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Mayor Fulop and Hudson County Executive DeGise Announce New, Innovative IT Training Program for Justice-Involved Adults and Youth Through Partnership with Cisco and the Department of Corrections as Fulop Administration Expands Job Training and Prisoner Re-Entry Programs

First of Its Kind Partnership for Cisco in New Jersey, Participants to Receive IT Training both in Jail and Following Incarceration; Additional Partners Include the Workforce Investment Board, Jersey City Employment and Training and Hudson County Community College

JERSEY CITY – **Mayor Steven M. Fulop** and **Hudson County Executive Thomas DeGise** today announced a **new, innovative IT Training program** for both inmates and recently incarcerated individuals, as well as the at-risk population, that is a partnership with the **global technology company Cisco** as the Fulop administration continues to expand its job training and prisoner re-entry program.

The training program, a **first of its kind partnership for Cisco in New Jersey**, is known as the **Cisco IT Essential Training Course**, and was developed in partnership with Cisco and the Hudson County Department of Corrections (HCDOC), the Hudson County Workforce Investment Board (WIB), the Jersey City Employment and Training Program (JCETP), and the Hudson County Community College. Program participants will receive information technology training, a workforce field that is in high demand, increasing their ability to find quality and lasting jobs. An American multinational technology company, Cisco designs, manufactures and sells networking equipment throughout the world.

“By working with our partners at Hudson County corrections, as well as in the corporate community, we are able to model a program that provides real, hands-on training and job skills that our prisoner re-entry clients need to succeed in today’s workforce,” said **Mayor Fulop**. “We know how valuable these skills are and this training will create a pathway to future employment and success for those seeking a second chance.”

According to the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DLWD), information technology is a key industry cluster and STEM and computer-related occupations within that cluster are all expected to grow within Hudson County over the next several years. With the proper credentials and opportunities to further their education, justice-involved adults and juveniles who are trained through this program will be better-prepared for careers in technology.

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“You often hear people say, ‘We could send people to college for the money we spend incarcerating them,’” said **Hudson County Executive DeGise**. “Well, we're giving people who want a second chance an opportunity to learn -- and start a better life when they leave jail.”

With funding through the Second Chance Act, the Hudson County Department of Corrections will establish a computer lab at the Hudson County Correctional Center, and will develop a computer-based curriculum, in which instructors will teach students to break down and re-assemble computer hardware.

“Cisco training will provide our inmates and ex-offenders an opportunity to become skilled in information technology that will assist them in securing quality careers in the future,” said **Oscar Aviles, Director of Hudson County Department of Corrections**. “We are excited about this partnership and will use it as an example to partner with other corporate stakeholders to expand training for our reentry community.”

The program is scheduled to begin on July 13th and will be administered at the jail with expanded training facilities at the administrative building adjacent to the jail. A total of 60 participants will be able to receive the three-month training, which includes basic computer training, IT essentials, an entrepreneurship course, resume writing, career counseling and job placement assistance.

“We are excited to be partnering with the Hudson County Department of Corrections and Hudson County Community College to provide IT skills to under-served populations, and in particular those returning from incarceration,” said **Keith Davis, a Cisco-certified program coordinator**. “We are especially thrilled to be working with Jersey City and Hudson County on developing an innovative training program with a direct links to the reentry program, employment training and the community college.”

Program participants will be recruited through the Department of Corrections and the Hudson County Community Reentry Program (CRP). A Hudson County Community College instructor will work with Corrections and the Reentry program to identify interested and qualified candidates for the training program. All program participants must be County-sentenced or released, have attained a high school diploma or GED, and read at an eighth grade level.

Shortly after taking office, Mayor Fulop established Martin’s Place, Jersey City’s prisoner re-entry program to work with the ex-offender community, in coordination with the Jersey City Employment and Training Program. Considered a national model, Martin’s Place connects recent ex-offenders with counseling, addiction recovery, transitional housing, job training and employment placement. Martin’s Place participants have a 61 percent job placement rate and a recidivism rate of 22 percent, which is substantially lower than the national average of more than 60 percent.

“We are grateful to Cisco for working with this partnership to provide job training opportunities for Jersey City residents,” said **Jim McGreevey, Executive Director of the Jersey City Employment and Training Program**.

The Jersey City Employment and Training Program, Inc. is a multi-service 501(c)(3) private non-profit organization, working with diverse populations including men and women on parole, administering workforce development funds on behalf of the City of Jersey City.

All media inquiries should be directed to Jennifer Morrill, Press Secretary to Mayor Steven M. Fulop at 201-547-4836 or 201-376-0699. ////