

ASSEMBLY, No. 5623

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MAY 12, 2021

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman RONALD S. DANCER

District 12 (Burlington, Middlesex, Monmouth and Ocean)

Assemblyman HERB CONAWAY, JR.

District 7 (Burlington)

Assemblywoman VALERIE VAINIERI HUTTLE

District 37 (Bergen)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblymen Benson and Verrelli

SYNOPSIS

Creates commission to coordinate job training and retraining to develop workforce post-coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/1/2021)

1 AN ACT concerning job training and retraining to develop
2 workforce following end of coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic
3 and supplementing Title 34 of the Revised Statutes.

4
5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
6 *of New Jersey:*

7
8 1. a. There is created a commission to be known as the
9 "Coronavirus Recovery and Reskilling of Workers Commission,"
10 which shall be a permanent, independent body in but not of the
11 Department of Labor and Workforce Development. The
12 commission shall consist of seven members as follows: the
13 Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development, ex officio,
14 who shall serve as chair of the commission, and six members
15 appointed by the Governor as follows: one person who shall be
16 nominated by an organization that represents the interests of the
17 business community in this State, one person who shall be
18 nominated by the New Jersey Business and Industry Association
19 (NJBIA), two persons who shall be nominated by the New Jersey
20 State AFL-CIO, and two persons representing the interests of
21 community colleges.

22 b. Members shall be appointed not later than December 31,
23 2021. Members shall be appointed for four-year terms and may be
24 re-appointed for any number of terms. Any member of the
25 commission may be removed from office by the Governor, for
26 cause, upon notice and opportunity to be heard. Vacancies shall be
27 filled in the same manner as the original appointment for the
28 balance of the unexpired term. A member shall continue to serve
29 upon the expiration of the member's term until a successor is
30 appointed and qualified, unless the member is removed by the
31 Governor.

32 c. Action may be taken by the commission by an affirmative
33 vote of a majority of its members and a majority of the commission
34 shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of any business, for the
35 performance of any duty, or for the exercise of any power of the
36 commission.

37 d. Members of the commission shall serve without
38 compensation, but may be reimbursed for the actual and necessary
39 expenses incurred in the performance of their duties as members of
40 the commission within the limits of funds appropriated or otherwise
41 made available for that purpose.

42 e. The purpose of the commission shall be to: (1) develop,
43 oversee, administer and assist in the implementation of a coherent,
44 integrated system of workforce recovery investment programs and
45 services which, in concert with the efforts of the private sector, will
46 help displaced and incumbent workers learn new skills to find new
47 careers while building an education and workforce development
48 ecosystem driven by the needs of New Jersey employers; and (2)

1 create a partnership between New Jersey’s community colleges and
2 the business community, with close connections to vocational-
3 technical schools, four-year colleges and universities, and
4 workforce development boards to ensure programs are responsive to
5 the needs of New Jersey employer.

6 e. As used in this act, P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before
7 the Legislature as this bill):

8 “Commission” means Coronavirus Recovery and Reskilling of
9 Workers Commission.

10 “Department” means the Department of Labor and Workforce
11 Development.

12

13 2. The commission shall establish and oversee, and as
14 appropriate, coordinate:

15 a. The Pathway and Skills Collaborative Program, in
16 accordance with section 3 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before
17 the Legislature as this bill), of the following industries: Health
18 Services, Global Manufacturing and Supply Chain Management,
19 Innovation and Technology, Energy, Construction and Financial
20 Services;

21 b. Industry-specific Centers of Excellence, in accordance with
22 section 4 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature
23 as this bill) at specific community colleges, in close partnership
24 with vocational-technical high schools, workforce development
25 boards, four-year colleges and universities, labor unions and other
26 training provider partners;

27 c. Reskilling and Recovery Programs for unemployed
28 individuals through community colleges, in accordance with section
29 5 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this
30 bill);

