

NEW JERSEY

ATLANTIC COUNTY WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Local Plan for the Workforce
Innovation and Opportunity Act
July 2016 – June 2020



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Introduction

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), signed into law in 2014, requires Local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) and chief elected officials (CEOs) within each of New Jersey's three WIOA workforce planning regions to participate in a regional planning process resulting in a comprehensive four-year plan which shall be modified every two years. Each Regional Plan is to incorporate input and coordination from each of the local areas within the workforce planning region. Regional plans must comply with the requirements outlined in WIOA and must align with and support the strategies described in the New Jersey Combined WIOA State Plan (State Plan). Additionally, each Regional Plan shall include:

- An overview of the region, including a list of local areas and counties that comprise the region;
- The collection and analysis of regional labor market data (in conjunction with the State)
- The establishment of regional service strategies, including use of cooperative service delivery agreements;
- The development and implementation of sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the planning region;
- The establishment of administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate;
- The coordination of transportation and other supportive services as appropriate, for the region;
- The coordination of services with regional economic development services and providers;
- The establishment of an agreement concerning how the planning region will collectively negotiate and reach agreement with the Governor on local levels of performance for, and report on, the performance accountability measures described in WIOA sec. 116(c) for local areas or the planning region; and
- The establishment of a process to review and modify the plan every two years.

A primary focus of the State Plan relates to the statewide Talent Development Strategy. In New Jersey, the talent development system includes:

1. New partnerships with employers across the state's seven key industries,
2. Strong collaborations between workforce programs, education and higher education,
3. The use of technology to better connect jobseekers and employers,
4. Better labor market intelligence to inform workforce investments, and
5. Innovative partnerships between the state, local governments, community and faith-based organizations and educational institutions.

In an era of global competition and rapid technological change, New Jersey must continue to build on this strong talent development foundation. The State Plan sets a strategic direction for the future and outlines five themes, which the state will focus on in order to increase the number of residents with an industry-valued credential or degree through high-quality partnerships and integrated investments.

Theme 1: Building Career Pathways with a focus on Industry-Valued Credentials

Through a common definition of career pathways, a newly created list of industry-valued credentials, literacy standards and a renewed commitment to Employment First for all persons with disabilities, New Jersey will ensure that all workforce investments are enabling individuals to access greater economic opportunity and to build on their skills throughout their careers. These efforts will expand the number of career pathways, at all

levels of education and workforce services, which will help more individuals obtain industry-valued credentials and degrees.

Theme 2: Expanding High-Quality Employer-Driven Partnerships

Across departments, New Jersey is focusing investments and programs on building employer-driven, high-quality partnerships that follow a common definition and framework. These partnerships are critical to building new career pathways for jobseekers and students and help increase the number of individuals with an industry-valued post-secondary degree or credential. To further support these efforts, the state's seven industry-focused Talent Networks will facilitate the development of new high-quality, employer-driven partnerships across the state; investments in new Targeted Industry Partnerships and Talent Development Centers will build a foundation for all of the state's workforce development investments.

Theme 3: Strengthening Career Navigation Assistance through One-Stop Career Centers and Broad Partnerships

New Jersey is committed to supporting One-Stop Career Centers that meet local needs and assist individuals in obtaining new skills and employment. New Jersey will expand the number of jobseekers and students who have access to high-quality career guidance and job search assistance through a new network of One-Stop Career Centers, community colleges, libraries, community-based organizations and faith-based organizations, organized labor and educational institutions.

Theme 4: Strengthening Governance through Effective Workforce Development Boards and Regional Collaborations

Effective Workforce Development Boards are critical to the success of New Jersey's Talent Development system. Led by the private sector but inclusive of key partners, local WDBs engaged in an active governance role ensure that investments are made in effective programs and that local residents can access the services they need for career success.

New Jersey has committed to supporting regional planning, service coordination and resource sharing for all workforce education and training programs, recognizing that labor markets are not constrained by governmental or political boundaries. New Jersey is a densely populated state and our labor markets are not constrained by state and county boundaries. These efforts will be organized around three regions of the state: North, Central and South.

Theme 5: Ensuring System Integrity through Metrics and Greater Transparency

To reflect the strategic priorities of the state, New Jersey is adopting an additional set of performance measures and applying these measures, and those required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to broader number of programs. New Jersey will make performance data on workforce development programs accessible to workforce decision-makers and the public. The Eligible Training Provider List and Consumer Report Card are critical tools assisting jobseekers and students making decisions about short-term occupational training programs.

These five talent development themes, coupled with the five primary focus points of the State Plan, create a strong foundation on which to build Local Area strategies. The Local Plan will be designed to help achieve the vision of the State Plan while advancing regional and local efforts in workforce development, credential attainment, economic development, and the formation of strategic partnerships.

The Atlantic County Local Area believes that the most important way to strengthen New Jersey's workforce is to build High Quality Partnerships with a wide range of employers, state departments, local governments, educational institutions, organized labor and community-based organizations that play critical roles in the labor market. Regional planning within the workforce development system provides an opportunity to strategically coordinate services, resources, and strategies that contribute to the development of talent throughout New Jersey.

I. Strategic Planning Elements

An analysis of the local and regional economic conditions including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations; and the employment needs of employers in those industry sectors and occupations.

The industrial and occupational data in this plan is formatted to identify proportional representation in the current labor market landscape. Analyzing in this way will simplify the identification of key occupational groups and industries that are growing and are projected to grow in upcoming years.

Industries

The top five industries in terms of net local employment for Atlantic County are: 1) Arts, entertainment, recreation, and accommodation and food service, 2) Educational services, health care, and social assistance, 3) Retail Trade, 4) Professional scientific, management, administration, and waste management services, and 5) Construction. These top five industries account for 74% of the total civilian employed population age 16 and older. The top two industries alone account for nearly half of the local employment standing at 49% of the population employment.

Table 1: Atlantic County Employment by Industry¹

| INDUSTRY | Number Employed |
|--|-----------------|
| Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food service | 34,345 |
| Educational services, and health care and social assistance | 28,013 |
| Retail trade | 14,062 |
| Professional, scientific, management, administration, and waste management service | 11,131 |
| Construction | 7,396 |
| Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing | 6,508 |
| Public administration | 6,348 |
| Other services, except public administration | 5,482 |
| Transportation and warehousing, and utilities | 4,954 |
| Manufacturing | 4,867 |
| Wholesale trade | 2,273 |
| Information | 1,729 |
| Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining | 539 |
| Civilian employed population 16 years and over | 127,647 |

A strong concentration at the top is present, with some of the lower end industries possessing small quantities of the total employment for the county. Getting a grasp on the size of these industries provides a picture of the economic landscape and the roles that each industry plays in the overall employment of Atlantic County. Finding substantial industry sectors will assist in aiming at specific skills and certifications that are being demanded in the location.

¹ Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Occupations

Occupational employment can provide an explanatory landscape of what industries are demanding. Included below are the top 15 occupations filtered by total net employment for Atlantic County, accompanied with a percentage of total employment of all occupations in the area, as well as Annual Salaries for the corresponding occupation. The top five Occupations in Atlantic County in terms of net employment are: 1) Retail Salespersons, 2) Waiters and Waitresses, 3) Cashiers, 4) Registered Nurses, and 5) Janitors and Cleaners.

Table 2: Atlantic County Occupational Employment²

| Occupation | Number Employed | (%) of Total | Median Annual Salary |
|--|-----------------|--------------|----------------------|
| 41-2031 Retail Salespersons | 5,940 | 12% | \$23,790 |
| 35-3031 Waiters and Waitresses | 5,490 | 11% | \$23,920 |
| 41-2011 Cashiers | 3,570 | 7% | \$21,750 |
| 29-1141 Registered Nurses | 2,930 | 6% | \$75,650 |
| 37-2011 Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners | 2,610 | 5% | \$28,590 |
| 37-2012 Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners | 2,490 | 5% | \$22,930 |
| 31-1014 Nursing Assistants | 2,130 | 4% | \$28,230 |
| 33-9032 Security Guards | 2,100 | 4% | \$28,870 |
| 25-2021 Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education | 1,840 | 4% | \$70,170 |
| 43-9061 Office Clerks, General | 1,840 | 4% | \$34,200 |
| 43-5081 Stock Clerks and Order Fillers | 1,780 | 4% | \$24,920 |
| 49-9071 Maintenance and Repair Workers, General | 1,610 | 3% | \$41,610 |
| 43-6014 Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical | 1,610 | 3% | \$38,870 |
| 43-4051 Customer Service Representatives | 1,520 | 3% | \$31,670 |
| 35-3021 Combined Food Prep and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food | 1,510 | 3% | \$22,090 |
| Total Number of Employed Persons | 49,920 | | \$39,368 * |

*Average Salary across all Occupations

This top five group contains roughly 41% of the total employed population in the area, and four out of the five occupations fall well below the annual salary average and pay less than \$15 per hour (based on a standard 40-hour work week). Comparing with the South Jersey Workforce Collaborative region, the top five occupations remain the same except for Janitors and Cleaners being replaced with Laborers and Freight, Stock. The 41 SOC code owns two of the top three occupations in terms of employment in Atlantic County. In terms of frequency, the 43 SOC code shows up four times, but in the latter half of employment level. SOC codes 35 and 37 each appear twice in the top fifteen occupations.

A broader look at Occupational Groups will assist in categorizing which occupational areas are drawing the most labor from Atlantic County. The top five Occupational Groups in terms of net employment in the County are: 1) Food Preparation and Serving-Related Occupations, 2) Office and Administrative Support Occupations, 3) Sales and Related Occupations, 4) Personal Care and Service Occupations, 5) Education, Training, and Library Occupations.

² Source: Occupational Employment Statistics, May 2015 Estimates

Table 3: Atlantic County Employment by Occupational Group³

| Occupational Groups | Number Employed | (%) of Total | Median Annual Salary |
|--|-----------------|--------------|----------------------|
| 35-0000 Food Preparation and Serving-Related Occupations | 18,280 | 14% | \$25,850 |
| 43-0000 Office and Administrative Support Occupations | 16,450 | 13% | \$36,230 |
| 41-0000 Sales and Related Occupations | 13,950 | 11% | \$31,780 |
| 39-0000 Personal Care and Service Occupations | 9,490 | 7% | \$28,310 |
| 25-0000 Education, Training, and Library Occupations | 9,080 | 7% | \$60,530 |
| 29-0000 Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations | 7,520 | 6% | \$89,230 |
| 37-0000 Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations | 6,670 | 5% | \$27,260 |
| 53-0000 Transportation and Material Moving Occupations | 6,280 | 5% | \$33,210 |
| 33-0000 Protective Service Occupations | 5,060 | 4% | \$50,380 |
| 49-0000 Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations | 4,850 | 4% | \$49,500 |
| 11-0000 Management Occupations | 4,660 | 4% | \$116,060 |
| 13-0000 Business and Financial Operations Occupations | 4,600 | 4% | \$67,650 |
| 31-0000 Healthcare Support Occupations | 4,340 | 3% | \$30,710 |
| 47-0000 Construction and Extraction Occupations | 4,140 | 3% | \$60,490 |
| 51-0000 Production Occupations | 2,730 | 2% | \$33,460 |
| 27-0000 Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations | 2,160 | 2% | \$55,080 |
| 21-0000 Community and Social Services Occupations | 2,120 | 2% | \$51,500 |
| 15-0000 Computer and Mathematical Occupations | 2,090 | 2% | \$90,040 |
| 17-0000 Architecture and Engineering Occupations | 980 | 1% | \$85,370 |
| 23-0000 Legal Occupations | 680 | 1% | \$83,600 |
| 19-0000 Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations | 490 | 1% | \$76,410 |
| Total for all Occupational Groups | 126,620 | --- | \$54,798* |

*Average Salary across all Occupations

The top five occupational groups account for 52% of the net employment in Atlantic County. The SOC codes 35, 43, and 41 each appear in both the top individual occupations list and the top occupational groups list. In terms of salary, four of the five top occupational groups fall below the average salary across all occupational groups.

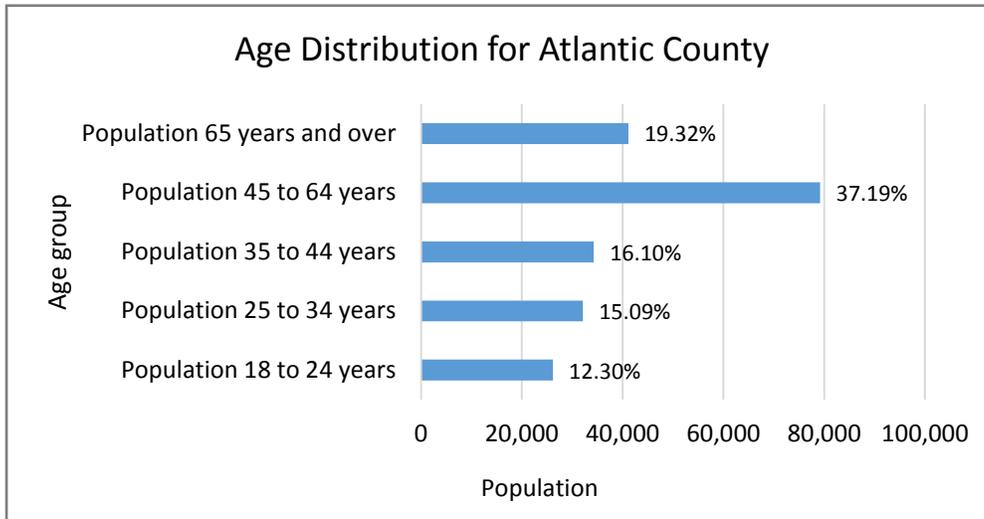
OPTIONAL: Any additional data and analysis about unique economic, industry and labor market information, information on demographics, and target populations, and other key information regarding the local area.

Two unique factors shaping the state of the labor force in Atlantic County are age distribution, and inflows and outflows of the Workforce. The impact of each of these appears to be uniquely prominent given the shape of the age distribution and the lack of outflows within Atlantic County.

