| New Jersey Workforce Innovation Notice | WD-PY26-1 |
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| **Issued By:** | Workforce Development<br>Division of Career Services |
| **Approved By:** | Dr. Yolanda Allen, Assistant Commissioner<br>Workforce Development *Yolanda H. Allen* |
| **Issued Date:** | July 23, 2026 |

**SUBJECT:** **Job for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) Cash Incentive Awards FFY26**

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** This NJWIN is effective **Immediately.**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:** Questions regarding this notice should be directed to Baden.Almonor@dol.nj.gov and copy Debra.Cusanno@dol.nj.gov.

**PURPOSE:** This guidance provides an overview of the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) Cash Incentive Awards FFY26 initiative which requires and allows for the provision of cash awards to recognize the excellence of eligible employees.

## POLICY OVERVIEW

### Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) Cash Incentive Awards FFY26

In accordance with Veterans Program Letter 01-22, attachment 5, states must design a program of performance incentives awards to receive Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) funds. Per 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(c)(7), one percent of the JVSG individual state allocation must be designated for performance incentive cash awards for eligible employees and employment services offices (One-Stop Career Centers). If one percent of the annual grant budget is less than $4,500 for a fiscal year, a modification will be submitted to determine the cash awards for that year. The intention of the incentive award program is to:

- Encourage the improvement and modernization of employment, training, and placement services for veterans, and
- Recognize eligible employees and employment service offices for excellence in providing such services or having made demonstrable improvements in providing services to veterans.

As such, the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDOL) will use its monetary award allocation to incentivize outstanding service provided to veterans in the state's 24 One-Stop Career Centers (One-Stops). This incentive award program will continue to operate as defined in the applicable State Plan and as approved by the United States Department of Labor (USDOL). The NJDOL anticipates that employees, recognizing the value of this program, will demonstrate increased motivation and a competitive attitude that supports constant improvement and a sharper focus in their service of eligible veterans.

**Award Dissemination**

In recognition of exceptional performance in providing exceptional service to veterans, NJDOL will provide cash incentives to three One-Stops that have outperformed their peers. The employees named on the award nomination application of the One-Stops receiving an incentive award will share in the overall office award. One-Stops are limited to one office-level incentive nomination per year. To be considered for an incentive award, the One-Stop and its employees must demonstrate excellence in providing quality services to veterans. Awards will be reserved for instances where most if not all, employees at the One-Stop contribute to improving services offered and provided to veterans. Awards will be granted based on a review of objective data and a subjective nomination, including quantitative and qualitative factors.

[NOTE: A Veteran Business Representative (VBR) covering multiple One-Stops may be listed on multiple office nominations and may be awarded for their contributions to each winning nomination. VBRs are the only employees that can be named on multiple office nominations.]

**Award Eligibility / Selection Process**

Applications will be scored in a manner similar to a Request for Proposal. The JVSG Incentive Award Selection Committee will establish a minimum score to determine whether an application qualifies for an award. Each scored category will have a maximum number of associated points, guidance on what qualifies in each category, and a scoring grid will be provided to assist in assigning points to each listed item. Applications will be blind-scored by a three-member panel from the Committee, and the Division of Workforce Development Assistant Commissioner will approve the final award.

| Incentive Award Selection Committee |
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| Assistant Commissioner of Workforce Development |
| Director of Workforce Development |
| Assistant Director of Workforce Development |
| State Veterans Coordinator |
| Central Office Management Chief or higher |

**One-Stop Office Scoring Criteria**

The following qualitative and quantitative criteria scores will be combined to obtain a total score:

- One-Stop best practices that result in system improvements positively impacting services provided to veterans.
- Outstanding case management services provided to eligible veterans.
- Collaborative success in providing services to veterans, such as partnerships with Veterans Readiness and Employment, WIOA, and other partner agencies.

- Efforts to assist hard-to-place populations (e.g., veterans experiencing homelessness).
- Exceptional performance beyond job requirements or outside of established performance goals.
- Support letters from veteran customers that received direct service from One-Stop employees.
- Outreach to employers and veteran job seekers.
- Innovative veteran-related activity.
- One-Stops with higher-ranking Veterans' Entered Employment Rate (VEER) scores will be favored. For example, when calculating the number of veterans and other eligible persons not employed at program entry, the score is determined by the number of veterans and eligible persons employed in the first quarter after the exit quarter divided by the number of veterans and eligible persons who exit during this quarter.

