



# Framework for the Future of New Jersey's Community Colleges

## Initiative 1:

### Expanding Pathways That Lead to Credentials and Careers

New Jersey residents, at various stages of their lives and careers, must have seamless access to higher education through our community colleges, and should have clear paths that lead to jobs and careers that provide family-sustaining wages.

In the coming year, New Jersey's community colleges will launch a broad effort to promote the earning of stackable, industry-valued credentials by designing and offering robust and inclusive *pathways*, that are continuously assessed, that incorporate high school collaborations, that allow for seamless transitions between noncredit and credit courses, and that include innovative partnerships with four-year institutions. This effort, which will be organized around the state's key industry sectors, will nurture and strengthen the essential links between employers, industry associations, labor unions, workforce development boards, high schools, and four-year institutions and will provide an adaptive framework that will strengthen the collaboration among New Jersey's community colleges.

This effort will focus on the development of **Credential and Career Pathway Collaboratives** that will be guided by an industry-specific employer leadership group and informed by cutting-edge labor market data and information. The collaboratives, to be created in industries such as advanced manufacturing, health care, culinary and hospitality, and technology, will bring together community colleges and affiliated partners, including industry associations, key employers, high schools, workforce development boards, and four-year institutions. Each collaborative will coordinate closely with state government agencies and will work closely with the New Jersey Apprenticeship Network, ensuring that work and learn models are incorporated into pathways.

Each collaborative will map existing credential and career pathways across the state and develop an inventory of existing degree and certificate programs, noncredit training, capacity (equipment/facilities/credentials), and partnerships in participating community colleges. Each collaborative will develop detailed "maps" of at least two to three pathways, starting with dual enrollment programs and career and technical education programs in high schools, on to community college, and continuing to a four-year college or university. These "maps" will be based on existing pathways in current use, on models from other states, and on information and data that document industry need. Maps will include pathways between credit and noncredit programs, include multiple on ramps and exits for learners, will incorporate registered apprenticeship models, will adopt accepted prior learning assessment standards when appropriate, and will practice continual outcomes assessment to perfect pathway models.

As part of this comprehensive and collaborative effort, community colleges will explore and assess alternative delivery methods (online, hybrid); assess opportunities for “affinity programs” – serving specific student cohorts (by company, union, or other affiliation); analyze the need for incubator/entrepreneurial/maker spaces on community college campuses; investigate opportunities for campuses on alternative sites (for example, nursing programs co-housed or co-located at health care campuses); and study the demand/need for a range of four-year applied/technical programs housed at community colleges.

Each collaborative will identify necessary resources to implement the pathways and pursue funding opportunities, develop new curricula when needed (to be shared among participating community colleges); design and execute brand messaging to recruit and enroll learners; and implement programs and partnerships. Finally, each collaborative will develop and implement a coordinated outreach campaign to employers, key stakeholders, and potential students.

### Each Pathway Collaborative will:

- ✓ Engage employers
- ✓ Identify key credential pathways
- ✓ Map existing programs and pathways
- ✓ Collaborate to build new pathways
- ✓ Communicate pathways to students and employers

#### Focus Areas:

- Dual enrollment
- Prior learning assessments (PLA)
- Industry valued credentials
- Credit/noncredit pathways

#### Focus Industries:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Health Care
- Technology
- Transportation / Logistics
- Construction / Utilities
- Culinary / Hospitality
- Biotechnology / Pharmaceuticals / Medical Technology
- Other industries to be identified

#### Key Partners:

- Industry Associations/ Employers
- Labor Unions
- High Schools
- Colleges and Universities
- State Government