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LWD

- News Release -

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Christie Administration Unveils Innovative Partnership to Connect New Jersey Workers with Employment Services at Their Local Libraries
\$2.5M Grant from State Department of Labor Will Expand Workforce Services for Job-Seekers

LONG BRANCH, N.J. April 22, 2015 – Expanding opportunities for New Jersey job-seekers to connect with employment and training resources, the Christie Administration announced an innovative partnership with local public libraries across the state during the New Jersey Library Association annual conference in Long Branch today. The \$2.5 million initiative will strengthen local communities and the Garden State economy by helping more people to find jobs and manage their careers closer to home.

The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD) will provide grants up to \$50,000 to 26 municipal and county libraries to serve as access points for job-seekers to obtain workforce services that will help them on the path to employment.

“This partnership with New Jersey’s libraries is a great match and will build on the services my department already provides,” said Commissioner Harold J. Wirths of the state Department of Labor and Workforce Development. “We continually explore ways to improve our services and this initiative will meet the needs of local communities by using resources that are already in place and have a direct link to the people they serve.”

The State Library is working closely with LWD to support this effort and will receive a \$200,000 grant to help implement the initiative with the local libraries.

“The New Jersey State Library is pleased to partner in this effort with the state Department of Labor and Workforce Development,” said Mary Chute, State Librarian. “While we recognize

and support the ongoing efforts of New Jersey's libraries to provide services to job-seekers including the unemployed and under-employed, we enthusiastically applaud the Labor Department's recognition of this role and investment in the capacity of local libraries. In turn, libraries will extend into communities the reach of the Labor Department, our experts in employment and reemployment."

LWD will train and support library staff so they are familiar with the programs and services the department provides including its premier job search engine, Jobs4Jersey.com. Library staff will also inform job-seekers on how to connect with businesses through the Talent Networks and networking opportunities through Jersey Job Clubs.

"The New Jersey Library Association looks forward to this new initiative by the Department of Labor and Workforce Development," said Patricia Tumulty, Executive Director of the New Jersey Library Association. "New Jersey libraries have been providing vital assistance to residents seeking help finding new employment opportunities for several years. We are pleased the Labor Department recognizes this important role. This new partnership will provide selected libraries the ability to improve employment opportunities for many of our residents."

In addition to the 26 competitive grants awarded to local libraries, the state Department of Labor will award grants totaling \$100,000 to 10 libraries to provide literacy and basic skills training to job-seekers through a cooperative partnership with its county community college.

Dr. Lawrence A. Nespoli, President of New Jersey Council of County Colleges, said, "New Jersey's community colleges have a longstanding partnership with the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development and we look forward to working with local libraries to build on the success we have in providing job-seekers with basic skills and literacy training to help them achieve their personal and professional goals."

The library partnership offers another avenue to assist job-seekers, the underemployed and individuals looking for career changes with job search activities, computer skills, employability skills as well as English as a Second Language and literacy classes through the community college system. The initiative is not designed to supplant the One-Stop Career Center system.

"We will see a tremendous return on our investment with the state's local libraries," said Commissioner Wirths. "The partnership with local libraries will nearly double the number of locations we have to serve job-seekers which gives us the ability to positively impact a larger segment of the New Jersey workforce."

The initiative is expected to be up and running this fall.