

## **TPSID 2 - New Jersey Pathways to Independence**

### **Abstract**

The Bergen Community College TPSID 2 project is a model comprehensive transition and postsecondary education program conducted in collaboration with the College of New Jersey. It will help students maximize potential to achieve personal and financial independence by integrating academic and social skills with vocational training options leading to gainful employment. A person-centered approach will help students to identify their personal academic and career goals, develop benchmarks for monitoring their own progress, and earn meaningful (i.e., national or industry recognized) credentials that can aid in attainment of gainful employment. The initiative integrates hands-on involvement from a range of supportive service agencies, employers, peer mentors, college faculty and advisors, and students themselves to help participants achieve individual development goals, continue their education, and obtain paid internships, apprenticeships, and jobs.

This proposed program builds upon the highly successful TPSID Turning Points project implemented by Bergen and its partners over the past five years. **TPSID 2-Pathways to Independence** extends that previous effort and builds a comprehensive transition model by attaining four key goals: 1) to provide students with ID a strong foundation of essential (including literacy, high school equivalence, and work readiness) skills and competencies needed to secure and retain jobs in high demand occupational areas within New Jersey; 2) to assist ID students in earning meaningful credentials to help advancement along a career Pathway towards higher-skill, higher-wage opportunities in areas of high demand industry sectors; 3) to engage employer partners, supportive services and families in collaborating with consortium members to identify occupational knowledge/skill/ability needs and address critical workforce shortages by actively supporting the initiative and hiring ID student participants; and 4) to develop a formal network of post-secondary and college programs within the tri-state region for the purposes of sharing information, conducting research in new practices, problem-solving issues of implementation, and synergistically expanding resources.

The project's blended training program integrates intrusive student support services, incorporates "essential skills (academic, social, and workforce readiness) and aligns industry specific skills programming needed for employment in high growth industry sectors identified by the State of New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Key student outcomes are stackable credentials and nationally recognized certificates, including Certified Nurse Assistant, Child Development Assistant, Certified Production Assistant, Culinary Certification, as well as other industry demand-driven emerging fields, as appropriate to individual student career interests.

The partnership includes Bergen Community College as lead agency, The College of New Jersey, NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development Division of Vocational Rehabilitation; Bergen County Special Services, Bergen County Division of Special Services, secondary school districts, and employers.

Fifteen students will be enrolled and successfully complete the program for each of five years, for a total of 75. Program capacity will strengthen over the grant funded period to allow for self-sustained continued growth following federal support.