A demographic analysis reveals that Atlantic County has an aging population. The top two age groups are made up of the 65 and over and the 45 to 64 age groups. In fact, this demographic makes up roughly 56% of the population, i.e. 56% of the population is over 45. As the age groups get lower in age, the smaller the portion of the population they represent.

³ Source: Occupational Employment Statistics, May 2015 Estimates

Chart 1⁴



An analysis of inflows and outflows of the workforce in the Atlantic County seems pertinent to the presence of the workforce in explaining any supply and demand gaps. As seen below, the in-county employment is weakly impacted by outflows of labor to other counties and states, especially when compared to other areas.

Table 4: Workforce Locational Flows Comparison⁵

| Place of Work | Atlantic County | Southern Region |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Total Resident Workers | 125,903 | 856,045 |
| New Jersey | 121,812 | 741,661 |
| Worked Out of State | 4,091 | 114,384 |
| Percent Worked In State | 96.8% | 86.6% |
| Percent Worked Out of State | 3.2% | 13.4% |
| Live and Work in Same County | 105,130 | 506,405 |
| Percent Live and Work in Same County | 86.3% | 68.3% |
| Percent Work Outside County | 13.7% | 31.7% |

Compared to the South Jersey Workforce Collaborative region, the workforce of Atlantic County is predominantly immobile, with 96.8% working In State, and 86.3% working within the county. This leaves only 13.7% of the employed population working outside the county. Overall, the outflow of labor for Atlantic County is notably low compared to other counties in the region.

An analysis of the knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the employers in the region, including employment needs in in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

Most vital to the understanding of the gaps between the labor force and employers is an analysis of the specific skills and occupations that are currently in demand. Data collection was done on Baseline Skills in Greatest Demand, Top Detailed Occupational Listings, Technical Skills in Greatest Demand, and Certifications in Greatest Demand. From this we can directly infer the skills that should be developed moving forward for the skill levels of the workers properly meeting the demands of employers.

⁴ Source: NJLWD, 2014 - 2034 Population Estimates

⁵ Source: New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Office of Research and Information

Chart 2⁶

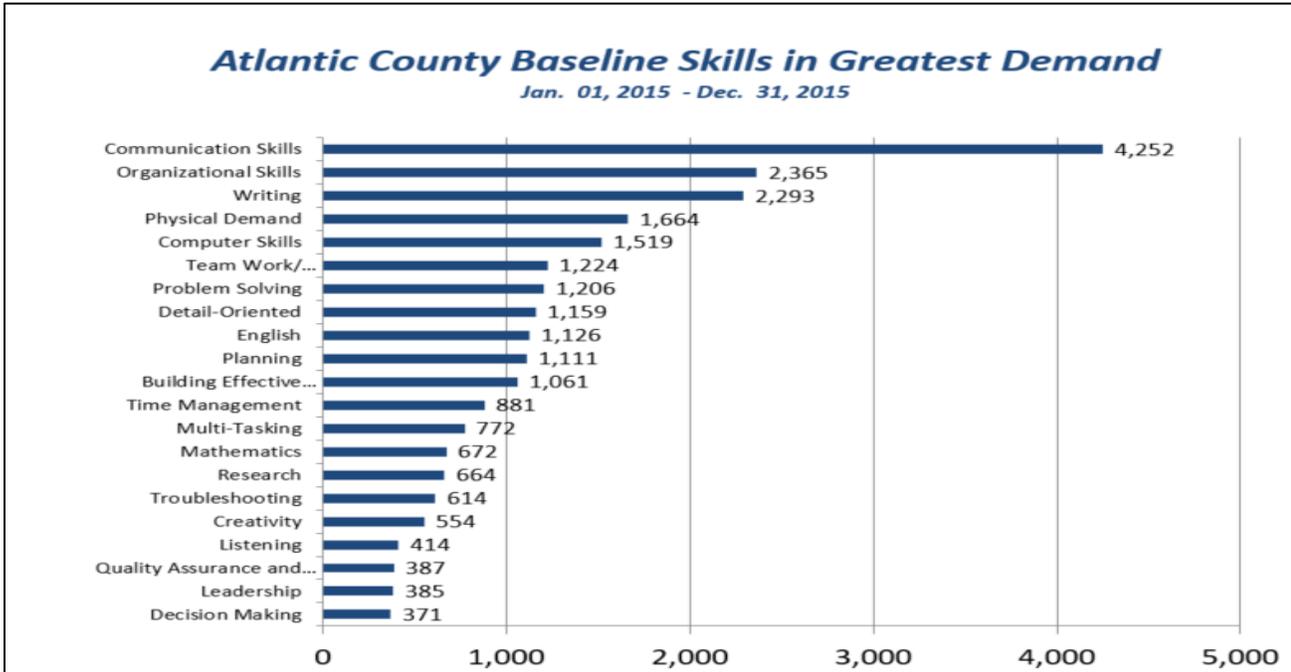
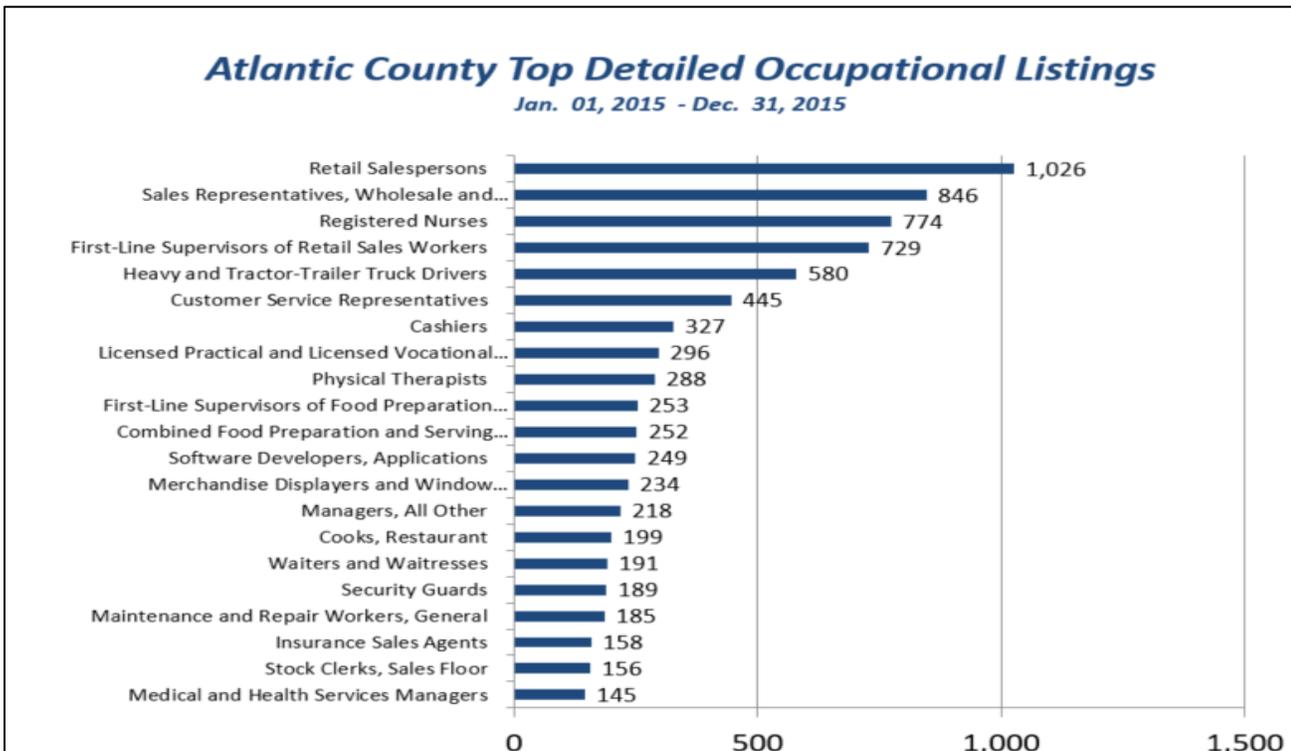


Chart 3⁷



⁶ Source: Burning Glass Technologies Inc., Labor Insight

⁷ Source: Burning Glass Technologies Inc., Labor Insight

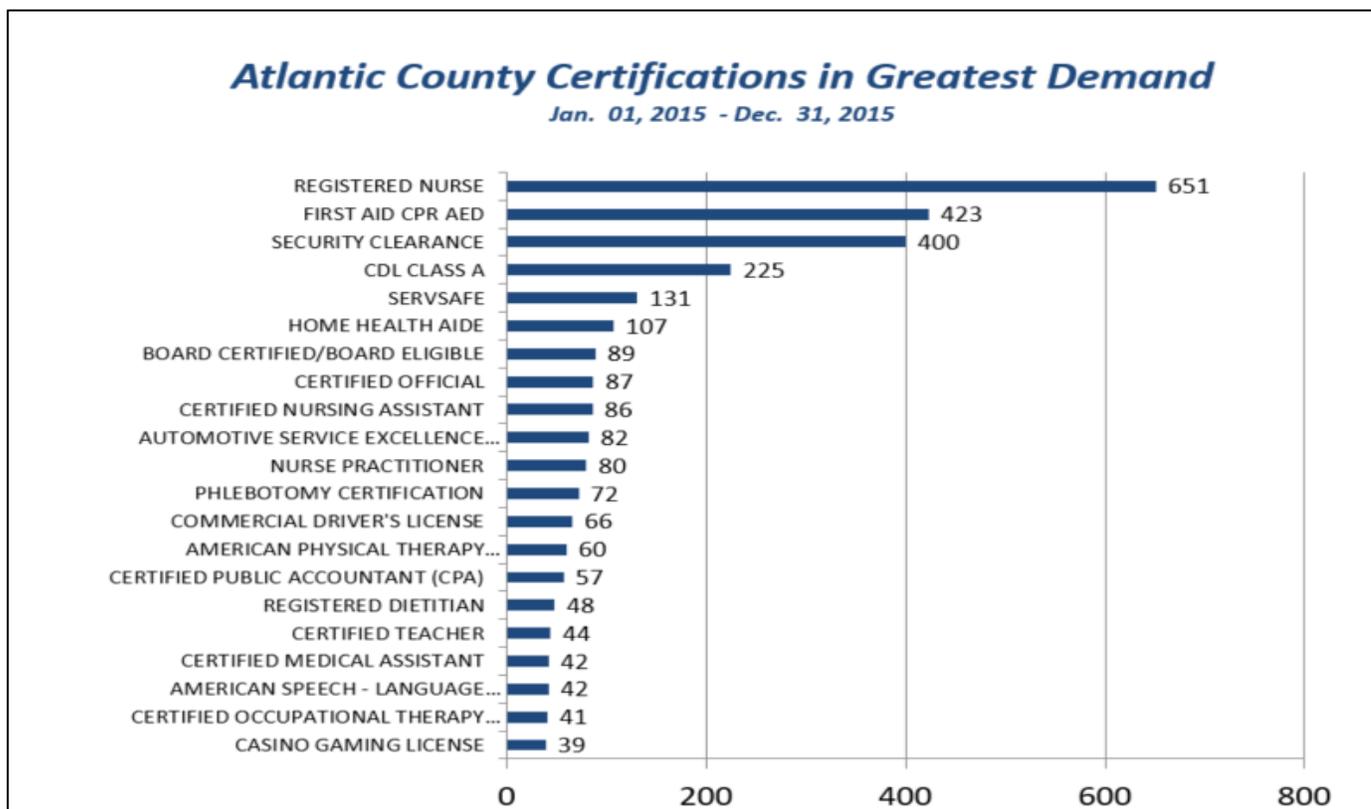
Chart 2 Analysis

Using data collected by the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJLWD), Communication Skills, Organization Skills, and Writing dominate the top three skills in demand. Physical Demand and Computer Skills round out the top five. General task related office skills appeared very frequently in the observations, and may warrant an additional focus moving forward.

Chart 3 Analysis

Looking at the top Detailed Occupational Listings for Atlantic County, the area of sales is in high demand with ‘Retail Salespersons’ earning 1,026 observations of demand and ‘Sales Representatives’ following in the second highest spot at 846 observations of demand. O*Net categorizes both occupations as needing oral expression and comprehension, which can be expressed as Communication Skills. After the top two, ‘Registered Nurses’ ‘Supervisors of Retail Sales’ and ‘Truck Drivers’ round out the top five. Focusing on the more prevalently available occupations in the current landscape we, can concentrate skills attainment effectively to decrease unemployment and fill employer demands.

