

News

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PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP PROMOTES STATE SUPPORT PROGRAMS WITH OUTREACH

New awareness campaign targets low-to-middle wage workers

TRENTON – The Departments of Human Services (DHS), Labor and Workforce Development (LWD) and Community Affairs (DCA) today announced an informal partnership with the NJ Business and Industry Association (NJBIA) to promote information about state programs and services available to low-and-middle wage workers. Their shared goal is to raise awareness of state supports that can help working individuals and families make ends meet.

The advocacy campaign is called, “**Programs that work for people who work**”. The English-Spanish [flyer](#) includes information on mortgage assistance, energy assistance, children’s health insurance, food assistance and subsidized child care.

“In this economy, it can be difficult to make ends meet, even if you’re employed,” said DHS Commissioner Jennifer Velez. “Many people are unaware of the wide-ranging supports available in New Jersey to help them through tough financial times.”

Individuals working in hourly wage positions or on part-time schedules may experience difficulty staying current with bills. Car repairs, a leaky roof or sudden medical expenses can wipe out a family budget and present major challenges to individuals and families just trying to stay afloat.

“This initiative presented us with a great opportunity to keep our members informed with a useful and timely resource,” said Christine Stearns, Vice President at NJ BIA, a business trade organization with 22,000 members. “Three-quarters of our members are small companies with fewer than 25 employees, so they often don’t have the human resource staffing to research and compile this type of information for their workers.”

NJ BIA sent its membership the flyer in an Employment and Labor policy email update entitled, **Helping Employers and Employees in Difficult Economic Times**. It also is posted on the [website](#).

Among the highlighted programs, eligibility ranges from 185% of the federal poverty level (\$1,680 per month income for an individual/\$3,447 per month for a family of four) to 350% of the federal poverty level (\$3,177 per month for a family with one child/\$6,519 per month for a family of four).

“People often are surprised at the types of support we provide to low- and middle-income households, the unemployed or people in transition who need only temporary assistance,” said DCA Commissioner Lori Grifa. “Many of our programs – such as our foreclosure assistance or energy assistance programs - are designed for working people in need of short-term relief from financial problems.”

The Departments are using social media, business trade associations, faith-based organizations and their respective stakeholder groups to get the message out to New Jersey’s working residents.

“The Department of Labor has a robust stakeholder list, with which we’ll share this important information,” said LWD Commissioner Hal Wirths. “Businesses are always looking for ready-made, benefit-related materials for their workers.”

The bi-lingual flyer is posted on the DHS, LWD and DCA websites and can be downloaded for use by interested groups at www.state.nj.us/humanservices/programsthatwork.

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