

[Second Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 5213

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

221st LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JANUARY 16, 2025

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman MICHAEL VENEZIA

District 34 (Essex)

Assemblyman REGINALD W. ATKINS

District 20 (Union)

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District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)

Senator ANDREW ZWICKER

District 16 (Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset)

Senator TROY SINGLETON

District 7 (Burlington)

Co-Sponsored by:

**Assemblywomen Morales, Haider, Senators Beach, McKnight, Johnson,
Burgess, Timberlake and Turner**

SYNOPSIS

Establishes “New Economy Opportunity Skills System Pilot Program” to strengthen alignment and collaboration between local workforce development boards, community colleges, and county vocational school districts.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As amended on January 12, 2026 by the General Assembly pursuant to the Governor’s recommendations..

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 12/18/2025)

1 AN ACT concerning the strategic alignment and collaboration
2 between local workforce development boards ¹**[and]** ¹
3 community colleges, ¹and county vocational school districts,¹
4 ²and² supplementing P.L.1992, c.43 (C.34:15D-1 et seq.)²**], and**
5 making an appropriation².
6

7 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
8 *of New Jersey:*
9

10 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the “New
11 Economy Opportunity Skills System Act.”
12

13 2. The Legislature finds and declares that:

14 a. Because New Jersey needs a skilled workforce to compete in
15 the global economy and to promote economic mobility for
16 residents, the State seeks to create a more efficient and seamless
17 service delivery model for local workforce and economic
18 development by better aligning State workforce development
19 services ¹**[and]** ¹ community colleges¹, and post-secondary
20 programs in county vocational school districts¹; ²and²

21 b. Strengthening strategic coordination between these entities
22 will enhance the delivery of training and services, address labor
23 market needs, and provide a skilled talent pipeline to meet the
24 demands of employers throughout New Jersey²**]; and**

25 c. Community colleges ¹and post-secondary programs in
26 county vocational school districts¹ are well-positioned to serve as
27 the preferred provider of postsecondary education, workforce
28 training, and adult literacy programs, supporting job seekers,
29 workers, and individuals receiving public assistance in career
30 preparation and employment².
31

32 3. As used in this act:

33 ²“Commissioner” means the Commissioner of Labor and
34 Workforce Development.²

35 “Community college” means a county college established
36 ¹**[under P.L.1967, c.271 (C.18A:64A-1 et seq.)]** pursuant to chapter
37 64A of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes¹.

38 ¹“County vocational school district” means any entity
39 established pursuant to article 3 of chapter 54 of Title 18A of the
40 New Jersey Statutes for the purpose of providing efficient
41 occupational, technical and academic education opportunities to
42 secondary and postsecondary students.¹

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

¹Assembly AAP committee amendments adopted February 20, 2025.

²Assembly amendments adopted in accordance with Governor’s recommendations January 12, 2026.

1 ²“Department” means the Department of Labor and Workforce
2 Development.

3 “Division” means the Division of Workforce Development in the
4 Department of Labor and Workforce Development.²

5 “Local workforce development board” means the local board
6 established in each designated ²【service delivery area】 local
7 workforce development area² pursuant to the “Workforce Innovation
8 and Opportunity Act” (29 U.S.C. s.3101 et seq.).

9 ²【“State Employment and Training Commission” or
10 “commission” means the “State Employment and Training
11 Commission” created pursuant to section 5 of P.L.1989, c.293
12 (C.34:15C-2).】²

13

14 4. a. To establish the “New Economy Opportunity Skills
15 System Pilot Program,” the ²【State Employment and Training
16 Commission】 division² shall initiate a pilot program in ²【three】 a
17 select number of² local ²workforce development² areas to strengthen
18 strategic alignment and collaboration between the operations of
19 local workforce development boards ¹【and】 ¹community
20 colleges¹, and post-secondary programs in county vocational school
21 districts¹. ²【The】 Under the division’s oversight, the² pilot program
22 shall include:

23 (1) joint development and implementation of workforce training
24 programs with an emphasis on industry-recognized credentials
25 ²along with strengthening and validating participants’ existing skills
26 and experience²;

27 (2) ²dedication to a customer-centered approach that enables
28 participants’ success through delivery of wrap-around assistance as
29 appropriate;

30 (3)² collaborative efforts for branding, outreach, and marketing
31 to increase awareness of available training and career services;

32 ²【(3)】 (4)² integrated planning and coordination of funding
33 resources to maximize the impact of State and federal support for
34 workforce development; and