Chart 4⁸



⁸ Source: Burning Glass Technologies Inc., Labor Insight

Chart 5⁹

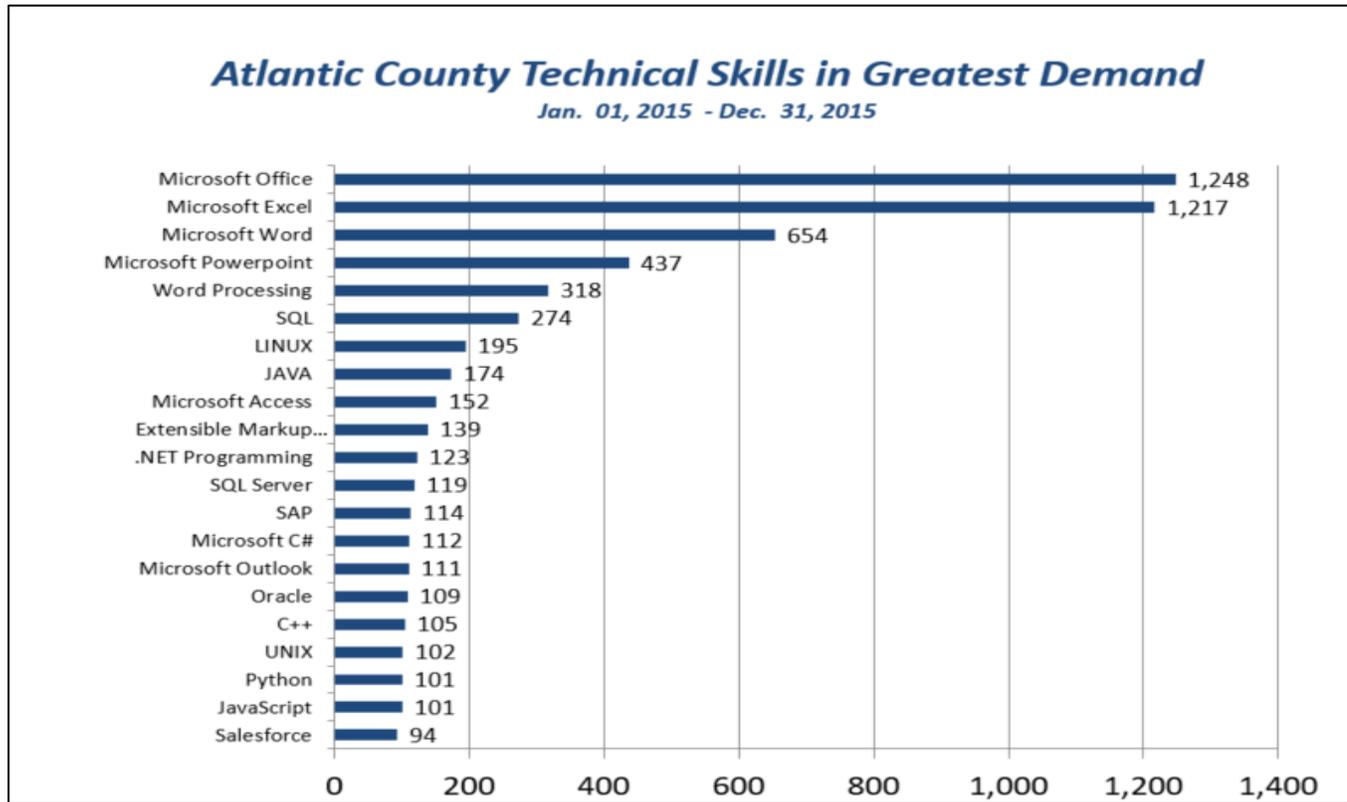


Chart 4 Analysis

Chart 4 operationalizes important benchmarks and certifications that are most desired by employers across the County. Registered Nurse is the top certification in demand with 651 observations, with First and CPR AED following with 423 observations. The top two certifications are interrelated with the health field, which was a strong component of the occupational listings. After the top two, in descending order, there is Security Clearance, CDL Class A, and ServSafe. It is important to note that both trucking and serving occupations appeared within the occupational listings as well.

Chart 5 Analysis

Technical Skills are an increasingly important dynamic in the current workforce landscape. As technology continues to play a larger role in daily tasks of occupations, labor must be equipped and familiar with the proper skills to stand a fair chance of gaining employment. Within the County the highest demanded skills are with Microsoft Office. Microsoft Office (which includes Excel, Word and PowerPoint) outweigh all other in-demand technical skills combined. This concentration of technical skills demand presents an opportunity for the County to ensure that Microsoft Office skills are included in various career pathway curricula.

An analysis of the workforce in the region, including current labor force employment (and unemployment) data, and information on labor market trends, and the educational and skill levels of the workforce in the region, including individuals with barriers to employment.

⁹ Source: Burning Glass Technologies Inc., Labor Insight

Exploring the current labor force data and current labor market trends serves as a channel through which to gauge economic supply and demand. Trends and abnormalities in employment levels serve as a backdrop for the barriers to employment and directions of the different forces within the labor market. Barriers to employment for the labor force and those discouraged from seeking employment are responsible for producing gaps between supply and demand. Assessing those barriers, as well as what is generating them, is essential to implementing solutions to address them.

Analyzing the five-year difference between counties and the Regional Aggregate (the South Jersey Workforce Collaborative), we can see ‘post-recession years’ effects on unemployment rates, employment, and the labor force as a whole. The unemployment rate difference is negative 2.9%, which is promising at face value. Considering a decrease in 12,900 workers from the labor force, as well as a 7,600 decrease in overall employment, it becomes possible that a portion of the unemployment rate shrink may be due to workers dropping out of the labor force entirely.

Table 5: Labor Statistics for the Southern Region¹⁰

| County | Year | Labor Force | Employment | Unemployment | Unemployment Rate |
|--------------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Atlantic | 2010 | 140,600 | 123,300 | 17,300 | 12.3 |
| Burlington | 2010 | 236,856 | 215,553 | 21,303 | 9.0 |
| Camden | 2010 | 264,513 | 235,549 | 28,964 | 10.9 |
| Gloucester | 2010 | 152,423 | 136,775 | 15,648 | 10.3 |
| Cumberland-Salem | 2010 | 104,479 | 91,303 | 13,176 | 12.6 |
| Regional Aggregate | 2010 | 948,903 | 845,518 | 103,385 | 10.9 |
| Area Title | Year | Labor Force | Employment | Unemployment | Unemployment Rate |
| Atlantic | 2015 | 127,700 | 115,700 | 12,000 | 9.4 |
| Burlington | 2015 | 232,359 | 220,281 | 12,078 | 5.2 |
| Camden | 2015 | 255,354 | 239,308 | 16,046 | 6.3 |
| Gloucester | 2015 | 149,669 | 140,803 | 8,866 | 5.9 |
| Cumberland-Salem | 2015 | 98,832 | 90,764 | 8,068 | 8.2 |
| Regional Aggregate | 2015 | 912,776 | 850,449 | 62,327 | 6.8 |

A decrease in the overall labor force can be an alarming statistic given that there is also a grow in the overall population, although as understood by *Chart 1*, the age distribution could be impacting this. Despite this, the unemployment rate is still notably higher than the ‘Regional Aggregate’ as well as most other counties across the South Jersey Workforce Collaborative region in both 2010 and 2015. However, given this, raw unemployment has fallen by 5,300 since 2010.

Table 6: Labor Force¹¹

| County Atlantic Labor Force | 2014 | 2024 | 2034 | Change: 2014-2024 | | Change: 2024-2034 | |
|-----------------------------|---------|---------|---------|-------------------|------|-------------------|------|
| | 133,100 | 141,300 | 145,500 | 8,200 | 6.2% | 4,200 | 3.0% |

¹⁰ Source: NJLWD, 2014 - 2034 Labor Force Projections

¹¹ Source: NJLWD, 2014 - 2034 Labor Force Projections

Projections have Atlantic County reversing its 5-year direction and having the labor force growing by 6.2% over a 10-year span (2014-2024). With growth such as this, the supply of the workforce will go up, which is good for labor markets but can potentially lead to a temporary inflation in the unemployment rate in the short run during job searches.

Barriers to Employment

Educational Attainment data for Atlantic County and the South Jersey Workforce Collaborative Region has been collected for the purposes of gauging the skill level of the workforce. Education can often serve as a barrier to employment in many occupations, including many top occupations for Atlantic County such as ‘Registered Nurse’.

Table 7: Educational Attainment for Atlantic County^{12,13}

| Educational Attainment | Atlantic County | % Total (Atlantic) | South Region | % Total (Region) |
|---|-----------------|--------------------|--------------|------------------|
| Less than 9th grade | 11,202 | 5.20% | 55,046 | 3.91% |
| 9th to 12th grade, no diploma | 17,347 | 8.05% | 95,529 | 6.78% |
| No High School Degree | 28,549 | 13.26% | 150,575 | 10.69% |
| High school graduate (includes equivalency) | 62,303 | 28.93% | 414,434 | 29.42% |
| Some college, no degree | 37,905 | 17.60% | 242,169 | 17.19% |
| Associate's degree | 12,546 | 5.83% | 93,079 | 6.61% |
| Bachelor's degree | 30,807 | 14.30% | 236,555 | 16.79% |
| Graduate or professional degree | 14,701 | 6.83% | 121,240 | 8.61% |

Comparing to surrounding counties in the South Jersey Workforce Collaborative Region, Atlantic County has a higher proportion of their population in the attainment levels of ‘Less than 9th Grade’, ‘9th to 12th grade, no diploma’, ‘No High School Degree’, and ‘Some College, no degree’. Whereas, the South Jersey Workforce Collaborative Region has a higher proportion of the population in ‘High School Graduate’, ‘Associate’s Degree’, ‘Bachelor’s Degree’, and ‘Graduate or professional degree’. The post High-school level attainment rates for Atlantic County are lower than the surrounding counties.

Table 8: English Proficiency for Southern Region Counties¹⁴

| English Proficiency | Atlantic | Burlington | Camden | Cape May | Cumberland | Gloucester | Salem |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|------------|---------|----------|------------|------------|--------|
| Speak English less than "very well" | 29,332 | 16,962 | 39,757 | 3,962 | 17,001 | 7,572 | 2,235 |
| Population Over 18 | 399,817 | 659,863 | 735,852 | 149,440 | 225,297 | 415,960 | 95,711 |
| % Total | 15.33% | 24.18% | 27.71% | 5.48% | 8.66% | 15.13% | 3.50% |

Furthermore, elaborating on the educational dynamic to barriers to employment, the ability to speak English is of vital importance. Given that ‘Communication Skills’ was the top demanded Baseline Skill in Atlantic county, the absence of the ability to speak the language would be a large barrier to employment. Below is a county by county (South Jersey Workforce Collaborative Region) analysis of the percent of population that ‘Speak English

¹² The percentages add up to more than 100% since an individual may fall into more than one category.

¹³ Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

¹⁴ Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

less than “very well”. Atlantic county stands at 15.33%, meaning 15.33% of the population over 18 years of age speak English ‘less than very well’, placing in the middle of the Region. Of note, there is a moderately positive correlation between size of population and percentage of total population over 18 that speak English less than very well.

Table 9: Income Assistance¹⁵

| Assistance | Atlantic County | % of Total Pop. (Atlantic) | South Jersey Region | % of Total Pop. (Region) |
|---|-----------------|----------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| With earnings | 78,545 | 20% | 527,840 | 20% |
| With Social Security | 32,872 | 8% | 216,161 | 8% |
| With retirement income | 17,750 | 4% | 137,914 | 5% |
| With Supplemental Security Income | 5,744 | 1% | 35,217 | 1% |
| With cash, public assistance income | 3,785 | 1% | 23,511 | 1% |
| With Food Stamp/SNAP benefits in the past 12 months | 12,627 | 3% | 65,957 | 2% |
| Population Over 18 | 399,817 | --- | 2,681,940 | --- |

Social Assistance in different forms can also indicate a barrier to employment in the form of monetary barriers. When comparing Atlantic County to that of the South Jersey Workforce Collaborative Region, the county is nearly identical to the Region in all categories relating to the percentage of population receiving some form of income assistance. Overall, the County has approximately 400,000 individuals receiving some form of income assistance. Programs to assist these individuals are described in *Section II: Local Workforce System*.

An analysis of the workforce development activities (including education and training) in the region, including an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of such services, and the capacity to provide such services, to address the identified education and skill needs of the workforce and the employment needs of employers in the region.

Each region and its labor areas have unique industry, labor force, and demographic characteristics. Regional focus offers insight and analysis on the changing employment situation and its industries. Despite the estimated loss of approximately 1,100 casino hotel jobs since March 2015, the Atlantic City labor area still managed to bet the trend and show an overall job gain. The two largest increases occurred in educational and health services at a +700 and trade, transportation and utilities at a +600, and retail at 700 jobs. The county’s largest industry, leisure and hospitality remained unchanged due to the food services and drinking places boosting employment by 1,200. Between March 2015 and March 2016, the South Jersey Workforce Collaborative Region experienced improvement of their non-seasonally adjusted unemployment rate moving down from 8.1% to 6.0%. Atlantic County’s unemployment rate dropped the most in the region from 11.6% to 7.8%.

Since then, we have had another turn of despair in this area, as one more casino has closed leaving 2,800 workers out of a job. Our workforce development system has been put to the test yet again. With four casinos closing just under two years ago, this time we are better equipped to respond to the demands of the residents. The workforce development service in Atlantic County has gotten much better as we strive to

¹⁵ Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

improve our methodology of deliverance. We are able to provide a wide variety of services such as educational literacy, high school equivalency preparation and examinations, as well a job development and placement. Our labor market information is available at any time as our Wagner-Peyser partners are collocated with us. We have partnered with our local colleges and Chamber of Commerce to meet the training and workforce needs of both our residents and businesses in our community. We also partner with some of our community based organizations to provide some wrap around services such as utility, mortgage, and rental assistance.

The Atlantic County Workforce Development Board is technologically challenged. We need to be more social media friendly. We are working to get our face book page and twitter sites up and running to be able to reach more residents and finding ways to do more online applications and distance learning.

Describe the local board's strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment), including goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of the Act in order to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. Describe how this supports the regional plan efforts and potential for shared cost. Describe how the local plan may differ from the regional plan, with a justification for the variance.

Mission:

To coordinate resources and efficiently deliver workforce readiness services for the residents and businesses of Atlantic County through educational and technical skills training that responds to the needs of the employers.

Vision:

To enhance the economic climate of Atlantic County by providing a skilled workforce that is responsive to the needs of all business in Atlantic County and its vicinity.

Goals:

1. To evaluate the local workforce development system to ensure effective and efficient delivery of services
2. To garnish high quality partnerships with the private and public sector businesses
3. To increase our out of school youth services to meet the 75 percent expenditure requirement in accordance with WIOA
4. To serve as a clearinghouse for planning, labor market assessment needs and workforce development services and resources for both the residents and businesses of Atlantic County
5. To enhance our technology to quickly and effectively communicate information to all residents and businesses

Alignment with Regional Plan

The mission and vision statements of this Local Plan, and those in the South Jersey Workforce Collaborative Regional Plan, identify a need to have coordinated, collaborative workforce initiatives that address the needs of both individuals and businesses. This may be achieved through forming and expanding partnerships, utilizing data-driven approaches, and implementing policies focused on improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the workforce development system as a whole.

Potential for Shared Regional Costs

Atlantic County will work with other counties in the South Jersey Workforce Collaborative Region to share costs when possible. Examples of this are found in business attraction and retention initiatives and with the use of Salesforce.