**One-Stop Office Award Disbursement**

NJDOL will recognize three One-Stop offices annually. One-Stop office incentive award recipients will receive an equal share of the total JVSG grant incentive award funds (see chart below), and awards will be 1% of the incentive award program funds minus the $4,500 allotted for three individual incentive awards.

| One-Stop Office Awards | |
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| One-Stop Office Awardees | Amount |
| Employees *listed* on the One-Stop office nominations for the three chosen One-Stops. | The award amount is calculated by dividing 1% of NJDOL's total JVSG incentive award by the *total number of nominees listed* on all three winning nominations submitted for that program year. The cash award will be divided by the number of employees listed on the winning nominations, so each member receives the same amount. |
| EXAMPLE: If 15 employees are listed on the first winning nomination, five on the second, and ten on the third, the total incentive award amount will be divided by the total number of nominees listed on all three winning nominations. In this example, the incentive award allotment would be divided by 30. Each awardee would receive an equal share, and the incentive would be paid through the payroll system for state merit employee awardees; for non-state merit employees, a separate payroll check will be issued. | |

**Individual Incentive Awards**

NJDOL will provide three individual employee incentive awards per year: Platinum ($2,000), Gold ($1,500), and Silver ($1,000) (See below chart). The total allotment for individual awards ($4,500) will be subtracted from the set-aside incentive awards funds first, with the balance of the incentive awards funds expended on the three One-Stop office awards. The individual award amounts will not change unless a modification is submitted and approved by NJDOL leadership and the Veterans' Employment and Training Services (VETS).

| Individual Incentive Awards | | |
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| Awards | Awardees | Amount |
| Platinum | First-place | $2,000 |
| Gold | Second-place | $1,500 |
| Silver | Third-place | $1,000 |

**Individual Award Eligibility**

Individual incentive awards will be based on subjective nomination and objective data. Anyone can nominate an employee for an individual award; however, nominations must be submitted to the local ES Manager for a preliminary review and submission. ES Managers are responsible for reviewing individual nominations, so they are not eligible for individual incentive awards. The following employees are eligible for individual incentive awards:

- Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists,
- Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) employees, otherwise known as VBRs, and
- Individuals providing employment, training, and placement services to veterans under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), including labor exchanges funded by the Wagner-Peyser Act.

**Individual Incentive Award Scoring Criteria**

Activities and services provided to veterans will be assessed based on service measure entries in the state's case management system. For example, the following will be evaluated by the selection panel when scoring individual incentive award nominations:

- The number of veterans served.
- The number of veterans cases managed.
- Outreach to veteran job seekers.
- Completed veteran Comprehensive Assessments.
- Completed veteran Individual Employment Plans.
- Documented Labor Market Information activities.
- Veteran customers matched to open job orders.
- Veteran business outreach conducted.

**Applying for Incentive Awards: One-Stop Office & Individual**

The Employment Services (ES) Manager must review and sign all incentive award nominations and include all letters and supporting documents with their One-Stop office and individual incentive nomination applications. Further, ES Managers must list the name of the VBRs, also called Local Veteran Business Representatives (LVERS), that played a role in providing services to veterans at their One-Stop. Although ES Managers must include their name on the One-Stop office and individual nomination documentation, they are not eligible for individual incentive awards.

| **Timeline/ Key Dates** |
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| Individual award nominations must be submitted to ES managers by August 14. |
| ES Managers must submit nominations for their One-Stop offices by COB August 20, 2026. |
| Nominations will be reviewed from August 21 through August 31. |
| Awards will be announced before the end of the September 25th pay period. |
| Incentive awards must be obligated by September 30. |
| Incentive award recipients and amounts given to awardees must be reported to VETS by November 14 of the fiscal year. |
| Incentive award funding must be liquidated by December 31 of the same year, per VPL 01-22, Attachment #5, or the most recent guidance. |