



News Release
April 26, 2019

**New Jersey Among First States to Participate in New MDRC Initiative: Scaling Up
Community College Efforts for Student Success (SUCCESS)**

Contact: Office of the Secretary of Higher Education
Stefani Thachik, Director of Policy and Outreach
Stefani.Thachik@oshe.nj.gov

Contact: New Jersey Council of County Colleges
Jacob Farbman, Executive Director, Center for Student Success
jfarbman@njccc.org
(609) 392-3434 or (609) 802-7814

TRENTON- Today, MDRC, a nonprofit education and social policy research organization announced that New Jersey will be one of the first states to participate in a new initiative to support student success at community colleges. Essex County College and Passaic County Community College were selected to participate in the project [Scaling Up Community College Efforts for Student Success \(SUCCESS\)](#).

Through this work, MDRC, with support from Arnold Ventures, will provide technical assistance to nine colleges across four states to develop financially sustainable programs with the goal of improving graduation rates for traditionally underserved students.

With SUCCESS, MDRC will draw on the strongest evidence available and build upon key principles derived from more than 15 years of postsecondary research conducted by MDRC and others. Examples of such evidence-based programs include [Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement \(VIDA\)](#) and the [Detroit Promise Path](#). Most notably, CUNY designed, developed, and implemented its [Accelerated Study in Associate's Programs \(ASAP\)](#), which was the first to show, through a random assignment evaluation, that comprehensive student support programs could dramatically increase graduation rates. High costs, though, remain a challenge to broader adoption and to sustainability of multifaceted programs. SUCCESS aims to leverage existing resources to create multifaceted programs at an affordable cost, while still producing substantial impacts at scale.

As part of the project, Essex County College and Passaic County Community College will implement evidence-based practices that include proactive advising, financial incentives, strategies for increasing academic momentum, and the use of real-time data to inform practices on campus.

“Education is a critical part of providing opportunity to our residents in New Jersey and to strengthening our innovation economy,” **said Governor Phil Murphy**. “Our state is working towards the goal of 65% of residents obtaining a high-quality credential by 2025. Essex County

College and Passaic County Community College are participating in an innovative solution to help our state reach that goal. Tuition-free community college has been a priority in my Administration and we will continue our efforts to provide greater affordability, support, and access to higher education for NJ residents.”

“New Jersey’s recently-released higher education plan focuses on student success. We recognize it is not enough to get students into college. We must also get students through college and across the stage at graduation on the path to a fulfilling career and life after college,” **said Secretary of Higher Education Zakiya Smith Ellis.** “The expertise and assistance from MDRC and the on-the-ground work by the county colleges will help ensure that our students, regardless of life circumstances, have the opportunity to obtain a high-quality credential.”

“The work of MDRC has had a significant impact on improving student success at community colleges throughout the country,” **said New Jersey Council of County Colleges President Aaron Fichtner, Ph.D.** “We see the learnings from SUCCESS as important tools that will help increase the number of people in New Jersey who hold post-secondary degrees or credentials. The New Jersey Council of County Colleges looks forward to working with MDRC and OSHE on this important initiative that will improve student success for traditionally underserved students.”

Along with New Jersey, select colleges in Indiana, California, and Ohio will also be participating in this endeavor. Results of this Initiative will be shared to help expand SUCCESS within and beyond its initial states and colleges.