The Region will collaborate on pro-active business attraction and retention interventions (for details please see *Section VII: Coordination with Economic Development* of the South Jersey Workforce Collaborative's WIOA Regional Plan). The Region will also conduct regular Sector Team meetings, workshops to bring industry expertise to the group, regular check-in calls, shared dissemination of job orders across the team, and shared use of Salesforce as a means of maintaining and managing data on business interactions and the "case file" for each firm. The Region will coordinate with the State to facilitate Salesforce access for outside partner firms such as the colleges, chambers, and WIOA system partners.

Atlantic County will also take part in the regional effort to share the cost of monitoring of training providers and educational service providers. The region will build a monitoring team, similar to the regional business service team, and will develop a shared monitoring calendar and list of those trainers held in common across multiple WDBs.

The region is currently in the process of exploring additional shared funding initiatives, including:

- Regional job fairs and positive recruitments
- Regional business outreach and Job Center service promotional events (such as Chamber events)
- Job Center staff regional training events

Taking into the account analyses described above, describe a strategy to work with the entities that carry out the core programs to align resources available to the local area, to achieve the local area's strategic vision and goals.

The WDB is charged with the main responsibility of ensuring that universal access to necessary services happens as efficiently and effectively as possible. There is cross membership between the One-Stop Oversight Committee and One-Stop Partners and the Atlantic County WDB so that relevant issues are brought to the appropriate venue. With that said, the WDB expects that these communication channels will continue and strengthen over time.

Atlantic County is committed to improving the quality of the area's workforce in order to meet business demand. The WDB has worked hard with its One-Stop and One-Stop partners to make certain that customers receive the referrals and access to additional support services they need to be successful. The One-Stop has co-located partners and formal and informal relationships with provider agencies to ensure that the One-Stop customers' needs are addressed. To help build upon current and past successes, the WDB will work to expand existing services delivery strategies focused on:

- Out-of-School Youth apprenticeships, career pathway guidance, and community learning experiences
- Employer driven training opportunities/collaborations

- Industry recognized credentials for all funded trainings Service Strategies to address regional workforce need
- Better communication with other WDB's in the South Jersey Workforce Collaborative Region
- Outreach to neighboring County businesses for regional placement opportunities
- Expand communication and collaborative partnerships with the neighboring States' WDBs and businesses

In addition to these strategies, and to help achieve the mission, vision, and goals identified in this Local Area Plan, the WDB will implement the following strategic priorities over the next four years:

- Explore and develop registered apprentice opportunities
- Increase Out-of-School Youth programs to focus on career pathways, apprenticeships, and post-secondary education
- Market and promote Workforce Development System services
- Expand on the business partners needs aligned with trainings
- Strengthen business partner relationships
- Achieve better integration of partnerships with local resources

Working in conjunction with other areas in the region is critical to reaching the full potential of the Atlantic County WDB. Regional coordination of service delivery strategies will allow each area to better prepare the workforce to meet the needs of the region's businesses and will allow each area to better leverage resources through cost sharing strategies. To maximize the positives and help reduce any burdens with regional efforts, Atlantic County will implement formal and Informal cooperative procedures, including:

- Developing an MOU with regional partners
- Convening quarterly meetings to keep communication and collaboration open regarding High Quality Employer Driven Partnerships
- Building a partnership with Economic Development entities in each WDB area
- Building relationships with Chambers of Commerce in each area, as well as the New Jersey Chamber
- Reviewing LMI to determine where growth opportunities are within the region
- Communicating with surrounding states that have an impact on our regional workforce demand

II. Local Workforce System

Describe the workforce development system in the local area, including identifying the programs that are included in that system and how the local board will work with the entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs to support alignment to provide services.

Atlantic County seeks to focus on creating and maintaining an employer-driven workforce system. This will be achieved by enhancing both communication and collaboration, expanding partnerships through the Talent Networks and the community college, expanding apprenticeship opportunities, and expanding programs (such as NJ Builds) to address the needs of the community. The following identifies the programs and services included in the County's workforce development system.

Core Programs

WIOA Title I: Adult/Dislocated Worker

The One-Stop Partners have been diligent in bringing together the partners required to facilitate the delivery of a workforce development system of complimentary services. Each partner is asked to participate in professional development trainings held by both local and state agencies to improve operations and coordinate service strategies with the One-Stop System. The partners have realized the commitment of time, personnel and resources they must contribute to the system for its overall success and have willingly done so for more than a decade.

The partners agree that the best model to deliver service is to co-locate as many services as space allows within the One-Stop. This group meets quarterly to identify gaps in service, discuss the implementation of programs and come to a consensus on the operation of said services and programs. The partners will continue to convene on a quarterly basis to refine the system and address new areas of concern. The goals remain the same as in the original plan, but flexibility in approach and accommodations will be critical to the success of this partnership.

The One-Stop works in conjunction with partner agencies to establish a system where job seekers and employers have access to core services such as labor market data, self-directed services, consultation and guidance and intensive services such as job training, customized training grants and literacy services to assist individuals that experience barriers to employment.

Universal access to core services is available to any individual that enters the One-Stop System, and there is no eligibility requirement for these services. Core services will be comprised of registration, intake, orientation, disbursement of labor market information and career information, eligibility determination for training services, referral to intensive services, and retention/follow-up services. Self-directed assistance, such as access to public computers and resources is also considered a core service.

One-Stop training services include: occupational skills training, on-the-job (OJT) training, workplace readiness, entrepreneurial training, adult education, career advancement training, customized training, job placement and retention, and follow-up services. Training is delivered through an individual training account (ITA).

Customers seeking assistance for career occupational guidance, help with a resume, job search skills, or any other employment assistance may meet with an Employment Counselor. Assessment and employment status are discussed as well as present and future career employment options. Counselors develop an Employability Development Plan (EDP) with the customer to outline the customer's path for future employment. Counselors also assist customers with additional educational help in the form of Tuition Free Waiver for eligible customers seeking additional college courses or a referral to other One-Stop services, such as literacy and job training. There are many specialized programs offered in the One-Stops to improve the likelihood of securing meaningful and sustainable employment.

Supportive services, those services which are necessary to enable an individual to participate in activities authorized under WIOA are available for customers. Supportive services include transportation, child care, depend care, housing, and needs-related payments. For details on supportive services please refer to *Section XI – Supportive Services*.

The County has measures in place to assist Dislocated Workers through One-Stop services and Rapid Response activities. For details on Rapid Response activities please refer to *Section XIII – Rapid Response*.

WIOA Title I: Youth

Youth should be served based on individual needs through placement in the most appropriate service. In general, the WDB supports the utilization of a point of service strategy that includes: self-service, job placement assistance, referral to support services, and job preparation training. This strategy enables the One-Stop System to determine each youth's marketable and transferrable skills and select a single point of entry into the system. This not only improves the efficiency of the program but the effectiveness of services provided. For the purposes of this plan the following definitions apply:

1. Self Service: Available to all youth "ready to work" that wish to utilize online job listing services, faxes, and telephones at the One-Stop. There is no eligibility requirement for this service.
2. Job Placement Assistance: Job search assistance may be conducted with limited staff interaction. This may include referrals to job openings based on the youth's aptitude, interests and employment experience. There is no eligibility requirement for this service; however, this should be made available to youth in need of additional support to gain unsubsidized employment.
3. Referrals: This may include referrals to support services such as high school equivalency preparation, public assistance programs, substance abuse or mental health facilities, etc. There is no eligibility requirement for referrals to support services.
4. Eligible youth may be referred to a WIOA funded youth program to focus on preparing for unsubsidized employment or post-secondary education through academic remediation, work readiness, and career counseling. These services require that youth meet eligibility requirements set forth in this plan. Older youth may be referred to the OSCC Employment and Training Unit to receive a grant entitled: "Individual Training Account" to enroll in occupational skills training with a vendor other than a WIOA funded youth program.

Through consultation with NJLWD, the WDB is interested in funding service providers that use an industry-focused approach to prepare youth for employment in demand occupations. The NJLWD recommends the use of nationally recognized, industry-based skill standards and occupational certifications as the basis for developing competency based learning objectives, curricula, instructional methods, teaching materials, and classroom activities.

The program design incorporates assessments, individualized goal setting, and counseling. As such, the following components are provided to each youth enrolled in a WIOA program:

1. Comprehensive assessment of academic levels, skill levels and service needs of each participant shall be conducted to determine: basic skills and occupational skills, when appropriate, work readiness, prior work experience, interests and aptitudes, and supportive services and developmental needs.
2. Individual Service Strategy (ISS) provides a framework for establishing the youth's goals and identifies: an employment goal, objectives for attaining the employment goal, measures barriers and strengths, and identifies appropriate services to assist in attaining the employment goal taking into consideration the assessments conducted.
3. Preparation activities to enter post-secondary education and/or unsubsidized employment with linkages between academics, work experience and occupational skills learning, attainment of an industry recognized credential, and linkages to local employers and job openings.
4. Case Management which includes assistance and/or referrals to support services such as public assistance, transportation, child care and housing, among others.

Priorities of funding should reflect demographics of the local area and target occupational areas that encompass employer needs and expectations.

Title II: Adult Education/Literacy

The literacy services component of workforce development in Atlantic County is and has been a critical component of the workforce development plan for some time. Since the late 1970's and early 1980's, many residents of southern New Jersey have been able to maintain a comfortable living without a high school diploma or post-secondary education. According to the U.S. Census data for the years 2010-2014, approximately 15% of county residents 25 years or older do not have a high school diploma. With the closing of five casinos in Atlantic City since the beginning of 2014, the need for a stronger educational foundation has become imperative when the current workforce must consider transitioning its career choice from the casino industry to another industry sector that offers sustainable job opportunities.

The local One-Stop Career Center works closely with the local community college, county and city libraries, technical schools, literacy volunteers and the local university to shape literacy services to best benefit the local customers. Efforts are made to provide a broad spectrum of literacy services including ESL, and adult basic education for grades 1-4, 4-6, 6-12. In addition, One-Stop services include preparatory services for the successful completion of the high school equivalency test, digital literacy for public assistance customers required to be in a work activity and financial literacy services for out-of-school youth.

The Atlantic County One-Stop Career Center assures that all service recipients are assessed for literacy services through the use of adult basic education assessments using the TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education). This assessment is provided for all customers including adult, dislocated, WFNJ and youth populations at its Pleasantville location. The One-Stop Career Center provides computer-based testing which allows for immediate test results. Those test results are reviewed with the customer and counselors provide recommendations for next steps in the development of the individual employment plan (IEP) or individual service strategy (ISS). Once the TABE assessment has been completed, all counselors use the universal literacy referral form to place a customer in Title II literacy services. This form is used not only to make the initial referral to the appropriate level of literacy service, it is also used as customers' progress from one level of instruction to the next.

Those customers who are participating in literacy services are re-tested after 50 hours of participation to evaluate their progress. The test proctor provides test results to the One-Stop counselors to determine customer progress toward his/her goal. Using this process, customers are able to progress from lower level basic education instruction at a third or fourth grade level to the Workforce Learning Link at a 7th to 12th grade level. If customers are interested in pursuing their high school equivalency diploma, the counselor from the learning link will make a referral to the high school equivalency preparatory program, to assure his best chance of success. When those same customers are ready to take the high school equivalency test, the Atlantic County One-Stop Career Center offers testing services on site. When customers attain the necessary academic level to qualify for a WIOA-funded individual training agreement, the literacy counselor will refer them to the appropriate employment specialist to initiate the training contract process.

Currently the Atlantic County One-Stop Career Center offers a number of co-located Title II services at its Pleasantville location. Those services include the supplemental learning lab services for customers who have been assessed at between a 4th and 6th grade level and workforce learning link services for those customers who are intent on improving their educational functional level or pursuing a training contract. Communication, through both formal and informal processes, occurs on a daily basis. All customers who are receiving Title II literacy services are co-enrolled in the AOSOS system as all employment specialists, including those involved with employment and training, WFNJ, and youth enter funded services for literacy.

Literacy services provided through the workforce learning link include two components, the first involves literacy services for those customers scoring between a 4th and 6th grade level on the TABE test. Customers in this group receive classroom instruction in math and reading, then progress to self-directed, computer-based instruction using the Aztec instructional software. As the customer progresses to the 6th grade level, he is transferred across the hall to the workforce learning link to continue his literacy instruction. The workforce learning link focuses on those individuals that are pursuing training contracts or those that are working to achieve their high school equivalency diploma. For those working to improve their grade level for targeted training contracts, the learning link offers Aztec software with individualized lessons structured to improve identified areas of weakness within pertinent subjects. As the customer achieves his/her required grade level for a funded training contract, the assigned counselor will begin the contract authorization process. For those customers whose goal is to achieve their high school equivalency diploma, as they reach the 9th grade level on the TABE re-test, they are encouraged to transfer their studies to the High School Equivalency Prep program offered by the local community college. This program provides practice tests and places its emphasis on readiness for the test. This program can be accessed by all One-Stop customers who have identified this outcome in their plan.

In order to provide WFNJ customers with an individualized employability plan, each TANF and GA customer completes the TABE test as part of the assessment process. As the employability plan is created by the customer in consultation with the contracted work activity provider, identified service needs that include literacy services will initiate a universal literacy referral to One-Stop services. As the WFNJ customer progresses through the literacy levels, he will be referred either to the employment specialist for training grant awards or to the high school equivalency prep program for additional test preparation. WFNJ customers also work with Title II Consortium services to address limited English proficiency through access to English as a Second Language services.

For those customers who are eligible as adult or dislocated workers, the referral process from literacy services to career pathways services occurs through the distribution of the TABE Re-test scores. As soon as the TABE

scores qualify for a training grant, the counselor will schedule an appointment with the customer to discuss current labor market information, available employment opportunities and potential career pathways for the customer's desired industry sector. For those WFNJ customers, the process will first be managed by the contracted WFNJ work activity sub-recipient, then referred to the WFNJ case manager through the amended employability plan.

