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## **New Jersey Releases Set of Reports to Address Material Hardships and High Quality Credential Pathways**

TRENTON – The Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE) today released the final deliverables under the agency’s grant project with Lumina Foundation to address material hardships and quality assurance for New Jersey students. To fulfill the vision set forth in the State Plan for Higher Education, *Where Opportunity Meets Innovation: A Student-Centered Vision for New Jersey Higher Education*, OSHE developed a two-pronged approach to addressing students’ basic needs insecurities through actionable and evidence-based practices and building higher quality credential pathways through reliable student outcomes and labor market information.

“Successfully advancing New Jersey’s higher education goals merits an investment in a quality assurance framework that operates in tandem with enhanced student supports,” **said Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Brian K. Bridges.** “Improving the seamless transition between education and the workforce, as well as having accurate information on student’s post-collegiate outcomes and labor market demands, is critical for residents to gain access to the training, education, and skills required to compete in our innovation economy.”

- ❖ OSHE worked with the Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice to develop a playbook and website that provides technical assistance to institutions on providing support for students’ basic needs, such as food, housing, childcare, and transportation. The playbook also includes guidance on partnering with community-based organizations. The website includes a directory of statewide resources spanning multiple categories of basic needs, with information on relevant applications or eligibility requirements. The final deliverables were informed by student focus groups and a convening with institutional representatives to identify challenges to and promising practices for increasing student support utilization and access.

To view the playbook and access the website, please visit:

<https://www.state.nj.us/highereducation/basicneeds.shtml>

- ❖ In partnership with the Education Quality Outcomes Standards Board (EQOS) and Common Group, OSHE launched a Utilizing Labor Market Information Pilot Program among seven higher education institutions to define a set of metrics and data collection processes to holistically measure students’ post-collegiate success. The final report and toolkit presents the lessons learned from the pilot program and recommendations for OSHE to scale labor market data collection best practices.

To view the final report and toolkit, please visit:

<https://www.state.nj.us/highereducation/strengtheningcareerpathways.shtml>

- ❖ OSHE also partnered with the New Jersey Council of County Colleges (NJCCC) to develop credential pathway maps across three industries, including supply chain logistics, data analytics, and clean energy. The Credential Pathways Initiative shall focus on aligning programs and careers within the State, sharing of educational opportunities with students, and promoting education and employer collaboration in an effort to meet the training needs of residents and the staffing needs of employers. The final guidebook and maps were informed by employer interviews, labor market data analysis, and an inventory of existing credential and degree programs.

To view the final guidebook and maps, please visit:

<https://www.state.nj.us/highereducation/strengtheningcareerpathways.shtml>

OSHE will continue implementing lessons learned from the grant projects to improve affordability and labor market value strategies impacting the New Jersey's attainment goal of 65 by 25: 65% of working-age New Jerseyans having a high-quality certificate or degree by 2025.

Lumina Foundation is an independent, private foundation in Indianapolis that is committed to making opportunities for learning beyond high school available to all. The foundation envisions a system that is easy to navigate, delivers fair results, and meets the nation's need for talent through a broad range of credentials. Lumina's goal is to prepare people for informed citizenship and for success in a global economy.