

# New program aims to help N.J.'s long-term jobless find work

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By [Erin O'Neill](#) | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com



A new program led by Rutgers University's Heldrich Center for Workforce Development that launched this week aims to help older, long-term unemployed residents find work. Here, a former Atlantic City casino employee works on her resume. **(William Perlman | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com)**

A new program launched on Tuesday aims to help older New Jersey residents who have been out of work for more than six months find jobs in a state with one of the highest long-term unemployment rates in the nation.

The New Start Career Network offers long-term unemployed residents who are 45 years of age or older with free online job search and interviewing tools, personal job coaching by trained volunteers and access to education and training opportunities. Rutgers University's John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development is managing the program, which is supported by a number of groups, including one founded by likely 2017 Democratic gubernatorial candidate Philip Murphy.

Carl Van Horn, a Rutgers University professor and director of the Heldrich Center, said the network is an attempt to address a lack of resources available to residents who have been out of work for an extended period of time.

"Once you exhaust your unemployment insurance, there's not really much available to you," he said. "We're stepping into the void and trying to make a difference."

Roughly 41 percent of the 302,000 unemployed residents in New Jersey in 2014 had been out of work for at least 27 weeks, according to federal data. That was among the highest long-term unemployment rates in the nation last year.

The network has raised more than \$1 million in cash so far, Van Horn said, with major funding provided by the Philip and Tammy Murphy Family Foundation.

Philip Murphy, a former U.S. ambassador to Germany and former Goldman Sachs executive, launched the nonprofit group New Start New Jersey last year to help improve the state's economy and advocate for middle-class issues.

Murphy is serving as the chairman of the New Start Career Network's advisory board and New Start New Jersey is a partner in the network.

Murphy said the goal of this project is simple.

"To help get out friends, family, and neighbors back to work," he said at the launch Tuesday at the Heldrich Center in New Brunswick. "We have people in the state with the drive to work. We need them to help us strengthen New Jersey."

"This is how we make progress as a state," Murphy added. "And I am honored to be part of this effort."

New Jersey Resources, the Fund for New Jersey, the AARP Foundation and the DirectEmployers Association are also supporting the network, as well as other nonprofit groups, employer associations, government agencies and educational institutions.

**NJ Advance Media staff writer Brent Johnson contributed to this report.**

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