Title III: Wagner-Peyser Employment Service Program

RESEA

Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment This service is provided to those dislocated workers who are at high risk of exhausting their unemployment benefits before locating their next job. The goal of this program is to provide unemployed workers who receive UI benefits with early access to specific strategies that can help get them back into the workforce faster. The strategies include developing a reemployment plan, access to relevant labor market information and referrals to reemployment services and training, as well as assessing their on-going UI eligibility

Job Referral and Placement

Job Search, Referral and Placement are processes whereby applicants are referred to employers who have registered job openings with the agency. Applicant skills, education, ability, and experience are matched with those needed by the employer. Using America's One-Stop Operating System, (AOSOS) the counselor can use a program entitled "focus assist" to locate customers from the workforce labor pool who have the skill set and experience the employer has requested. Once the candidates are identified, counselors will notify them by e-mail or phone of the employment opportunity. Employment services uses a similar process to coordinate single employer recruitments held in the One-Stop Career Center. These events are called 'positive recruitments'. These recruitments are cost effective for the employer as all recruitment activity is conducted by the employment services staff. The Wagner-Peyser staff identify the candidates, arrange the interview location with the employer and assure the only appropriately qualified candidates are presented to the employer.

Jersey Job Clubs

The Jersey Job Club provides the customer with the tools and support they need to find a job. This service helps the job-seeker develop new skills and build up skills he already has. Each Job Club workshop has a career development professional available to help develop a strategy for conducting a successful job search. Specific services offered include:

- A two-part Interviewing Skills Workshop prepares the customer for all phases of interviewing. Part two of this workshop includes practicing the skills learned in part one
- A workshop on Mastering the Art of Networking covers current strategies for effective networking.
- Learn the basics of using LinkedIn. How to register and build a profile is discussed in this introductory workshop
- A workshop on The Right Career reviews tools used to help identify factors and areas to explore when making a career choice or change.
- Learn how to connect to your community and keep your skills sharp in the Skills-Based Volunteering Workshop

Resource Room

To help with Employment Related activities employment services offers public access computers, along with copy machine and fax machine services in the first floor lobby area. Customers utilize computers for job searching, filling out online applications, resume writing and other employment related activities. The resource room is also used for small group interaction, network building and professional development.

Title IV: Vocational Rehabilitation

The New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) provides financial incentives to encourage businesses to employ and retain individuals with disabilities. The WDB acknowledges that some may feel this is the role of DVRS, but one could argue that there are many individuals with disabilities that prefer or are not eligible for DVRS services. In these instances, other services may be more appropriate and of great benefit to customers with disabilities.

DVRS defines an individual with a disability as having any physical or mental impairment that is a substantial impediment to employment may qualify an individual for vocational rehabilitation services. When eligible individuals with disabilities may afford themselves of the following DVRS sponsored services:

- Vocational Counseling & Guidance – Providing assistance to the consumer in handling the job search issues that impact employability, job maintenance strategies, and developing the overall techniques needed to be successful in a work environment
- Placement Services - Development of job leads both with and for the consumer and support during the job search; could include On the Job Training (OJT), Supported Employment (SE) or Time Limited - Placement and Coaching (TLPC)
- Job Seeking Skills - Guidance in work search activities such as resume writing, interviewing skills, job search organizations
- Supported Employment - Through referral to an SE provider, one-on-one assistance in job searching, interviewing, applying for jobs; followed by coaching on the job to facilitate learning job duties and adjusting to the work environment; followed by periodic follow-up to ensure job retention
- Time Limited Placement and Coaching - The first two categories of Supported Employment Services without periodic follow-along
- Job Accommodations - Guidance on changing the worksite's physical environment or adding equipment that will allow an individual to do more work tasks independently, effectively, and safely
- Skills Training - Vocational school, technology or trade School, business school, etc.
- College Training - 2 or 4 year programs leading to a degree
- Physical Restoration - Equipment or therapies which improve physical or cognitive functioning so that a person is able to work; examples could be physical, occupational, or speech therapy; cognitive therapy which includes those modalities; prosthetics or orthotics such as artificial limbs, braces, special shoes, hearing aids, and eyeglasses (in some instances)
- Emotional Restoration Services – Short-term individual, group or other types of counseling to reduce symptoms of mental health problems and improve work-tolerance and the ability to get and keep a job.
- Mobility Equipment
- Driver Training - Assessment of driving ability and equipment needed to drive safely; assistance in purchasing driver training lessons if needed to reach a specific work goal
- Vehicle Modification

- Home Modifications, if needed to reach a specific work goal

For those individuals with disabilities that do not wish to utilize DVRS services, the NJLWD operates Employment Services that help individuals find full-time or part-time employment.

Other Workforce Development Programs

Senior Community Service Employment Program

The factors of capacity and endurance are primary barriers for Workers between the ages of 55 and 64. These limitations demand a different approach to the employment process. In traditional employment settings, older workers may be limited in what jobs they can perform. While employers attempt to work through the need for additional accommodations and supports, they are realistically evaluating the effect that these actions have on the company's revenue and the level of customer service.

The National Council on the Aging (NCOA) and Workforce 55+, through Title V of the Older Americans Act administers the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) in all counties in the State of New Jersey. This program assists mature workers return to the workforce through assessment, counseling, immediate job placement and short term relevant job training that leads to unsubsidized employment. The primary population served by these organizations is low income individuals, aged 55 and older with poor and limited job prospects that return to work out of necessity. In many cases the job sector of previous employment is obsolete or has been upgraded and requires specialized training.

The WDB partners with these organizations to coordinate services for the mature worker population. Because these organizations are mandated to serve a specific "disadvantaged" population with multiple barriers to employment it has been difficult to expand the service model and meet performance benchmarks. To that end, there are immediate strategies that can be implemented to effectuate change.

- Expand the service model to include individuals seeking "encore careers"
- Improve integration with agencies that provide core and wrap around services
- Provide OJT's that prepare mature workers for employment in existing and emerging industries

The new face of the older worker is that of the employed individual age 50 and older that possesses an existing, marketable and transferable set of skills. These individuals need short term relevant job training or OJT work experiences to remain or re-enter today's workforce. It is this population seeking "encore careers" in a global economy that the One-Stop should prepare for employment in the next decade. Proper planning at this stage will prevent large numbers of older individuals seeking limited services, with lifetime durational limits such as partner agencies like NCOA.

Existing resources are leveraged to provide vocational assessment, career counseling, and fund employment place services through OJT's. These grants are utilized to bridge the gap between businesses and the aging population.

Veterans

The WDB has been meeting with its private sector members, state and county officials, post-secondary education institutions, and local veterans' organizations to devise a plan to provide short term, accelerated,

and relevant job training to returning veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan. For this reason, the WDB and its education partners are looking for way to count military and life experiences towards college credits for degree completion or to apply that experience for enrollment in accelerated job training programs. Veterans should be engaged in incumbent worker job training programs that mimic their military experiences.

The One-Stop has a dedicated Veterans Representative (VR). Disabled, recently separated, and disadvantaged veterans are given special attention. Veterans may be referred to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) for additional training, counseling, and other related services specific to their needs to help them obtain gainful employment. The Veteran Unit's goal is always to increase Entered Employment Rate. Workshops are offered in resume development, interviewing, labor market information, assessment, transferable skills, job fairs, recruitments, and follow up, case management, veteran benefits, and veteran's preference.

It's the policy of the WDB to provide veteran's preference in employment and training wherein all other employment factors are equal among viable candidates. Identifying and overcoming the barriers of post military employment is a priority of the WDB. Working in conjunction with the local Veteran Administration and community groups such as the American Legion will be critical to outreach to this population.

Employers that hire veterans receive the benefit of \$4,800 in tax credit under President Obama's Returning Heroes and Wounded Warrior Tax Credit, with additional tax credits of \$9,600 for hiring a service-connected disabled veteran.

Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Program

According to Literacy Volunteers Cape Atlantic (LVA) there has been a significant increase in workers seeking ESL classes. In the past, LVA served primarily low level learners at the Beginning ABE Literacy, Beginning Basic Education and Low Intermediate Basic Education. PathStone Corporation has identified that, in addition to Spanish, there has been a rise in individuals speaking Haitian Creole and French residing in the County. In the summer of 2011, PathStone Corporation served approximately 40 to 50 migrant farm workers in Atlantic County, of which most relocate to Cumberland/Salem/Gloucester counties in the winter season, because of lack of entry level jobs in the county and the high costs of housing. In the western part of Atlantic County there has been a rise in Spanish speakers, mainly from migrant farm workers who decide to remain in the area for their families.

Ex-Offender Programs

Each One-Stop has a trained Ex-Felon Employment Specialist who assists ex-offenders with re-employment services. This specialist provides customers with job referrals/leads through job development or prior employers contact list who are more receptive to hiring ex-offenders. The Ex-Felon initiates incentives for employers to hire ex-offenders such as Federal Bonding Program OJT and Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program.

It's understood that these programs, as operated by the NJLWD, may change over time or be discontinued. The WDB will make every effort to advocate for the continuation of such programs as a benefit to the unemployed. The local area implements waiver policies and procedures as directed by the NJLWD. Special requests are made, in writing directly to the NJLWD to secure local area waivers, when deemed necessary and with proper justification of the need. Waiver information is distributed to management for implementation

within units of the ACWD. The Monitoring Unit is responsible for the tracking of waivers and their utilization to ensure compliance. All waivers are presented to the WDB for inclusion in Board minutes.

Carl T. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act

It is estimated that by 2020, having a technical credential will far outpace the Associate's Degree. Giving credence to this theory, is a national trend emerging in the vocational and career technical education arena to provide academics and industry specific job training in the form of academies for youth (under 18) enrolled through comprehensive high school settings. Locally, the vocational and career technical schools have embraced the change and have begun the implementation or have completed phases towards becoming comprehensive high schools.

Unemployment Insurance

PRO's is a re-employment program that identifies Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimants who are likely to exhaust their benefits. These customers are identified within the first five weeks of collecting benefits with instruction to visit their local One-Stop. An orientation is provided that explains the benefits and services available, initial assessments and the required follow-up. In addition, job club activities are offered. These job clubs focus on a variety of different activities including self-assessment services; resume writing, labor market information (LMI), interviewing skills, career counseling, and job referral and placement services.

UI claimants, as well as other individuals, may also utilize the Jersey Job Clubs. Jersey Job Clubs are a volunteer-driven career development workshop series. These workshops focus on two different areas; the traditional job search topics as such resume writing, interviewing skills, job search techniques, LMI information, and more cutting edge areas of work search such as social media, elevator speech, networking skills, and branding statements.

SNAP/TANF/GA Recipients

Work First New Jersey (WFNJ) is an employment and training service available to individuals receiving public assistance. WFNJ will be integrated into One-Stop Career Center services and the cost of required staff will be funded through WFNJ allocations to the WDB. Employment Services staff will provide group job search sessions. The Local Area will also be responsible for WFNJ case management. As part of this case management, customers may be referred to Employment Services staff for group workshops on job search techniques and work-ready skills, or to literacy labs, occupational skills training, work-based training, competitive job placement and on-the-job training grants, as appropriate. The program partners with Stockton University, enabling customers to witness how continued education can lead to job security.

Work activities are provided for those individuals who are receiving public assistance and for whom a reportable work activity is required to maintain benefits eligibility. The primary goal of this program area is to provide individuals with work preparation services that lead to placement in a full-time (35 hours per week) or part-time (between 20 and 34 hours per week) unsubsidized employment. Reportable work activity programs include, but are not limited to:

- Unsubsidized employment
- Subsidized private sector employment
- Subsidized public sector employment
- Work experience

- OJT
- Job Search and Job Readiness
- Community service programs
- Vocational education/career and technical education
- Job skill straining directly related to employment
- Education directly related to employment in the case a recipient has not received a high school diploma or equivalency
- Secondary school leading to a certificate, in the case of a recipient who has not completed secondary school
- Providing child care service to an individual who is participating in a community service program.

Establishing individual employment plans that address the needs of customers receiving public assistance is tailored to their skills, abilities and aptitudes and training and employment needs and goals. All public assistance customers are afforded universal access to core services and intensive and training services, when eligible to meet their objectives. The WDB leverages all available resources to meet this population's need and if services are not available at a career center, they are referred to a One-Stop partner or contracted vendor to provide the service.

For individuals eligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), General Assistance (GA) and/or the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) programs, case managers make AC1 referrals, which confirm the placement of the customer in the activity and provides information related to the customer's social/emotional, work history and education levels. Shared documents may include but are not limited to: the individual responsibility plan (IRP), copy of the Tabulation of Adult Basic Education (TABE) assessment results, Comprehensive Social Assessment (CSA) summary, outreach form, and the Employability Plan Development Tool Parts A and B (EPDT). This packet transitions with the customer from activity to activity. Contracted vendors coordinate services with other providers and communicate with the To-Work Activity Unit. Every attempt is made to secure unsubsidized employment for customers throughout participation in an activity.

Most programs include work experiences which are planned, structured learning experiences that take place in a workplace for a limited period of time designed to model a real world employment setting. Under WFNJ, work experience workplaces may be in the non-profit sector or the public sector. Work experiences are practical application of existing or emerging skills that allow individuals to gain real world employment perspective and provides potential employers with a snap shot of the individual's ability to perform on the job.

A critical component to successful outcomes for public assistance customer is case management. This support and assistance in an individualized or group setting provides instruction and guidance in pursuit of unsubsidized employment. This may include, but is not limited to: life planning activities, peer to peer support groups, mentoring, leadership development, job coaching, career planning, and resolution of benefits/legal issues. Elements of good case management are monitoring of customers and follow-up services. Monitoring ensures compliance and promotes successful outcomes in activities, while follow-up services aids in the transition of customers from one activity to another and finally into unsubsidized employment.

New Jersey Workforce Development Partnership Program

We currently have not received any funds for this area, but when we do, we use them to assist those residences that do not meet the eligibility requirements of WIOA. For instance, someone who has not

registered for selective service can receive a training grant to enhance or develop new skills to gain unsubsidized employment. With the availability of these funds, it helps us to be able to assist more residents in Atlantic County.

Identify any areas of weakness in service delivery or resources and discuss whatever regional or local solutions are most appropriate.

Communication has improved over the past few years, but it remains a major concern of ours. We are communicating among our One-Stop partners much better than before, but clear communication with our business community can be further improved. The Board needs to improve our connection and communication with the business community.

