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## **New Jersey Helps Return Over 8,600 Stopped Out Students to Higher Education with Statewide ‘Some College, No Degree’ Initiative**

*OSHE Awards \$1.6 Million in Second Grant Cycle, Partners with Ithaka S+R*

TRENTON – Re-engaging stopped-out adult learners is essential to help more New Jersey residents complete their degrees, reduce equity gaps, and boost the state workforce. That is why the New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE) continues its commitment through the multifaceted statewide ‘Some College, No Degree’ initiative for a third year, strategically integrating partnerships and grants to build clear pathways and tailored supports for adult learners to return to higher education and persist to completion.

As of this month, through the [partnership](#) between OSHE, ReUp Education (ReUp) and 22 institutions of higher education alone, outreach and personalized coaching has empowered over 8,600 residents to re-enroll and over 350 of them to graduate. Graduates with an Associate’s degree could earn approximately \$3,700 per year in increased wages, while those with a Bachelor’s could earn approximately \$25,000. It is estimated that in the first year after earning their degree or credential, these graduates could contribute an added \$81 million to the state economy through taxes and consumer spending.

“With roughly three quarters of a million New Jersey residents identified as having some college credit but no degree, we recognize that each student’s reasons for not completing their education are diverse and deeply personal,” **said New Jersey Secretary of Higher Education Brian K. Bridges.** “By collaborating closely with our institutions and providing personalized support, we are addressing these unique motivations and challenges. This tailored approach has been particularly successful in re-enrolling adult learners from underrepresented communities, especially those from Black and Latinx backgrounds, ensuring that every learner can achieve their educational goals and access the life-changing credentials that will empower them to thrive.”

“I’m a firm believer in finishing what you started, despite roadblocks and other issues that can sometimes entangle us or make us lose our way,” **says Joel Cintron, a student at Passaic County Community College** who reenrolled with the support of a ReUp coach after stopping out twice before in 2011 and 2016. Now back on the path to complete a radiography credential, his advice is to “Prepare yourself, seek help, and don’t be afraid to be vulnerable.” Read more about Joel’s [story](#).

Today, OSHE announced the award of \$1.6 million to 18 institutions of higher education as part of a second grant cycle to enhance outcomes and evidence-based supports for this population. These Fiscal Year 2025 awards are as follows:

| Institution                      | Total Award |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| Atlantic Cape Community College  | \$75,000    |
| Bergen Community College         | \$100,000   |
| Brookdale Community College      | \$100,000   |
| County College of Morris         | \$75,000    |
| Felician University              | \$75,000    |
| Georgian Court University        | \$75,000    |
| Hudson County Community College  | \$100,000   |
| Middlesex College                | \$100,000   |
| Montclair State University       | \$125,000   |
| NJIT                             | \$125,000   |
| Passaic County Community College | \$75,000    |
| Ramapo College of New Jersey     | \$100,000   |
| Rider University                 | \$75,000    |
| Rowan College of South Jersey    | \$100,000   |
| Rowan University                 | \$125,000   |
| Salem Community College          | \$65,625    |
| Thomas Edison State University   | \$74,944    |
| William Paterson University      | \$100,000   |

The grants will provide direct benefits to students, helping them to cover the costs of things like basic needs, unexpected expenses, application fees, and credit for prior learning assessments. Additionally, institutions will be using funds to develop digital resources, in-person events, specialized advising, and more that help to foster success and belonging among returning adult learners.

OSHE is also announcing a partnership with Ithaka S+R to assess statewide initiatives re-engaging adult learners. Their review will include a focus on the impact of administrative holds and outstanding balances, which often hinder successful re-enrollment. Insights from this assessment will inform valuable resources and ongoing support for institutions through a statewide community of practice. Read more in Ithaka S+R’s [blog post](#).

“We are delighted to support and study the efforts of New Jersey’s Office of the Secretary of Higher Education to enable state residents with some college and no degree to get back on

track with their education,” says **Martin Kurzweil, Vice President for Educational Transformation at Ithaka S+R**. “In addition to the many New Jerseyans who will benefit from OSHE’s initiatives, this collaboration will yield valuable evidence to inform policy and practice for re-engaging learners in the future, and even beyond the Garden State.”

Since its inception, New Jersey’s ‘Some College, No Degree’ initiative has established a scaffolded approach to meet the needs of adult learners. In the [first](#) year of the initiative, OSHE partnered with ReUp and 17 institutions, launched a targeted marketing campaign and assessed the credit for prior learning landscape to develop a technical assistance platform. In the [second](#) year, the ReUp partnership network expanded to 22 institutions and OSHE introduced its first grant opportunity to support returning learners. As it enters year three, the initiative remains committed to enhancing support for the population of residents with some college but no degree which roughly translates to one-in-seven adults in New Jersey.

To learn more about the state initiative, visit

<https://nj.gov/highereducation/somecollegenodegree.shtml>.

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**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](https://nj.gov/highereducation)

**ReUp Education** is the industry leader in finding, enrolling, and supporting adult learners at scale. Driven by our mission to empower all adults to thrive in higher ed, we partner with institutions, state systems, state and regional governments, and member organizations to help adults navigate the journey to and through school. Named one of Fast Company’s Next Big Things in Tech, our patented technology, personalized support, and data insights have helped tens of thousands of adult learners make their dreams of higher education a reality. We’re on a mission to help millions more. Reimagine the adult learner experience at [reupeducation.com](https://reupeducation.com)

**Ithaka S+R** provides research and strategic guidance to help the academic and cultural communities serve the public good and navigate economic, demographic, and technological change. Ithaka S+R is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit with a mission to improve access to knowledge and education for people around the world. We believe education is key to the wellbeing of individuals and society, and we work to make it more effective and affordable.

