How Does Education Pay Off for New Jersey?

In New Jersey:

Working-age residents with college degrees are 33 percent more likely to participate in the workforce than those with less than a high school diploma.

And their earnings over a lifetime are twice as much – a substantial personal benefit as well as a benefit to the state with respect to more taxable resources, fewer health problems, lower rates of crime, and greater levels of civic engagement.

How Does New Jersey Measure Up?

New Jersey’s Young Adults Compared to the U.S. and Best Performing Countries (Age 25 to 34)

In New Jersey:

A higher percentage of young adults have completed high school than the U.S. average, but lower than the top states and the most educated countries.

A higher percentage of young adults have earned college degrees than the U.S. average, approaching the completion rates of the most educated countries.

The Challenge: New Jersey’s Working-Age Adults (18 to 64) with No College Degree

... 3,305,494 have not completed college (associate’s degrees or higher) — 60.0 percent of all working-age adults in New Jersey. Of these:

- 622,037 have not completed high school (or equivalent)
- 1,611,714 have completed just a high school diploma but have not entered college
- 1,071,743 have completed some college but no degree
- 295,856 speak little or no English
- 648,531 are living in families whose combined incomes are less than a living wage (twice the level of poverty)
How Well Does New Jersey Serve Adult Learners?

Addressing Basic Skills in New Jersey:
State-administered adult education programs serve adults without a high school diploma at a lower rate than the U.S. average, and at a much lower rate than the top performing states.

ESL programs serve the adult population lacking English proficiency at a lower rate than the U.S. average, and at a much lower rate than the top performing states.

GEDs Awarded per 1,000 Adults:

18 to 24 Years Old with No High School Diploma

- New Jersey: 32.9
- U.S.: 43.1
- Top 5 States: 80.8

25 to 44 Years Old with No High School Diploma

- New Jersey: 9.1
- U.S.: 8.7
- Top 5 States: 19.4

Helping High School Dropouts in New Jersey:
Adult education providers award GEDs to young adults without a high school diploma at a lower rate than the U.S. average, and at a much lower rate than the top performing states.

Compared with the younger age group, GEDs are awarded to older adults without a high school diploma at a much lower rate. State performance is comparable to the U.S. average for this age group, but not as high as that of the top states.

College Participation per 1,000 Adults:

Age 25-39 with Only a High School Diploma

- New Jersey: 141.7
- U.S.: 190.8
- Top 5 States: 317.5

Age 40-64 with Only a High School Diploma

- New Jersey: 34.7
- U.S.: 47.1
- Top 5 States: 103.1

Pursuing Higher Level Skills in New Jersey:
Postsecondary institutions serve young adults (25 to 39 year olds who only have a high school diploma) at a lower rate than the U.S. average.

Institutions serve older adults (40 to 64 year olds with only a high school diploma) at a lower rate than the U.S. average.

For the full report and access to the detailed state-by-state data, visit www.cael.org/adultlearninginfocus.htm

Produced by:
The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL); and The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS)

With Support from Lumina Foundation for Education