The Board's social media communication is another area for improvement. Our residents are all moving to social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and we need to get our messages out there via the same communication vesicles that our people use.

We have just begun to extend our training to online-distance learning. We need to develop the tools to allow our residents to utilize our One-Stop services via computers, tablets, and/or smart phones. Achieving this will take further work by the Board.

The Board also needs to have more knowledge about all the available resources in Atlantic County to assist the residents. One thing that we do have is our 211 Call System which allows residents to call and get information on what services are available and who provides them. Even with this system, we still are missing some pieces of the puzzle. It may also be that we do not have all the pieces or services in our area that individuals may need.

III. Local Board Initiatives

Describe how the local board, working with the entities carrying out core programs, will expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment.

Primary Strategies to be undertaken, some of which will be described in greater detail in subsequent sections of the Plan include:

- Expand on business driven training efforts. The Board and workforce development system staff will continue to partner with industries to develop employer-driven projects including:
 - Traditional hiring initiatives
 - Customized and incumbent worker training programs
 - On-the-job training
 - Apprenticeships
 - Securing direct business input on training curricula at Atlantic Cape Community College and other trainers to ensure the highest quality and most responsive training
 - Other models that focus on ensuring that firms gain the workers they need and Atlantic County residents are prepared for the jobs available in the County and surrounding region.
- Continue to improve upon job seeker services through a range of activities such as resume writing workshops, interviewing techniques workshops, dress for success workshops, partnering with area clothes closet for professional clothing, expungement services, mortgage/rent assistance services and more.

To address particular job-seeker backgrounds and barriers to employment, the following section includes a description of these key targeted populations, the need for services for them, and a summary of activities and service strategies that will be enhanced, and new efforts developed:

1. Low-income Adults/Dislocated Workers

The Atlantic County WDB firmly believes that a lack of work history, education, work preparation skills and long term unemployment or industry specific technical skills that do not cross over into other industries are barriers to employment for low-income adults and dislocated workers. Coupled with these barriers, the number of people living below the poverty line is at its highest level in half a century. Median family income is worse than it's been since the mid-90's. State and local governments have made deep cuts to staff and budgets for social service programs, contributing to an increase in the number of low-income adults. Stimulus funds have largely been exhausted. Today, more than ever there is an increasing numbers of overqualified people competing for a shrinking number of jobs and low-income adults and displaced workers fall to the bottom of the worker pool.

Low-income adults may have had less opportunity to further their education. In some cases these individuals may have dropped out of their high school and never sought a High School Equivalency (HSE). The 2010 American Community Survey statistics indicate that 31,035 individuals or 11% of the population (274,685) in Atlantic County over the age of 18 do not have a high school diploma. These statistics strongly suggest that there is a continued need for high school credential preparation. Less than a high school diploma or equivalent means that low-income adults are at a disadvantage when compared to those with high school diplomas.

Community colleges have been willing to waive the high school diploma requirement for some continuing education course, with the commitment from the customer to prepare to take the exam and earn the credential prior to completion. But most colleges and private vocational school require such a credential. In fact, those institutions that offer federal financial aid are no longer able to accept students without it.

Survival needs are more critical than employment for many low-income adults. A lack of affordable housing and childcare coupled with the high costs of transportation, where available are prohibitive to entering workplace. This population may possess complex challenges. And many cycle in and out of the welfare system and need long-term support and wrap-around services. The relationship between higher education and health outcomes is well known. In general, the poverty rate coincides with the unemployment rate. However, in some cases the number of individuals in poverty can be higher despite a low unemployment rate. Atlantic County is ranked 17 out of 21 counties in New Jersey in the area of Social and Economic factors in the County Health Rankings report dated 2009. This population doesn't lack the desire, rather the knowledge and ability to pursue such endeavors. Low-income adults need the "know how" to get started. There are some that believe these customers are unaware of the services available, or are unable to navigate the One-Stop system.

In today's society, the dislocated worker has become a far too common occurrence with the shifting of industry emphasis and restructuring and downsizing of businesses in an effort to survive the struggling economy. Many customers come to the career center offices in a state of shock and denial because they have been working in the same capacity for 10, 15 and 20 years. The loss of employment after that length of time, many times unanticipated, creates a level of uncertainty, vulnerability and doubt in all customers entering the career center.

Because many of the workers who have been displaced entered employment either before or shortly after their high school graduation, they do not have the level of education required to compete in the current job market. Even with a high school diploma, they are inadequately equipped to vie for those jobs that will afford them the same level of salary, benefits and comfort that their former job provided. In many instances the level of technological skill, especially related to computer operation is woefully inadequate. Having been in a regimented, structured work environment for extended periods of time limits the worker's scope of marketable and transferable skills and makes it much more difficult to be employable in an industry outside of their past work setting. Workers who have been laid off or terminated after years of successful employment also must confront the reality that they will have to adjust or significantly change their lifestyle in order to accommodate a lower salary and reduced benefits.

Extensions in unemployment benefits, both state and federal, have enabled many dislocated workers to put off having to face these realities and in many circumstances have exacerbated the challenges involved in re-employment. The expectations of spouses, family and friends all place additional pressure on the individual to continue to live in the lifestyle they have been accustomed to. Denial and a sense of 'entitled time off' create additional barriers to successful transition to the realization that the worker needs re-training and a job shift to a viable industry sector.

It is estimated that by 2020, having a technical credential will far outpace the Associate's Degree. Giving credence to this theory, is a national trend emerging in the vocational and career technical education arena to provide academics and industry specific job training in the form of academies for youth (under 18) enrolled through comprehensive high school settings. Locally, the vocational and career technical schools have

embraced the change and have begun the implementation or have completed phases towards becoming comprehensive high schools.

2. Limited English Proficiency

According to Literacy Volunteers Cape Atlantic (LVA) there has been a significant increase in workers seeking ESL classes. In the past, LVA served primarily low level learners at the Beginning ABE Literacy, Beginning Basic Education and Low Intermediate Basic Education. Today, 80% of their students are assessed as Low Beginning ESL, High Beginning ESL and Low Intermediate ESL. Of that ESL population, 41.3% of their customers are male as compared to 58.7% female and the largest ethnicity seeking services are individuals of Hispanic and Asian descent. PathStone Corporation has identified that there in addition to Spanish; there has been a rise in individuals speaking Haitian Creole and French residing in the bi-county region. In the summer of 2011, PathStone Corporation served approximately 40 to 50 migrant farm workers in Atlantic County, of which most relocate to Cumberland/Salem/Gloucester counties in the winter season, because of lack of entry level jobs in the county and the high costs of housing. In the western part of Atlantic County there has been a rise in Spanish speakers, mainly from migrant farm workers who decide to remain in the area for their families. According to the American Community Survey in 2010, Spanish, Chinese, Italian, Portuguese, and Tagalog have been listed as the top five (5) languages with the most speakers (other than English) in New Jersey. The Committee thinks that it's reasonable to extend these figures to South Jersey, given that there are many foreign workers employed by area businesses (See Section XIII. Adult Education and Literacy Services below for details).

3. Public Assistance Recipients

For many customers there are multiple challenges involved in sustaining unsubsidized employment and avoid long-term welfare dependency. Studies have shown that about one-quarter of the recipients who become employed stop working within three (3) months and at least half are no longer working within one (1) year. A sizeable portion of this population poses a complex challenge in that they have two (2) or more barriers to employment. These customers cycle in and out of the welfare system and may need long-term support and wrap-around services in one or more of the following areas:

- Case Management
- Domestic Violence
- Housing Instability
- Mental Health
- Substance Abuse
- Transportation
- Disability
- Basic Skills or other Educational Barriers
- Child Care Issues
- Lack of English Skills
- Parenting Problems
- Low Self-Esteem
- Behavioral Problems
- Financial Support to pay for work-related expenses (auto, clothing, child care)

Work activities are provided for those individuals who are receiving public assistance and for whom a reportable work activity is required to maintain benefits eligibility. The primary goal of this program area is to

provide individuals with work preparation services that lead to placement in a full-time (35 hours per week) or part-time (between 20 and 34 hours per week) unsubsidized employment. Reportable work activity programs based on the Work First New Jersey Work Verification Plan (2008) include, but are not limited to:

1. Unsubsidized employment
2. Subsidized private sector employment
3. Subsidized public sector employment
4. Work experience
5. OJT
6. Job Search and Job Readiness
7. Community service programs
8. Vocational education/career and technical education
9. Job skill straining directly related to employment
10. Education directly related to employment in the case a recipient has not received a high school diploma or equivalency
11. Secondary school leading to a certificate, in the case of a recipient who has not completed secondary school
12. Providing child care service to an individual who is participating in a community service program.

Establishing individual employment plans that address the needs of customers receiving public assistance is tailored to their skills, abilities and aptitudes and training and employment needs and goals. All public assistance customers are afforded universal access to core services and intensive and training services, when eligible to meet their objectives The WDB leverages all available resources to meet this populations need and if services are not available at a career center, are referred to a One-Stop partner or contracted vendor to provide the service.

For those individuals eligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), General Assistance (GA) and/or the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) programs, case managers make AC1 referrals, which confirm the placement of the customer in the activity and provides information related to the customer's social/emotional, work history and education levels. Shared documents may include but are not limited to: the individual responsibility plan (IRP), copy of the Tabulation of Adult Basic Education (TABE) assessment results, Comprehensive Social Assessment (CSA) summary, outreach form and the Employability Plan Development Tool, Parts A and B (EPDT). This packet transitions with the customer from activity to activity. Contracted vendors coordinate services with other providers and communicate with the To-Work Activity Unit at the ACWD. Every attempt is made to secure unsubsidized employment for customers throughout participation in an activity.

Most programs include work experiences which are planned, structured learning experiences that take place in a workplace for a limited period of time designed to model a real world employment setting. Under WFNJ, work experience workplaces may be in the non-profit sector or the public sector. Work experiences are practical application of existing or emerging skills that allow individuals to gain real world employment perspective and provides potential employers with a snap shot of the individual's ability to perform on the job.

A critical component to successful outcomes for public assistance customer is case management. This support and assistance in an individualized or group setting provides instruction and guidance in pursuit of unsubsidized employment. This may include, but is not limited to: life planning activities, peer to peer support

groups, mentoring, leadership development, job coaching, career planning, and resolution of benefits/legal issues. Elements of good case management are monitoring of customers and follow-up services. Monitoring ensures compliance and promotes successful outcomes in activities, while follow-up services aids in the transition of customers from one activity to another and finally into unsubsidized employment.

For the past few years, the WDB has implemented a 70/30 contract design under WFNJ, however it's the intention of the Board to progressively move towards 100% performance based contracts in small increments over the coming years. These increments will be voted on by the Board when deemed necessary by the WDB Executive Committee.

4. Veterans

Veterans face specific barriers moving into civilian employment, including limitations in the scope of military service training, state of the economy, no jobs in the private sector, unfit for civilian employment and lack of knowledge about treatment and support services. In totality, one or all of these obstacles put service members at a disadvantage when compared to those non-service members applying for jobs in the public and private sectors. It's understood that some veterans and active service members, depending on their Military Occupation Specialty (MOS) code may have varying experience and outcomes in securing or maintaining employment. However, form may members of the military trained in transferrable skills in entry level or highly specialized training, transition to the civil workforce difficult without re-training. The Center for a New America Security found in its America's Veteran report released in June 2012 that employers said "it's often difficult to understand the skills and experience gained from military service, and some veterans are just not qualified for the jobs they seek."

As of 2011, approximately 2.5 million post 9/11 service members would have left the armed forces for civilian ranks. Many of these will be in their prime "working" years. In July 2011, the unemployed numbers for veterans reached an all-time high of 13.3% nationally, with many of these veterans between the ages of 18 and 24, where the unemployment rate was estimated at 27 percent.

There are generational barriers as well when comparing those active service members and veterans from more recent wars and conflicts to those 40 to 50 years ago. This population experiences long terms affects from their service that is deeply entrenched in their everyday lives. This coupled with a lack in technical skills, employment experience and limited technology abilities makes employment seem impossible. Re-training is a necessity, almost like breathing for this population to re-enter the workforce or advance in an existing career with higher earnings potential for self-sufficiency.

Of those that obtain employment with little re-training typically find jobs in law enforcement, security, construction trades, and some healthcare. With the exception of those with advanced military training and education. Although many of these occupational clusters typically pay sustaining wages, those veterans with atypical military training are not able to access those jobs. For example, a combat medic treats military personnel on the front lines, sometimes for multiple tours of duty, saving lives and is not qualified to return and work as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) with training and an industry recognized credential.

While former and active service members may bring maturity to the workforce, they may also bring discipline and a lot of bad experiences to the civilian workplace. Employers are increasingly concerned about the possibility of "combat stress" and other psychological issues, regardless of the other desirable qualities former service members may bring to the job. Veteran's carry a stigma and face barriers in the civilian world without

treatment, if needed and re-training. The media tend to focus on the negative aspects of employing a veteran, such as the high suicide rate and attempted suicide rates, the effects of higher costs associated with medical care and absenteeism as a detriment to their business. The Center for a New America Security reported that employers worry that “those serving in the reserves or National Guard will be redeployed for long periods or that combat stress will be reflected in the workplace upon their return.”

The Atlantic County Veteran’s Administration reports that as of July 2012, there are 14,104 veterans in Atlantic County. In surrounding counties, there are 8,000 veterans in Cape May, 8,379 in Cumberland 4,729 in Salem, 18,447 in Gloucester, 28,662 in Camden, 37,764 in Burlington and 46,454 in Ocean County. Furthermore, the administration stated that the average age of those military personnel that have served over the past 12 years have been those in their 30’s and 40’s, married with children as opposed to combat veterans of past wars and conflicts. The Obama administration further reported that many of these individuals left jobs in higher wage categories to serve their country over multiple tours. Returning service members found that there were no employment or equivalent employment options in their previous occupation due to the economy. To further complicate the situation, many return with psychological issues, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury (TBI), which can lead to substance abuse issues. Ultimately, all of the above limits employment options, which perpetuates the problem. This issue impairs relationships, disrupts marriages and aggravates the difficulties of parenting and obstructs the employability of the individual.

