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New Jersey Joins National Coalition Working to Boost Timely Degree Completion

Governor Phil Murphy and the NJ Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Brian K. Bridges announce membership in the Complete College America Alliance

TRENTON – The Murphy Administration today announced that the state of New Jersey has joined the [Complete College America](#) (CCA) Alliance, a coalition of states, systems, institutions of higher education, and other organizations committed to improving credential attainment and college completion rates across the country. As part of the Alliance, New Jersey will gain access to tools, resources, and experts at the forefront of forward-thinking ideas to equitably improve outcomes for students and boost economic opportunity across the state.

“Building a more inclusive and equitable economy means putting affordable college options and credentials within reach for every New Jerseyan, regardless of their background,” **said Governor Phil Murphy**. “New Jersey is firmly committed to ensuring that every student in our state has the financial, academic, and social support needed to successfully complete college with a high-quality credential. Joining the Complete College America Alliance reflects our belief that economic prosperity and educational attainment are two sides of the same coin.”

According to the [most recent research](#) from the National Student Clearinghouse, more than 792,527 New Jersey residents have some college credits but would benefit from earning a degree or credential. Through 2030, the [highest growth](#) occupations in the state require at least a postsecondary education.

The announcement was made jointly by Governor Murphy and the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE), the leading state agency for higher education policy development and statewide program coordination in New Jersey. Joining the CCA Alliance aligns with the

state's ambitious [postsecondary attainment goal](#) of ensuring that 65 percent of New Jerseyans earn a postsecondary credential of economic and educational value by 2025.

“Our state is committed to making college more affordable and accessible while also implementing proven reforms in instruction, student support, and career preparation to give every learner the resources and support to complete college,” **said Dr. Brian K. Bridges, Secretary of Higher Education for New Jersey.** “Joining the CCA Alliance will help us to accelerate and sustain our progress as well as ensure that we can make good on the promise that every New Jerseyan, regardless of life circumstances, has the opportunity for a life-changing credential.”

The work with the CCA Alliance is part of a statewide strategy to expand access to higher education and economic mobility, particularly for students from under-resourced communities. Through this partnership, CCA will assist the state in convening higher education institutions to craft and align policies with evidence-based practices that boost college completion.

“New Jersey’s membership in the Complete College America Alliance demonstrates the commitment of Governor Murphy, Secretary Bridges and other state leaders to further the educational and economic opportunities for learners throughout the state,” **said Dr. Yolanda Watson Spiva, president of Complete College America.** “Already among the country’s most highly educated states--with one of the largest percentages of individuals who have continued their education beyond high school, New Jersey will now create an even more high-performing, affordable, and accessible higher education system.”

“New Jersey is taking great strides to reduce financial burdens for students pursuing postsecondary education. This year’s expansion of our twin College Promise programs, the Community College Opportunity Grant and the Garden State Guarantee, is reducing the net price of tuition for tens of thousands of undergraduate students, and the State’s landmark need-based Tuition Aid Grant (TAG) is available to students enrolling in summer 2023 and 2024 courses to accelerate their time to degree completion,” **said David J. Socolow, Executive Director of NJ Higher Education Student Assistance Authority.** “Becoming part of the CCA Alliance will enable New Jersey to track progress nationally and implement best practices to continuously improve our state’s student financial aid programs.”

As a CCA Alliance member, New Jersey will join other states working collaboratively to advance learner-centered policies and practices to improve student success and college completion, particularly for students from historically-excluded backgrounds and under-resourced communities. Higher education leaders in New Jersey will receive guidance and support in developing and implementing new policies and programs aligned with the state’s priorities while assessing metrics to demonstrate progress toward college completion goals.

This partnership will add to the Administration’s ongoing efforts to help more New Jersey students obtain a college degree through the statewide Some College, No Degree initiative. A multi-faceted effort to reengage individuals who never completed their postsecondary

education, the initiative has received \$8 million in funding in its second year through the state's Fiscal Year 2024 budget. This funding will allow OSHE to continue providing individuals with the resources and support they need to navigate their return to college, including through the partnership with ReUp Education and the newly launched student resource MyDegree.NJ.gov, and to implement additional strategies geared toward retention and completion among this student population.

To schedule an interview with the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, or Complete College America, please email media@completecollege.org.

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About New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education: The Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE) is the leading state agency for higher education policy development and statewide program coordination in New Jersey. Under the leadership of Secretary Brian Bridges, Ph.D., the office works to enhance postsecondary opportunity with a focus on equity, access and affordability for students from all backgrounds. OSHE is dedicated to shaping a strong and inclusive higher education landscape and strategically collaborates with a diverse array of partners to inform best practice, student-centered strategies that empower success. Learn more at nj.gov/highereducation.

About Complete College America: Complete College America (CCA) is a nationally recognized non-profit that builds movements for scaled change and transforms institutions through data-driven policies, student-centered perspectives, and equity-driven practices. Since its founding in 2009, CCA connects a national network of forward-thinking state and higher education leaders and introduces bold initiatives to help states and institutions confront inequities, close institutional performance gaps, and increase college completion rates, especially for marginalized and historically excluded students.

