

New Data Report Examines College Student Migration Trends in and out of New Jersey

Today, Interim Secretary Diana Gonzalez, along with state partners and leadership of the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University, announced [a new interactive data report](#) examining New Jersey's first-time college student migration patterns in and out of state and analyzing employment and earnings outcomes of college graduates.

According to the report, created by the Heldrich Center, a majority – 64 percent – of New Jersey first-time degree-seeking students attend in-state institutions. In 2018, about 45,500 New Jersey high school students who graduated within the past 12 months remained in the state to pursue postsecondary education. A majority — 70 percent — of New Jersey college graduates worked in the state.

“Through our [State Plan for Higher Education](#) and the [Jobs NJ: Developing Talent to Grow Business in the Garden State](#), the Murphy Administration is developing strategies to retain New Jersey's students and connect graduates to meaningful in-state employment. We know this work is more important than ever as we seek to restore our innovation economy that is severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic,” **Interim Secretary of Higher Education Diana Gonzalez said.** “New Jersey is, and always will be, a place where opportunity meets innovation. Our talented students are the critical gears we need to keep our engine moving and put the state back on the road to progress and resiliency.”

Using data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the New Jersey Education to Earnings Data System ([NJEEDS](#)), the report examines first-time college student migration trends in and out of the state. NJEEDS merges information from multiple state agencies to look at educational outcomes, employment, and earnings from students that attended K-12 schools and higher education institutions in New Jersey and those that are employed in the state. NJEEDS's dataset provides the basis for monitoring and evaluating New Jersey's talent development programs; this data will be critically important to determine how the ongoing COVID-19 emergency impacts student decision-making and wage earnings. The Heldrich Center plans to release a follow-up report on student migration in 2021.

Through Jobs NJ, the Murphy Administration seeks to re-establish New Jersey's leadership in the innovation economy by ensuring residents have the education and training necessary to access high-quality employment and employers can quickly and efficiently fill their talent needs.

In collaboration with the NJEEDS Executive Leadership Committee, Interim Secretary Gonzalez announced the report findings today during a webinar with Robert Asaro-Angelo, Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development; Tim Sullivan, Chief Executive Officer of the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, and Dr. Sean Simone, Director of Research and Evaluation at the Heldrich Center.

“The NJEEDS is a longitudinal database, established in 2012 and housed at Rutgers University, which integrates data from several state agencies to evaluate programs and inform policy,” **Dr. Simone said.** “It is our hope that NJEEDS will allow New Jersey to track education and workforce trends as we recover from the economic recession due to COVID-19.”

“COVID-19 has made it more important than ever for New Jersey to nurture our home-grown student talent right here,” **Commissioner Asaro-Angelo said.** “While the pandemic has shuttered many businesses, it has also created new workforce opportunities in the sciences and healthcare, for example. We are excited to be part of the effort to educate, train and mentor the next generation to do great things within New Jersey’s borders.”

“From the beginning of his administration, Governor Murphy has set numerous initiatives and programs in motion to cultivate a pipeline of home-grown talent, reverse the trend of out-migration of New Jersey students, and strengthen our economy,” **Sullivan said.** “As we begin to emerge from the effects of COVID-19, New Jersey’s world-class colleges and universities are equipping students with the tools they need to succeed amid the economic challenges the pandemic poses, and with the skills necessary to obtain good, high-paying jobs in our state, particularly in one of our many innovation-focused sectors.”