According to the National Career Development Association based in Washington, D.C, “nearly one in five service members returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, approximately 3,000, nationally, have post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or major depression.” Similarly, The Center for Military Health Policy and Research (RAND) released an article in April 2008 that indicated that a higher percentage of these veterans suffer from PTSD than from any other previous war, because of the stop loss (extensions of military contracts), multiple tours and greater prevalence of brain injuries. Nineteen percent of post Iraq and Afghanistan veterans have been diagnosed with possible TBI.

The WDB has been meeting with its private sector members, state and county officials, post-secondary education institutions and local veterans organizations few years to devise a plan to provide short term, accelerated and relevant job training to returning veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan. For this reason, the WDB and its education partners are looking for way to count military and life experiences towards college credits for degree completion or to apply that experience for enrollment in accelerated job training programs. Veterans should be engaged in incumbent worker job training programs that mimic their military experiences.

The One-Stops in Atlantic County have a dedicated Veterans Representative (VR). In 2001, the VR served 2,673 veterans in the community. Disabled recently separated and disadvantaged veterans are given special attention. Veterans may be referred to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) for additional training, counseling and other related services specific to their needs to help them obtain gainful employment. The Veteran Unit’s goal is always to increase Entered Employment Rate. Workshops are offered in resume development, interviewing, labor market information, assessment, transferable skills, job fairs, recruitments, and follow up, case management; veteran benefits and veteran’s preference

It is the policy of the WDB to provide veteran’s preference in employment and training wherein all other employment factors are equal among viable candidates. Identifying and overcoming the barriers of post military employment is a priority of the WDB. Working in conjunction with the local Veteran Administration and community groups such as the American Legion will be critical to outreach to this population.

Employers that hire veterans receive the benefit of \$4,800 in tax credit under President Obama's Returning Heroes and Wounded Warrior Tax Credit, with additional tax credits of \$9,600 for hiring a service-connected disabled veteran.

5. Mature Workers

The economic climate has members of the "baby boom" generation at or near retirement age revisiting their options as a means of economic security in uncertain times. Rising medical premiums and property taxes coupled with the cost of care for aging parents, debts and increases in daily utility, fuel and grocery costs has and will continue to influence their decision to keep working beyond retirement or re-enter the workforce as a means of self-sufficiency. In the past year, the One-Stop has seen an increase in individual's age 50 and older seeking services. In many instances, the mature workers possess existing, marketable and transferable skills, but lacks academic and computer literacy proficiency. These individuals need relevant instruction to re-enter or remain in today's workforce.

In a recent demographic analysis by Cornell University estimated that approximately 9.8% of New Jersey's population possessed a documented disability. According to that same survey, the overall percentage of individuals with disabilities in New Jersey age 65 to 74 years of age is 21.6 percent. Furthermore, new data from the Current Population Survey published in October 2010 Labor Review issued by the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences and Institute for Health and Aging at the University of California, cited that between October 2008 and June 2010, job losses among workers with disabilities in the aging population far exceed those of workers without disabilities.

In 2009, the American Community Survey issued statistics that identified 37% of the population in New Jersey as "mature workers." That's a little less than half of the population. Experience Works and the National Council on Aging, both One-Stop partners have stated that of their total caseload, 90% falls below the poverty level with 52% of these individuals receiving Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), public housing, Social Security Insurance (SSI) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Of that, 24% are disabled. The New Jersey Foundation on Aging (NJFA) has found that 25 percent of NJ seniors rely solely on Social Security benefits: the average for a woman being \$12,741. But living expenses for a one-bedroom apartment in NJ has reached the \$27,960 mark. Over past three years NJFA has seen a growth in senior enrollment in SNAP of more than 36,000 but another 130,000 may be eligible. Therefore, the older population seeing the increases in all basic needs and being the population that can least afford the trend of rising expenses but seek income alternatives, such as, continued employment or return to the work of work after long absences.

Recognizing the changing economy and evolving business practices over the past decade, workers between the ages of 55 and 64 represent the fastest growing segment of the American workforce and as such an increase in the aging labor pool. The factors of capacity and endurance are primary barriers for this population. These limitations demand a different approach to the employment process. In traditional employment settings, older workers may be limited in what jobs they can perform. While employers attempt to work through the need for additional accommodations and supports, they are realistically evaluating the effect that these actions have on the company's revenue and the level of customer service.

The National Council on the Aging (NCOA) and Workforce 55+, through Title V of the Older Americans Act administers the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) in all counties in the State of New

Jersey. This program assists mature workers return to the workforce through assessment, counseling, immediate job placement and short term relevant job training that leads to unsubsidized employment. The primary population served by these organizations is low-income individuals, aged 55 and older with poor and limited job prospects that return to work out of necessity. In many cases the job sector of previous employment is obsolete or has been upgraded and requires specialized training.

The WDB partners with these organizations to coordinate services for the mature worker population. Because these organizations are mandated to serve a specific “disadvantaged” population with multiple barriers to employment it has been difficult to expand the service model and meet performance benchmarks. To that end, there are immediate strategies that can be implemented to effectuate change.

1. Expand the service model to include individuals seeking “encore careers”
2. Improve integration with agencies that provide core and wrap around services
3. Provide OJT’s that prepare mature workers for employment in existing and emerging industries

The new face of the older worker is that of the employed individual age 50 and older that possesses an existing, marketable and transferable set of skills. These individuals need short term relevant job training or OJT work experiences to remain or re-enter today’s workforce. It is this population seeking “encore careers” in a global economy that the One-Stop should prepare for employment in the next decade. Proper planning at this stage will prevent large numbers of older individuals seeking limited services, with lifetime durational limits such as partner agencies like NCOA.

Existing resources are leveraged to provide vocational assessment, career counseling and fund employment place services through OJT’s. These grants are utilized to bridge the gap between businesses and the aging population.

6. Ex-offenders

Atlantic County works with the Volunteers of America which has an Atlantic City Safe Return program for ex-offenders. Safe Return assists ex-offenders in finding employment, housing, health care, substance abuse treatment, and skills training. Atlantic County will often co-enroll individuals into that program for specific re-entry services and case management and counseling, while still offering skills training through WIOA ITAs or other methods, depending on customer need or choice. Atlantic County is working to enhance services for ex-offenders re-entering the workforce and community in partnership with this program and also in partnership with area New Jersey Department of Corrections Transitional Services sites and programs, and staff make referrals to re-entry programs throughout the county.

7. People with Disabilities – For information related to services for people with disabilities, see Plan Section XIV: Services to Individuals with Disabilities, below.

8. Supportive Services – For information relating to supportive services please see Plan Section XI: Supportive Services, below.

Describe how the local board, working with the entities carrying out core programs, will facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs.

Career pathway development is critical to supporting workers and businesses in Atlantic County. Atlantic County's workforce must be equipped with a set of skills that is quite different than what was required for the past 35 years. From January of 2014 to October of 2016, Atlantic City has closed five casinos and established job losses for more than 10,000 workers. The skill set of many of those workers who provided customer service, through housekeeping, stockroom management, maintenance services as well as others, was limited to very basic education. Many of the jobs did not require a high school education. Many of the jobs were constructed so that the workers were only required to speak in their native tongue and not required to learn and speak English. Workers that did have high school diplomas and college education have remained in the same hospitality-based industry for more than 20 years. These workers are of the belief that they are too old to start all over again and are holding on to the hope that a casino will re-open in the near future and they will return to the work that they know best.

For those that are interested in pursuing other careers, the language and education foundation must be established first. Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language are services that are provided by workforce development and are essential to the attainment of a high school diploma. There are very few jobs that require a certification or industry-valued credential that do not also require a high school diploma. Counselors working with newly dislocated workers from the casino industry offer a number of basic services to all customers that are in need of basic educational and ESL services prior to pursuing their career pathway.

Once that foundational education credential has been attained, the customer is advised to pursue career pathways that offer an opportunity for a living wage, sustainability and advancement. Currently those areas revolve around the health industry, logistics and transportation industry, and hospitality, retail and tourism.

The Atlantic County Office of Workforce Development must provide an acceptable alternative to these workers that offers hope for a sustainable living wage in a career that offers the opportunity for individual and industry growth.

The South Jersey Workforce Collaborative, of which Atlantic County is a member, has prioritized career pathways through the following priorities:

- Develop viable pre-apprenticeship programs and apprentice programs with local businesses in the healthcare industry
- Create career-based programming to develop relationships between K–12 and postsecondary education to improve college readiness.
- Increase Out-of-School Youth programs to focus on career pathways, apprenticeships and post-secondary education
- Develop programs of student/job seeker and employer engagement that supports the guided pathway and career pathway approach to training and education
- Enhance connections between employers and job seekers through industry sector initiatives
- Develop a partnership framework for ongoing collaboration
- Raise awareness of in-demand skills and occupations among stakeholders

- Enhance program and credential development/alignment with business needs and industry valued credentials
- Expand private sector partnership model for youth programs
- Integrate assessment tools with emerging industry needs

Atlantic County Career Pathways activities will include:

- The Atlantic WDB's Healthcare Committee has done significant work to develop career pathways in conjunction with area healthcare industry employers, including a coherent multi-step pathway to move workers from Medical Assistant to Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) and to Registered Nurse (RN).
- Career pathways being developed for dislocated workers coming from housekeeping and other lower-skilled casino positions. Many of these workers are immigrants and lack sufficient English language skills for higher-level work. In partnership with Atlantic Cape Community College, Atlantic County Office of Workforce Development (ACWD) is delivering bridge training for this ESL population to develop their basic skills alongside customer service training that will result in a customer service credential and a front-desk service credential. They are being placed in front-desk and other customer service positions at various County and regional employers.
- Community Work Experience Program (CWEP): This mandated core work activity serves as the foundation for building marketable work experience for those customers receiving public assistance. Because the cash benefits associated with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and General Assistance (GA) recipients requires those customers to participate in full time work activities, many of the participants have the opportunity to enhance their educational functional level, expand their work-related credentials and take steps to initiate a career pathway. For example, the employers of the local nursing homes are constantly struggling to establish and maintain adequate staffing levels to meet the needs of their residents. Because the turnover for certified nursing assistants exceeds 30% in many facilities, it is very difficult to deliver a consistent high quality of service. Expenses related to overtime are placing serious financial burdens on these employers. Many of the workers hired for the nursing assistant positions become disenchanted with the difficulty of the work and quit after only a short time of employment. Working in conjunction with the Work First New Jersey work activity vendors, local non-profit and government agencies provide an opportunity for workers to gain real workplace skills in a number of areas, which they can use to transition to permanent employment. Efforts are currently underway to develop work activities in the county nursing home to provide real work experience in an in demand occupation at the nursing home, to provide a working understanding of the job duties and responsibilities of the position. Customers that are now intent on pursuing a credential for the certified nursing assistant will be more educated and informed about this position. This added step should lead to longer retention and career pathway planning in the health care field.
- Working closely with the Talent Networks and Talent Development Centers to develop further career pathways and build upon those being developed elsewhere in New Jersey and beyond to engage area business and industry in implementing career pathway training and workforce activities throughout Atlantic County.

Describe how the local board, working with the entities carrying out core programs, will improve access to activities leading to an industry valued credential, as made available through the Industry-Valued Credential List published by the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Highlight how the local area's education and occupational training programs will include employability skills (soft skills) training, experiential learning opportunities; including classroom training, on-the-job training, internships, externship, registered apprenticeship and any other training methods that are delivered.

Several training programs are mentioned in the sections above.

Soft Skills / Foundational Skills Training:

Currently the County's One-Stops use a common curriculum for soft-skills training. This curriculum is built in response to employer needs. When the Board releases competitive bids for Work First New Jersey (WFNJ) programs, an integrated soft-skills component is required in all classroom training efforts, and the Board is working to ensure that all Eligible Training Provider programs also include soft skills in their curriculum. The local Foundational Skills Training is built on a strong foundation of research. According to United States Department of Labor (USDOL) in a presentation made December 15, 2010, there are universal soft skills employers want from workers that include:

1. Work Ethic and Professionalism
2. Teamwork and Collaboration
3. Customer Service
4. Workplace Etiquette
5. Problem Solving and Critical Thinking
6. Effective Communication

This is especially true for younger workers and those with long term unemployment.

In addition, the NJLWD issued a publication in 2011 entitled: *Greener Pathways: Paving Your Way to Career Success Starts with Understanding New Jersey's Labor Market* that cited five high priority skills (in addition to soft skills) that workers need to have to compete in a global economy. These included:

1. Adaptability Skills
2. Information Management and Communication
3. Business Skills
4. Interdisciplinary Skills
5. Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Skills, where applicable

Classroom Training:

Most credentials for which the workforce system in Atlantic County trains are industry recognized. The Board engages employers through the Business Services Team individually and in partnership with Regional efforts of the South Jersey Workforce Collaborative. Atlantic County has approximately 40-45 trainers on the Eligible Training Provider list that customers regularly select and engage in training. The primary training emphasis in the Atlantic County region includes, certification for truck driving, (CDL) certification for nursing assistant, (CNA) licensing as a cosmetologist, training for medical assistant, training for Microsoft Office, culinary school training and medical coding and billing. The primary employment opportunities involve the medical and logistic industries. In PY 2015, Atlantic County wrote over 845 ITA contracts. While hospitality, retail and tourism is an important industry, it does not attract as many customers as the two mentioned above.

Internships:

See above on the Community Work Experience Program for another valuable internship program in place in Atlantic County. While the CWEP program provides an opportunity for the public assistance customer to experience job activity related to a potential career entry point, the local carpenters' union has created a pre-apprenticeship (internship) for customers who might be interested in the carpenters' union five-year apprenticeship program. This program creates a learning environment that allows for the development of knowledge and a working understanding of the commercial carpenter. While the internship is focused on the trades, it sets a standard and expectation for baseline requirements that can be used for consideration of internships in other industry sectors.