31 d. An increased investment in the New Jersey Basic Skills
32 Training Program, established pursuant to P.L.2009, c.199 (C.
33 34:15D-21.1 et seq.) from the Supplemental Fund for Workforce
34 Basic Skills established pursuant to section 1 of P.L.2001, c.152
35 (C.34:15D-21); and

36 e. The integration of workforce development programs with
37 community colleges in order to expand access to industry-valued
38 credentials for adults in accordance with section 6 of P.L. ,
39 c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

40

41 3. a. There is established in the Department of Labor and
42 Workforce Development the Pathway and Skills Collaborative
43 Program, focused on the following industries: Health Services,
44 Global Manufacturing and Supply Chain Management, Innovation
45 and Technology, Energy, Construction and Financial Services,
46 which shall be managed by the New Jersey Community College
47 Consortium of Workforce and Economic Development, and shall:

1 (1) Build a connected training ecosystem of community
2 colleges, vocational-technical schools, workforce development
3 boards, four-year colleges and universities, labor unions and other
4 training providers in each industry;

5 (2) Convene Industry Leadership Teams of businesses and labor
6 unions to guide each collaborative to identify industry-valued
7 credentials and competencies associated with each, in consultation
8 with the department;

9 (3) Document and promote education and career pathways with
10 embedded and stackable credentials that are responsive to the needs
11 of employers in the State;

12 (4) Analyze and disseminate labor market data and longitudinal
13 education and employment data to drive education decisions of
14 educational institutions;

15 (5) Promote the use of the Community College Opportunity
16 Grant Program, created by P.L.2021, c.26 (C.18A:71B-111 et seq.)
17 to upgrade the skills of incumbent workers;

18 (6) Promote the expansion of apprenticeship and other work-
19 based learning opportunities for students;

20 (7) Develop and promote public-private partnerships to leverage
21 federal and philanthropic funding opportunities;

22 (8) Develop an annual education and workforce development
23 strategy for each industry tied to the unique needs of the state's
24 regions; and

25 (9) Host regular meetings of ecosystem education and employer
26 partners to facilitate collaboration.

27 b. To the fullest extent possible, the Pathway and Skills
28 Collaborative Program shall first be funded by any available federal
29 funds, including, but not limited to, a portion of those federal block
30 grant funds allocated to the State from the federal "Coronavirus
31 Relief Fund," established pursuant to the federal "Coronavirus Aid,
32 Relief, and Economic Security Act," Pub.L.116-136, funds
33 available to the State from the federal "American Rescue Plan Act
34 of 2021," Pub.L.117-2, and any other federal funds that have been
35 made available to the State with regard to the coronavirus disease
36 2019 pandemic, to effectuate the purposes of this section to ensure
37 that all reskilling, reemployment, and recovery efforts are better
38 aligned with the needs of employers in the State. To the extent that
39 federal funds do not adequately fund the program, the department
40 shall request annually as part of its budget proposal funds not to
41 exceed \$3.5 million as may be necessary to effectuate the purposes
42 of this section.

43
44 4. a. There shall be established six Centers of Excellence at
45 specific community colleges, in close partnership with vocational-
46 technical high schools, workforce development boards, four-year
47 colleges and universities, labor unions and other training provider
48 partners. Each of the six centers shall coordinate with one of the six

1 Pathways and Skills Collaborative industry programs, established in
2 section 3 of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature
3 as this bill).

4 b. The centers shall work to:

5 (1) Expand stackable credential pathways with multiple on-
6 ramps and off-ramps for individuals at all stages of their lives and
7 careers;

8 (2) Develop new curriculum and programs guided by industry
9 partners, with a focus on embedding credentials into existing degree
10 programs and building pathways between high schools, community
11 colleges, and four-year colleges and universities. All curriculum
12 and materials shall be shared Statewide;

13 (3) Develop degree-apprenticeship programs;

14 (4) Expand the use of prior learning assessments and expand
15 pathways from workforce training to degree programs at
16 community colleges; and

17 (5) Implement pilot education and training programs to meet
18 industry needs, including training for displaced and incumbent
19 workers.

