

Vision 2028: A Framework for the Future of New Jersey Community Colleges

ANNOUNCEMENT

New Jersey Community Colleges Release Vision 2028 Report Offering a Framework for the Future and Launching Initiatives to Strengthen Partnerships

In a rapidly changing world and intensely competitive global economy, New Jersey's community colleges are critical institutions of higher education and economic opportunity, able to reach a significant proportion of the state's population and offer affordable, high-quality education that serves the complex needs of students, employers, and local communities. New Jersey's 18 community colleges are rooted in our local communities, responding to the local needs of students and employers, while understanding that we live in an increasingly connected global community. Community colleges impact our students, counties, and our state, and enable each to compete and thrive in the nation and the world.

Many of New Jersey's 18 community colleges were created 50 years ago, and now enroll over 325,000 students at over 60 campuses, making them the largest provider of higher education in the state. New Jersey's community colleges are uniquely positioned to help the economy grow, industries thrive, and people succeed in an era of rapid economic, social, and technological change.

During the past year, the New Jersey Council of County Colleges and the state's 18 community colleges have developed an ever-expansive vision of the future of higher education; a future that is agile, collaborative, and innovative, and that prepares individuals, at varying stages of their lives and careers, for success in an increasingly diverse society and global economy.

The vision for the future is summarized in a new report, *Vision 2028: Framework for the Future of New Jersey's Community Colleges*. The report was developed based on input from over 600 community college leaders and stakeholders through more than 25 meetings, a statewide Leadership Summit, and through online comments from members of the community college community, including students, alumni, trustees, faculty, staff, and others. The report is aligned with New Jersey's Plan for Higher Education developed by the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education.

With state and county support, New Jersey's community colleges are committed to working together in the years ahead, to develop new models of collaboration and cooperation and to lead partnerships with state and local government agencies, businesses and industry associations, high schools, four-year colleges and universities,



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libraries, social services organizations, labor unions, community and faith-based organizations, foundations, and other stakeholders in order to increase access to post-secondary education, support the success of students, ensure access to valuable and relevant learning, and to serve as community engines.

At the heart of this vision for the future is a commitment from the state's community colleges to play a critical role in increasing the number of New Jerseyans who have earned a post-secondary credential or degree so that the state can meet its ambitious goal of 65% post-secondary attainment by the year 2025. Community colleges will work together and with partners to expand opportunities for all New Jerseyans in order to close equity and opportunity gaps by race, ethnicity, and geography.

The Vision 2028 executive summary and full report are accessible to download at the bottom.

To achieve the vision for the future, the New Jersey Council of County Colleges is launching four initiatives, with the input and support of a broad array of partners, that will help the people of this state obtain the post-secondary credentials and degrees they will need to thrive in the economy and ensure that economic mobility is available to more New Jerseyans.

Initiative 1: Expanding Pathways that Lead to Credentials and Careers

Initiative 2: Strengthening the Delivery of Innovative Learning of Essential Skills and Abilities

Initiative 3: Connecting Adults to Opportunity

Initiative 4: Connecting Students to Social Service Supports

More information on these initiatives can be found at <https://www.njccc.org/initiatives>

The New Jersey Council of County Colleges is committed to building broad, comprehensive partnerships to support these four initiatives and the implementation of Vision 2028. A wide variety of partners have committed to working with the Council and the 18 community colleges. (See statements from selected partners below.)

Organizations interested in working with the Council and the colleges, or those who have a promising idea, practice, or solution to contribute to Vision 2028 are asked to complete the online form

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Vision2028Initiatives>

New Jersey's future and that of its residents depend on a strong network of community colleges working collaboratively with a wide array of partners to expand economic mobility and to build a skilled, innovative workforce that can drive economic growth.

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The following partners have voiced their support for this effort:

Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, State of New Jersey

Zakiya Smith Ellis, Ed.D., Secretary of Higher Education

“New Jersey’s county colleges play a critical role in helping the State reach its goal of 65% of working-age New Jerseyans with a high-quality credential or degree by 2025. The close alignment between Vision 2028 and the State higher education plan, ‘Where Opportunity Meets Innovation: A Student-Centered Vision for New Jersey Higher Education,’ signals a collective and collaborative direction for higher education across the state. We look forward to continuing to work with NJCCC on their initiatives to help students succeed.”

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Kevin Brown, Vice President

“New Jersey community colleges provide education and training that significantly improves the lives and careers of our state’s residents. SEIU has worked closely with the community colleges to ensure that our members have economic opportunities for themselves and their families. The initiatives outlined in Vision 2028 will further strengthen these efforts and reaffirms the commitment of community colleges to expanding economic opportunity and mobility for all New Jerseyans.”

Anti-Poverty Network of New Jersey

Renee Koubiadis, Executive Director

“The Anti-Poverty Network of New Jersey is pleased to join the New Jersey Council of County Colleges in their Vision 2028 efforts that seek to identify not only social and economic barriers, but the solutions for the significant population of poor and working poor individuals in New Jersey who could achieve economic mobility and self-sufficiency through higher education and training. By focusing on social service needs, career pathways, apprenticeships, and on and off-ramps in the education process for youth and adults, we can reduce racial and gender equality gaps in our state.”

The Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities

Rutgers, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

Deborah M. Spitalnik, Ph.D., Professor of Pediatrics and Executive Director

“The Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School is delighted to serve as a foundational partner with the New Jersey Council of County Colleges in Vision 2028: Framework for the Future of New Jersey Community Colleges. As New Jersey’s federally designated University Center for Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service, The Boggs Center is committed to working in partnership with community colleges to create more



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opportunities for postsecondary education and career preparation for individuals with disabilities, infuse disability awareness and information in community college curriculum, and contribute to developing and sustaining the workforce that supports people with disabilities. We congratulate the Council of County Colleges in strengthening our communities and state by creating opportunities for all citizens to have access to education and contribute to a more inclusive and vibrant New Jersey.”

Educational Testing Service

Michael Nettles, Ph.D., Senior Vice President and the Edmund W. Gordon Chair for Policy Evaluation and Research

“ETS is delighted to be a partner with community colleges throughout the United States, and especially the eighteen in New Jersey where ETS is headquartered. Community colleges are at the forefront of providing access to higher education beyond the Associate’s degree and the knowledge and skills that people need for succeeding in the workforce. Our mission at ETS is to help advance quality and equity in education for all people worldwide. Joining hands with our New Jersey community college colleagues and friends in pursuit of Vision 2028 gives us an opportunity to advance our mission here at home.

Hunger Free New Jersey

Adele LaTourette, Director

“Community colleges play a critical role in helping New Jersey residents to achieve lifelong financial stability. This plan presents a bold vision for achieving that goal. We look forward to working with community colleges to strengthen the food safety net for students, so hunger does not derail their education. We also welcome the opportunity to expand community colleges’ role in employment training and education programs for students who rely on federal food aid and need to hone skills to land self-sustaining jobs.”

International Rescue Committee New Jersey Office for Refugees

James Lenton, Statewide Refugee Coordinator

“The International Rescue Committee’s New Jersey Office for Refugees is delighted to serve as a foundational partner with the New Jersey Council of County Colleges in Vision 2028: Framework for the Future of New Jersey Community Colleges. As the Administrator of the federal Department of Health and Human Services’ Office for Refugee Resettlement funding in New Jersey, we support refugees and other new Americans to actualize their full potential to be successful and contributing members of the community. We commend the inclusivity of the Council’s Vision 2028, and look forward to working together to ensure community colleges not only support refugees and new Americans to enroll and graduate but are able to tap into their full potential as vital members of community college communities.”

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Michele Siekerka, Esq., President and CEO

“The New Jersey Business & Industry Association is proud to continue our partnership with NJCCC as we share the same mission of building and facilitating a skilled workforce for the state of New Jersey. It is critical that community colleges provide as many opportunities as possible to our residents to get that postsecondary education needed to thrive as part of New Jersey’s workforce. We look forward to standing together with NJCCC to deliver with our time and data for this important endeavor.”

New Jersey Campus Compact

Saul Petersen, Ph.D., Executive Director

“New Jersey Campus Compact is perfectly positioned as a statewide higher education coalition to showcase the value of civic engagement to enhancing students' commitment to their education, to their success both academically and socially, and to the health of their local communities. Through a partnership with NJCCC, we are primed and ready to build several high-level supports for our community college partners, particularly in the areas of: supporting faculty in their development of high quality service-learning courses, designed in ways that have equity at the center and ensure that every student can participate and benefit with credit and professional experience; connecting students' volunteer and civic engagement experiences with their development of transferrable workplace skills, and also with their commitment to engaging in civic and community life; and gaining sector-wide access, through the Campus Anti-Hunger Act and other funding sources, to an expanded food pantry model with full wraparound student empowerment resources offered in a welcoming and stigma-free environment for all.”

New Jersey Council for the Humanities

Carin Berkowitz, Ph.D., Executive Director

“The New Jersey Council of County Colleges’ Vision 2028—with its focus on humanities-based skills like communication, critical thinking, and collaboration and teamwork among diverse populations—charts a path that not only will help to prepare students and our state for unforeseen economic opportunities, but will also help New Jersey’s community colleges become leaders nationwide in higher education. The New Jersey Council for the Humanities looks forward to partnering with NJCCC in helping to achieve the important goals they so admirably identify.”

New Jersey Council of County Vocational-Technical Schools

Judy Savage, Executive Director

“County vocational-technical schools and community colleges have a special relationship as county-based educational entities that share a focus on preparing students for success in New Jersey's workforce. Continuing to expand opportunities for

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secondary students to earn dual credit and launch pathways to high-demand careers will benefit students, families, employers and our state's economy."

North Jersey Partners
Tammy Molinelli

"The productivity of the New Jersey economy relies on the skills of its workforce and providing an opportunity for all residents to contribute. North Jersey Partners, an innovative and strategic non-profit organization, is committed to building a comprehensive partnership with the New Jersey Council of County Colleges to achieve the goals of Vision 2028."

New Jersey Technology Council
James Barrood

"New Jersey's innovation economy depends on a skilled workforce with strong problem solving, critical thinking, technology, and entrepreneurial skills. New Jersey's community colleges play a critical role in preparing students, of all ages, with these and other essential skills. The Vision 2028 framework will po

For more information visit <https://www.njccc.org/vision-2028>.