensuring that all New Jerseyans have the skills, abilities and connections to find jobs and a career that builds a skilled workforce to drive economic growth.

In December 2014, New Jersey launched an inclusive effort to develop a blueprint to guide the implementation of WIOA which will serve as a foundation for the State Plan. This effort involved the launch of a WIOA website, development of six Work Groups of stakeholders and state staff, webinars to solicit additional input and a two-day “Pathways and Partnerships” conference with 300+ stakeholder participants. The resulting “Blueprint for Talent Development” was adopted by the State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) on June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015 and includes seven key policy frameworks.

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## *Blueprint Key Policy Frameworks*

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- 1. Regional Planning and Services:** New Jersey will commit to supporting regional planning, service coordination and resource sharing for all workforce education and training programs, recognizing that labor markets are not constrained by governmental or political boundaries.
- 2. High-Quality Partnerships (HQPs):** New Jersey defines “high-quality partnerships” as those workforce and education efforts which are employer-driven and have developed a clearly defined mission and vision statement, with defined roles, responsibilities and impact measures for all partners.
- 3. Career Pathways:** New Jersey has adopted a common definition of career pathways: A series of education and training experiences resulting in industry-valued credentials leading to employment, promotion and/or advanced education. Career Pathways are industry-focused, have diverse entry and exit points, and include integration of adult basic skills, digital literacy, employability skills and work-based learning.
- 4. Industry-Valued Credentials:** New Jersey will focus education and training on assisting individuals to obtain a post-secondary credential or degree that is valued by employers.
- 5. Locally-Driven One-Stop Career Centers:** New Jersey is committed to One-Stop Career Centers that meet local needs and assist individuals in obtaining new skills and employment.
- 6. Career Guidance Network:** New Jersey will expand the number of jobseekers and students who have access to high-quality career guidance and job search assistance through a new network of One-Stop Career Centers, community colleges, libraries, community-based organizations and faith-based organizations, labor unions and educational institutions.
- 7. Data-Informed Decision-Making:** New Jersey will make performance data on workforce development programs accessible to workforce decision-makers and the public. The Eligible Training Provider List and Consumer Report Card are critical tools assisting jobseekers and students making decisions about short-term occupational training programs.

# Key Actions: Implementation of WIOA



The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD) is taking the following strategic actions to support the seven key policy framework elements.

## *Blueprint Strategic Actions*

- 1. Focus the state's Talent Networks on developing employer-driven, High-Quality Partnerships:** LWD will retool the Talent Networks – managed by higher-education institutions and business organizations – to provide critical intelligence on industry workforce needs and to facilitate the creation of sustainable, regional partnerships focused on the needs of employers.
- 2. Build partner capacity to develop and enhance employer-driven, High-Quality Partnerships:** LWD will provide training to state Business Representatives, local Workforce Investment Board (WIB) staff, Talent Network directors and other key stakeholders to increase the number of high-quality partnerships.
- 3. Incorporate Career Pathways into all Training Programs:** LWD will review all workforce programs – including adult literacy, TANF and SNAP Employment and Training, youth programs, and services for individuals with disabilities – and will incorporate the Career Pathways model into all training investments, with a focus on contextual and work-based learning.
- 4. Develop an Industry-Valued Credentials List:** Based on analysis of labor market data, feedback from Talent Networks and input from employers, LWD will develop a list of industry-valued credentials. The list, which will be adopted by a state Credentials Review Board, will replace the state's Demand Occupation list and will be used to guide all training investments across federal and state workforce programs.
- 5. Implement Path to Employment – A unified approach to Career Guidance and Job Search Assistance:** LWD has developed a modernized framework for career guidance and job search assistance that will form the basis for: 1) new resources and tools for jobseekers and students; 2) new training for staff of One-Stop Career Centers, libraries, community colleges, community and faith-based organizations, labor unions and other stakeholders; and 3) enhancements to LWD's *Jobs4Jersey.com* website.
- 6. Implement a Functional Integration Model throughout One-Stop Career Centers:** LWD will work closely with local WIB's to develop and implement a new model of jobseeker service delivery across key workforce programs. The new model will clearly define partner roles and responsibilities at the state and WIB levels to guide evolution to a locally-driven One-Stop System.
- 7. Expand Training for all Workforce Staff:** LWD has established a new office of professional development to implement new training programs for state and local workforce staff.
- 8. Renewed commitment to the Eligible Training Provider List / Consumer Report Card:** LWD's [NJTopps.org](http://NJTopps.org) website is an important resource for jobseekers and students making decisions about occupational training. LWD will expand efforts to ensure that performance data is available on all occupational training programs and will upgrade the [NJTopps.org](http://NJTopps.org) website.