20 c. To the fullest extent possible, the Centers of Excellence shall
21 first be funded by any available federal funds, including, but not
22 limited to, a portion of those federal block grant funds allocated to
23 the State from the federal "Coronavirus Relief Fund," established
24 pursuant to the federal "Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic
25 Security Act," Pub.L.116-136, funds available to the State from the
26 federal "American Rescue Plan Act of 2021," Pub.L.117-2, and any
27 other federal funds that have been made available to the State with
28 regard to the coronavirus disease pandemic, to effectuate the
29 purposes of this section.

30 To the extent that federal funds do not adequately fund the
31 program, the department shall request annually as part of its budget
32 proposal funds not to exceed \$5 million as may be necessary to
33 effectuate the purposes of this section.

34

35 5. a. The New Jersey Community College Consortium of
36 Workforce and Economic Development, in consultation with the
37 commission, shall work with community colleges, in partnership
38 with vocational-technical high schools, to establish Reskilling and
39 Recovery Programs for unemployed individuals to provide short-
40 term training to dislocated workers.

41 b. The Reskilling and Recovery Programs shall:

42 (1) Lead to the attainment of industry-valued credentials,
43 identified through the Pathway and Skills Collaborative process in
44 partnership with the department.

45 (2) Address the needs of local employers.

46 (3) Connect to stackable credential pathways that lead to degree
47 programs at community colleges and four-year college and

1 university partners in order to promote longer term mobility for
2 workers.

3 c. Employers participating in the programs would be eligible
4 for a \$2,000 stipend per employee to defray the cost of on-the-job
5 training and onboarding of new employees. Up to 2,000 workers
6 shall be eligible for the program.

7 d. To the fullest extent possible, the Reskilling and Recovery
8 Programs shall first be funded by any available federal funds,
9 including, but not limited to, a portion of those federal block grant
10 funds allocated to the State from the federal “Coronavirus Relief
11 Fund,” established pursuant to the federal “Coronavirus Aid, Relief,
12 and Economic Security Act,” Pub.L.116-136, funds available to the
13 State from the federal “American Rescue Plan Act of 2021,”
14 Pub.L.117-2, and any other federal funds that have been made
15 available to the State, for use by the New Jersey Community
16 College Consortium of Workforce and Economic Development, to
17 effectuate the purposes of this section.

18 To the extent that federal funds do not adequately fund the
19 program, the department shall request annually as part of its budget
20 proposal funds, not to exceed \$4 million for the cost of worker
21 stipends, and not to exceed \$8 million as may be necessary and
22 available for the Reskilling and Recovery Programs, for use by the
23 New Jersey Community College Consortium of Workforce and
24 Economic Development, to effectuate the purposes of this section.
25

26 6. The commission, in consultation with the department, shall
27 integrate Workforce Development Programs with community
28 colleges in order to expand access to industry-valued credentials for
29 adults by:

30 a. Expanding the presence of One-Stop Career Centers on
31 community college campuses by replicating existing centers
32 operating at county community colleges in the State at county
33 community colleges in the State that do not yet have career centers.

34 b. Establishing community colleges as a primary provider of
35 industry-valued credential training throughout the State’s workforce
36 development system.

37 c. Encouraging the State Employment and Training
38 Commission and local Workforce Development Boards to develop
39 strategies and plans for building strong alignment and collaboration
40 between Community Colleges and all State and federal workforce
41 development programs.

42 d. Expanding collaborative efforts between existing State and
43 federal workforce development programs and community colleges
44 to expand attainment of industry-valued credentials, including:

45 (1) Services of individuals with disabilities through the Division
46 of Vocational Rehabilitation Services;

1 (2) Services to adults with low levels of literacy through Title II
2 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Pub. L. 113-128
3 (29 U.S.C. 3271 et seq.); and

4 (3) Services to individuals receiving public assistance through
5 the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
6 Employment and Training Program administered by the Food and
7 Nutrition Service in the United States Department of Agriculture
8 and established pursuant to the federal "Food and Nutrition Act of
9 2008," Pub.L.110-246 (7 U.S.C. s.2011 et seq.).

