

## **OCC Receives Recovery New Jersey Talent Network Grant to Assist Businesses and Jobseekers Displaced by Superstorm Sandy**

TOMS RIVER, NJ – Ocean County College (OCC) has been awarded a \$250,000 Recovery New Jersey (RNJ) Talent Network Grant by the State of New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD). The grant was awarded to run from April 1, 2013 to June 2014.

As the lead agency and grant administrator, Ocean County College is strategically located within the state to act as a central hub to provide access to the businesses and jobseekers displaced from those areas most impacted by the storm. As a community college, OCC's mission is to reach out to members of the community to help train jobseekers and ultimately assist those workers to get hired.

"This much needed grant will allow OCC to reach out to our community, not only right here in Ocean County, but throughout every region of the state affected by the storm," said Patricia Fenn, OCC Executive Director of e-Learning and Continuing & Professional Education. Ms. Fenn's department will be overseeing the grant.

Superstorm Sandy has had a significant impact on the economy of many communities throughout New Jersey, especially Ocean County. From small "Mom and Pop" establishments to the "big box" stores, some businesses were forced to close temporarily, others permanently, and thus many New Jersey residents lost their jobs. Some of these jobs may never be reinstated, and these jobseekers will need to be offered retraining opportunities in new areas of work resulting from the recovery effort.

The LWD explains that to ultimately recover from Superstorm Sandy, the economic and workforce priorities must be established and centralized through the implementation of a statewide communication network that includes dissemination methods such as webinars, websites, social media blogs, seminars, and other outreach events.

The RNJ Talent Network will serve as the primary workforce contact for the revitalization efforts needed to recover from Superstorm Sandy, helping to connect employers and jobseekers in communities most affected by the storm. RNJ will make successful connections with businesses, jobseekers, and workforce partners including the LWD, Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs), One-Stop Career Centers (OSCCs), educational institutions, social media, and the existing Talent Networks to identify needs and opportunities for businesses, jobseekers, and dislocated workers.

Among its varied responsibilities, OCC's RNJ Talent Network will collaborate with partners across the state including the New Jersey Community College Consortium for Workforce and Economic Development, WIBs, LWDs, OSCCs, and county vocational school adult programs. The OCC RNJ Talent Network will provide the framework and foundation for disseminating information to employers and jobseekers across the state about accessing LWD programs and services, such as On-the-Job-Training, and connecting candidates to meet the recovery workforce need.

Through its connections to jobseekers, OCC will help provide or connect dislocated workers to career and vocational counseling, job-related training, and self-help centers. In addition, OCC and its partners will host networking events for jobseekers and businesses to provide in-person communication and networking opportunities.

OCC will also work to increase the number of businesses registered on [www.Jobs4Jersey.com](http://www.Jobs4Jersey.com) and create LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook accounts. OCC will keep the web repository and social media pages active after the end of the grant as the recovery process continues.

If you are a business owner or jobseeker affected by Hurricane Sandy and would like more information on the Recovery New Jersey Talent Network, contact Michael Forcella, Project Director for OCC's RNJ Talent Network Grant, at 732-255-0400, ext. 2157, or [mforcella@ocean.edu](mailto:mforcella@ocean.edu).

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