

## CHAPTER 228

**AN ACT** concerning the establishment of certain county college certificate programs and supplementing chapter 15D of Title 34 of the Revised Statutes.

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

C.34:15D-21.3 Findings, declarations relative to certain county college certificate programs.

1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

a. A skilled workforce is one of the most critical issues facing New Jersey employers and the availability of appropriately trained workers directly impacts the State's ability to compete nationally and internationally;

b. While the State of New Jersey, through the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, has initiated many programs to link business and industry with employees, there remain areas of the State that are the home to particular industries that lack the skilled workforce necessary to fill available employment positions;

c. It has become increasingly apparent that an increased focus is needed on training individuals for the "right" jobs as opposed to training individuals for "a" job;

d. Increased attention needs to be paid and efforts made to connect individual employers and groups of employers to appropriate educational institutions so that curriculum may be developed that is exactly in line with the needs of these employers and directed to individuals who may have the greatest chance of program and employment success; and

e. County colleges already have a long history of partnering with the Department of Labor and Workforce Development and local Workforce Investment Boards to design training programs for dislocated workers, but these efforts can be further refined and more explicitly targeted to develop certificate programs in which regional employers have a vested interest through their role in program development and program candidate review that will allow them to grow their business by immediately hiring appropriately trained individuals.

C.34:15D-21.4 Development of certificate programs to connect regional employers to county colleges.

2. a. The New Jersey Community College Consortium for Workforce and Economic Development shall consult with each county college in the State to foster the development of certificate programs that connect regional employers to the county colleges in the collaborative development of programs that meet the unique needs of the employer and are directly connected to the knowledge and skills required by the employer. The certificate programs established by a county college shall be directly targeted to business and industry located in the region that have an identified and immediate need to hire employees with education and skills that are not being addressed through available training and educational opportunities.

b. (1) Under a certificate program, the employer shall develop the curriculum to ensure that it is directly aligned to the needs of the employer. The employer shall consult with appropriate faculty at the county college for assistance in the curriculum development and to receive faculty input and feedback to ensure the alignment of the curriculum.

(2) The employer may prescreen candidates prior to enrollment in the certificate program to ensure that the candidate demonstrates the aptitudes, abilities, and qualities sought by the employer.

(3) The county college shall provide the faculty for the certificate program and shall make college facilities available for the program. Upon agreement with an employer, certificate program classes may be provided on-site at the employer's business location.

(4) An employer may hire an individual enrolled in a certificate program prior to completion of the program with continued employment dependent upon successful completion. The county college shall issue a certificate to each individual who successfully completes the program to indicate that the individual has acquired the requisite knowledge and skills for employment in the identified field or occupation.

(5) An employer who participates in the development of the certificate program shall make a commitment to interview all graduates of the program for employment positions that are available at the time of the participant's completion of the program.

3. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved August 9, 2019.