10 e. Expanding advancement opportunities for workers by
11 linking customized training to pathways to credentials and degrees
12 with the Community College Opportunity Grant program.

13
14 7. To the fullest extent possible, funding to expand basic skills
15 training to qualified displaced, disadvantaged or employed workers
16 shall be appropriated to an account reserved for a grant to the New
17 Jersey Community College Consortium for Workforce and
18 Economic Development, a part of the New Jersey Council of
19 County Colleges first from any available federal funds, including,
20 but not limited to, a portion of those federal block grant funds
21 allocated to the State from the federal "Coronavirus Relief Fund,"
22 established pursuant to the federal "Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and
23 Economic Security Act," Pub.L.116-136, funds available to the
24 State from the federal "American Rescue Plan Act of 2021,"
25 Pub.L.117-2, and any other federal funds that have been made
26 available to the State, for use by the New Jersey Community
27 College Consortium of Workforce and Economic Development, to
28 effectuate the purposes of this section.

29 To the extent that federal funds do not adequately fund this
30 expansion of basic skills training, the department shall request as
31 part of its annual budget proposal funds not \$3 million to effectuate
32 the purposes of this section. This request is in addition to any funds
33 provided through the allocation dedicated to the same grant in the
34 "Supplemental Workforce Fund for Basic Skills" for existing basic
35 skills training programs.

36
37 8. This act shall take effect immediately.

38
39
40 STATEMENT

41
42 This bill creates the "Coronavirus Recovery and Reskilling of
43 Workers Commission," an independent body in but not of the
44 Department of Labor and Workforce Development. The purpose of
45 the commission will be to:

46 (1) develop, oversee, administer and assist in the
47 implementation of a coherent, integrated system of workforce
48 recovery investment programs and services which, in concert with

1 the efforts of the private sector, will help displaced and incumbent
2 workers learn new skills to find new careers while building an
3 education and workforce development ecosystem driven by the
4 needs of New Jersey employers; and

5 (2) create a partnership between New Jersey's community
6 colleges and the business community, with close connections to
7 vocational-technical schools, four-year colleges and universities,
8 and workforce development boards to ensure programs are
9 responsive to the needs of New Jersey employer.

10 Specifically, the commission will, as appropriate, establish and
11 oversee, and coordinate:

12 (1) The Pathway and Skills Collaborative Program, of the
13 following six industries: Health Services, Global Manufacturing and
14 Supply Chain Management, Innovation and Technology, Energy,
15 Construction and Financial Services;

16 (2) Industry-specific Centers of Excellence at specific
17 community colleges, in close partnership with vocational-technical
18 high schools, workforce development boards, four-year colleges
19 and universities, labor unions and other training provider partners;

20 (3) Reskilling and Recovery Programs for unemployed
21 individuals through community colleges;

22 (4) An increased investment in the New Jersey Basic Skills
23 Training Program, established pursuant to P.L.2009, c.199 (C.
24 34:15D-21.1 et seq.); and

25 (5) The integration of workforce development programs with
26 community colleges in order to expand access to industry-valued
27 credentials for adults.

28 The bill provides that, to the fullest extent possible, funding for
29 the programs in the bill will first come from any available federal
30 funds, including, but not limited to, a portion of those federal block
31 grant funds allocated to the State from the federal "Coronavirus
32 Relief Fund," established pursuant to the federal "Coronavirus Aid,
33 Relief, and Economic Security Act," Pub.L.116-136, funds
34 available to the State from the federal "American Rescue Plan Act
35 of 2021," Pub.L.117-2, and any other federal funds that have been
36 made available to the State.

37 The bill further provides that to the extent federal funding is
38 inadequate to fund the programs, the in the bill Department of
39 Labor and Workforce Development will request funding through its
40 annual budget proposal.