35 ²【(4)】 (5)² performance evaluations based on appropriate metrics
36 aligned with State and federal workforce development programs to
37 assess participant outcomes, program effectiveness and other
38 measures as required under the “Workforce Innovation and
39 Opportunity Act,” (29 U.S.C. s.3101 et seq.) and applicable State
40 laws; ²and

41 (6) a memorandum of understanding binding all participating
42 entities through a specific scope of work, pilot timeline, delineated
43 roles and responsibilities, funding and mechanisms for disbursement
44 of funds to participating entities by the division, and reporting
45 requirements to ensure participating entities expend public monies
46 efficiently towards pilot goals.²

1 b. ²The division shall partner with the Office of Research and
2 Information in the department to ensure the local workforce
3 development areas participating in the pilot program are selected
4 based on objective, scientific criteria. To the extent possible, the
5 division shall consider the criteria identified by the Office of
6 Research and Information to ensure participating areas are
7 representative of the larger universe of local workforce
8 development areas in the State so that the pilot outcomes may be
9 evaluated based on evidence-based criteria.

10 c.² The ²**【commission】** division², in consultation with the New
11 Jersey Council of County Colleges ¹and the New Jersey Council of
12 County Vocational-Technical Schools¹, shall develop a strategy to
13 strengthen Statewide strategic alignment and collaboration between
14 local workforce development boards ¹**【and】** ¹community
15 colleges¹, and post-secondary programs in county vocational school
16 districts¹. The strategy shall include:

17 (1) a guideline for scaling the pilot program established
18 pursuant to subsection a. of this section to other areas throughout
19 the State;

20 (2) recommendations for legislative and regulatory changes
21 needed to facilitate integration; and

22 (3) an implementation timeline and resource plan for Statewide
23 integration.

24 ²**【c. The commission】** d. At the end of the pilot period, the
25 division² shall submit an annual report to the Governor and to the
26 Legislature, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-
27 19.1), on the progress and outcomes of the pilot program and the
28 implementation of the “New Economy Opportunity Skills System
29 Pilot Program.” The report shall include:

30 (1) data on participant outcomes, including but not limited to
31 employment rates, credential attainment, wage increases, and other
32 appropriate metrics aligned with State and federal workforce
33 development programs and applicable State laws;

34 (2) recommendations for improvements or adjustments to the
35 “New Economy Opportunity Skills System Pilot Program¹**【;】**”¹ ²**【and】**²
36 ²**【and】**²

37 (3) an update on the Statewide integration strategy and its
38 implementation ²; and

39 (4) a recommendation as to whether the pilot program can and
40 should be scaled and expanded Statewide².

41
42 ²**【5. Community colleges ¹and post-secondary programs in
43 county vocational school districts¹ shall be the preferred providers
44 of postsecondary education and workforce training programs for
45 State workforce development services. Community colleges ¹and
46 county vocational school districts¹ shall also be designated as the**

1 lead providers of adult literacy programs under State workforce
2 development services, with the responsibility to collaborate with the
3 Department of Human Services on efforts to assist public assistance
4 recipients in obtaining employment and preparing for career
5 opportunities.¹²

6
7 ²[6. There ¹[is appropriated from available State funds,
8 including the New Jersey Workforce Development Partnership
9 Fund and the Supplemental Workforce Fund for Basic Skills, and
10 federal funds to the State Employment and Training Commission
11 such funds as shall be necessary for the implementation of this act.]
12 are appropriated such amounts as are necessary to effectuate the
13 purposes of the bill, subject to the approval of the Director of the
14 Division of Budget and Accounting, in consultation with the
15 Executive Director of the State Employment and Training
16 Commission.¹] 5. The commissioner is authorized to expend moneys
17 from the Workforce Development Partnership Fund and from the
18 Supplemental Workforce Fund for Basic Skills to effectuate the
19 purpose of this act.² If federal funds become available ¹[for] to
20 effectuate¹ the purposes of this act, the ²[State Employment and
21 Training Commission] division² shall utilize such federal funds
22 ¹[as the primary source of funding before State funds, if necessary,
23 are expended.] to the extent such funds are certified as available by
24 the Director of the Division of Budget and Accounting. ²[If federal
25 funds are not available to effectuate the purposes of this act, State
26 funds shall first be appropriated from the New Jersey Workforce
27 Development Partnership Fund and then from the Supplemental
28 Workforce Fund for Basic Skills.¹]²

29
30 ²[7.] 6.² This act shall take effect immediately and shall
31 expire three years after the effective date, but the ¹[Chairman]
32 ²[Chairperson¹ of the State Employment and Training
33 Commission] commissioner² may take any anticipatory
34 administrative action in advance as may be necessary for the
35 implementation of this act.