Experiential Learning:

The Community Work Experience Program has provided a safe learning environment for a small number of public assistance recipients that are learning how to use new technology in the county welfare offices. These participants, while still participating in the CWEP program, are learning how to digitize and data enter documents within the public assistance system. Although not yet employed, the skills these customers are learning will enhance their data entry and clerical skills, and afford the participant a valuable asset that will improve their resume and marketability. Externships are a required component for many of the occupational training programs. Several of the medical industry programs include externships in the medical discipline the customer is pursuing. These externships offer the trainee the opportunity to practice the skill they are learning in a controlled, supervised environment. In many cases, the customer's externship experience has led to employment opportunities with the business owner.

On-the-Job Training:

The On the Job Training (OJT) programs bridges the skills gap between workers and local employers. This program provides a broader array of employment opportunities for customers, while providing financial incentives to the business community to encourage economic growth and expansion. This approach allows the customer to receive work experience and elevates the burden on the employer for the initial training period of a new hire. The ideal situation is that a successful OJT placement provides full-time unsubsidized employment for the customer and satisfies the employer needs at the same time.

OJT also provides job retention services that support businesses in several ways. Retention helps alleviate employee turnover, which is one of the biggest financial burdens facing employers. Businesses incur costs even before the actual hire, such as interviewing, background checks and substance abuse screening. Retention services through OJT reduce these costs by providing training support to the employer during the initial hiring phase and continued support throughout the training period. Business are reimbursed up to \$4,000 per customer based on the Specific Vocational Preparation (SVP) assessment as reflected in the Job Zones of O*Net that indicates training hours for different occupational titles. The OJT is considered to be full-time, with a minimum of 35 hours per week. Employer contribution towards trainee wages is no less than the current minimum wage of \$8.38 per hour. The "Prove It" assessment is utilized to match trainee skill-sets with employers prior to placement and execution of a contract.

Registered Apprenticeship:

Apprenticeship continues to be a viable option for employers with specific training needs. According to the United States Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration (ETA), registered apprenticeship has over 1,000 apprenticeable occupations across a variety of fields, with traditionally strong showing in the construction industry. On their website, the ETA lists its top 10 occupations for the previous fiscal year, almost

all of which are available in both green industries and growing industries and include: Electrician, Heavy Truck Driver, Carpenter, Plumber Pipe Fitter, Sheet Metal Worker, and Construction Craft Laborer, Roofer, Ironworker and Painter. The Atlantic WDB works with the local apprenticeship coordinator to provide opportunities for students that show interest in those fields, as well as many others. The apprenticeship coordinator works with local union representatives that serve on the WDB Board to coordinate such opportunities. It's this type of connectivity that enables the WDB to offer specialized services and initiatives.

IV. Local Area Strategies and Services

Describe the strategies and services that will be used in the local area in order to facilitate engagement of employers, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations, in workforce development programs.

The Business Development Committee of the WDB endorses a systematic approach to the delivery of services for the business community. It supports implementing service strategies to:

1. Develop evaluation tools to assess employer needs.
2. Increase accessibility of information to private sector business through social media.
3. Partner with the New Jersey Talent Networks to identify workforce needs and develop a skilled workforce to meet those provisions in Advanced Manufacturing, Financial Services, Healthcare, Technology and Entrepreneurship and Transportation, Logistics and Distribution to access industry based organizations.
4. Institute an evaluation process to garner business satisfaction with services.

In order to achieve many of the system goals and to be effective in the implementation of WIOA and WFNJ, the WDB incorporates employers as a system user and offers assistance and financial incentives. The WDB works with local employers to identify skills gaps and addresses these concerns through private sector membership on the Board and in sub-committee settings. These Committees have written plans to address specific industries and populations to meet the needs of the local labor market. Recommendations are shared with appropriate parties to address through the development or modification of job training, work experience and work preparation activities.

The WDB works with small, midsized and large local area employers, the JOBS and the NJLWD to ensure that identified skills gaps that are not being met, are incorporated into existing programs. In the event that these skills cannot be incorporated into an existing program, the WDB will seek to have those needs met by offering additional programs or services. Meeting the skill needs of employers will increase the employability of the customers serviced. Therefore, the WDB is diligent to ensure that skills are addressed through the delivery of core, intensive and training services.

The One-Stop System's Business Representatives (BSR) coordinate services to maintain a non-duplicative, seamless delivery of services to the employer community. The BSRs are members of the Business Development Committee and attend quarterly meetings. Information is shared with the Committee and recommendations made for implementation of new service strategies to improve employer participation.

Employers are given a single point of entry into the system that allows them to streamline their recruiting efforts and reduces duplication of services. The BSRs work in tandem to acquire job orders and inform area employers of the various programs and incentives that are available. These incentives vary from time to time based on funding availability, but are marketed as a benefit to the employer. Employer familiarity of One-Stop business services is critical to the labor exchange. Likewise, these relationships allow the BSRs to gather information, in an informal setting related to what employers need as it pertains to job preparation and training skills.

Local companies are able to communicate with the One-Stop System, possible job growth areas and expansion efforts in local industry. This information is utilized in a proactive manner to address the future needs of the workforce. Additionally, it allows the One-Stop System to provide up-to-date labor market information to better serve customers participating in activities sponsored by the One-Stop System. Similarly, employers have access to information related to education, training, OJT and other services that may be of value to them in growing their businesses. Employers are encouraged to register employment opportunities on the Career Connections website. They may place job orders online and review applicant resumes. Through this venue, job candidates and employers are able to connect with little assistance from the One-Stop System. However, when needed hands on assistance is available through the BSR.

The On the Job Training (OJT) programs bridges the skills gap between workers and local employers. This program provides a broader array of employment opportunities for customers, while providing financial incentives to the business community to encourage economic growth and expansion. This approach allows the customer to receive work experience and elevates the burden on the employer for the initial training period of a new hire. The ideal situation is that a successful OJT placement provides full-time unsubsidized employment for the customer and satisfies the employer needs at the same time.

OJT also provides job retention services that support businesses in several ways. Retention helps alleviate employee turnover, which is one of the biggest financial burdens facing employers. Businesses incur costs even before the actual hire, such as interviewing, background checks and substance abuse screening. Retention services through OJT reduce these costs by providing training support to the employer during the initial hiring phase and continued support throughout the training period. Business are reimbursed up to \$4,000 per customer based on the Specific Vocational Preparation (SVP) assessment as reflected in the Job Zones of O*Net that indicates training hours for different occupational titles. The OJT is considered to be full-time, with a minimum of 35 hours per week. Employer contribution towards trainee wages is no less than the current minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour. The “Prove It” assessment is utilized to match trainee skill-sets with employers prior to placement and execution of a contract.

Realizing that the area’s workforce is comprised of two distinct categories, young adults completing their education and a workforce, that is indeed growing older will compel employers to rethink current business practices and develop new processes that effectively utilize this resource. Consideration of modified work schedules, including greater opportunity for part-time or half day employees, virtual employment and home based employment will provide smaller businesses ways to continue to thrive while addressing the employee’s needs for social and financial support. Young workers prefer employment that allows for greater flexibility of time and work setting. Older workers with disabilities may need this accommodation for self-sufficiency. This requires employers to re-tool their thinking as to how best benefit from the existing labor pool. Helping businesses recognize the value of this resource is one for the first efforts that should be undertaken by the One-Stop. Intensive agency supports and financial incentives for the employer offset training costs and enhance the opportunity for retention. OJT programs supported by the One-Stop that embrace these elements will considerable increase the number of customer that secure employment and retain that employment over a longer period of time. Numerous business organizations with household names like American Express, Compact Computer Corporation and Sun Microsystems have found increase productivity through telecommuting.

Apprenticeship continues to be a viable option for employers with specific training needs. According to the United States Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration (ETA), registered apprenticeship

has over 1,000 apprenticeable occupations across a variety of fields, with traditionally strong showing in the construction industry. On their website, the ETA lists its top 10 occupations for the previous fiscal year, almost all of which are available in both green industries and growing industries and include: Electrician, Heavy Truck Driver, Carpenter, Plumber Pipe Fitter, Sheet Metal Worker, and Construction Craft Laborer, Roofer, Ironworker and Painter. The Atlantic WDB works with the local apprenticeship coordinator to provide opportunities for students that show interest in those fields, as well as many others. The apprenticeship coordinator works with local union representatives that serve on the WDB Board to coordinate such opportunities. It's this type of connectivity that enables the WDB to offer specialized services and initiatives.

Incumbent worker training is made available to employers who qualify to improve the quality of the workforce and help individuals advance in their existing careers. Customized training opportunities are utilized by local businesses in the Atlantic service delivery area for incumbent worker training. Over the past two (2) decades, the Hospitality and Tourism industry has frequently utilized this service, but in the past five (5) years other industries have partnered in such endeavors. For instance, the healthcare industry recently utilized a customized training grant to train workers with limited English proficiency in universal healthcare terminology to improve patient care. Customized training opportunities are mostly applied on behalf of the employer by Atlantic Cape Community College (Atlantic Cape) and in some instances provided by another training entity. The BSRs market the availability of customized training funds to the employer community as a means to facilitate the relationship with the community college that benefits the employer. In no instances is public training dollars utilized to underwrite an employer programs brokered by the training vendor. Intensive services to the employer population are closely monitor and coordinated to eliminate duplication of service and double dipping.

Employers utilizing the One-Stop System understand that the skills needed to perform specific jobs are addressed by the One-Stop System during different phases of program implementation. During the core service phase, basic skills needs are identified through the TABE assessment and appropriate plans made to address the deficiencies. The intensive phase of the system further identifies customer needs and determines eligibility for specific programs. The third phase of the system is based on the individual customer needs, such as job training and OJT participation. Customers are referred to these services based on the demands of the local labor market.

The NJWLD has formed Talent Networks in key New Jersey industries. These include: Green Jobs, Transportation, Logistics and Distribution, Healthcare, Advanced Manufacturing, Financial Services, Technology and Biosciences. Specific to the bi-county region are: Green Jobs, Healthcare, Financial Services and Technology. According to the NJLWD, the green economy employed 200,521 workers in 2009 in New Jersey in three (3) major areas: green energy production, renewable energy and energy efficiency, which includes green building and construction design. In addition, the healthcare and social assistance industries employed more than 500,000 people and financial services made of 5.2% of the overall total employment in New Jersey in 2010 and attributed to 8% of the state's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Furthermore, technology has supported a high skilled and paid workforce for years and the advent of the Aviation and Research Park in Atlantic County shall increase the employment needs in that industry over the next decade. As such, secondary, vocational and post-secondary education institutions and area service providers should begin to prepare young adults for employment in these areas as combined that make up more than 50% of New Jersey's workforce. Local employers categorized in these Talent Networks are a key component to this plan.

All of these approaches to worker training are being marketed to the business community and information on these initiatives is available at every career center and through the BSRs. The skill sets that customers learn while enrolled in these initiatives improves their employability while providing the employers with a highly qualified workforce. This in turn, provides the employer with a larger pool of candidates to choose from. These initiatives are successful in training and placing many customers and the WDB intends to continue to provide funds for such services. Continued support from the USDOL/ETA and NJLWD is critical to continued success and availability of these programs (See Economic and Business Development Plan for details).

Specific projects in targeted industry sectors are discussed in the South Jersey Regional Plan and in the sections that follow.

Describe the strategies and services that will be used in the local area in order to support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area.

Atlantic County's workforce development system, operated by the Atlantic County Office of Workforce Development (ACWD), works to ensure that the area workforce is ready for the demands of business in our community. Atlantic County WDB has become more employer-driven in response to community needs and WIOA goals and works closely with the Atlantic County Improvement Authority, the County's economic development arm.

Employer services that are mirrored with job-seeker services include:

- **Business outreach** to build strong, multi-faceted employer relationships through high quality partnerships to find out what employers are looking for and help them fill all their needs.
- **Assessment of employer needs** to create a detailed job description which can be disseminated county-wide and region-wide (in keeping with regional business service team strategies outlined in the South Jersey Workforce Collaborative's Regional Plan).
- Delivery of **customized training solutions** including current worker incumbent worker training, new worker customized training classroom training with work-readiness components that serve both worker and business.
- **Job placement activity that works not merely to fill open positions but works closely with area businesses to build the capacity of area companies such that they can expand their workforce and create new jobs.** The Office of Workforce Development partners closely with the County's Economic Development department to help employers build capacity, by providing them a better trained and more job-ready workforce, helping them access other public benefits (tax credits, other training funding, small business support, etc.), building linkages to other businesses, and other services to help ensure that they are more able to hire, retain and pay a good wage to more workers overall. This is real job creation and demands that our system work differently than a merely "supply-side" system. Atlantic County is working to build this new model.

The Board's Economic Development Committee has worked to:

1. Make sure businesses are informed about the services available to them.
2. Once informed, engage those businesses.

3. Through support for firms, ensure that they are in a better position to have job opportunities available for our job-seeker clients.
4. Add a new role of retention support that focuses on both the worker and the business. This client-customer management effort ensures that the worker and their employer have the supports necessary, both tangible and intangible, to ensure job retention. Check-ins with the employer on “how is this worker working out?” and “how is the public system serving you?” are critical to good retention outcomes and true business services

Some examples of business-driven efforts and trainings follow. In all of these efforts, business, education and the workforce system worked together to identify the employer needs, develop curriculum and operate programs. These are successful and promising models to build upon as this new era in workforce development is ushered in.

- South Jersey Industries (South Jersey Gas) training for Utility Line Locator: The Board’s WIOA funds to support this 70-hour training that meets the needs of the South Jersey utility company which has experienced retirements resulting in a shortage of line workers. Skills include visual inspection of pre-defined construction sites, use of technology, and reading and interpreting maps to determine presence of underground utilities. This training was developed between Atlantic Cape Community College, the Atlantic County Office of Workforce Development and the industry. In 2014, trained 7 with 100% securing employment in the field.
- Operation Gas Technician: 124 hour program in conjunction with South Jersey Gas and Atlantic Cape Community College. Skills developed include plastic fusion and installation, pipe inspection, regulation of gas meters, location markings, and other skills for gas technicians. In 2014, 11 were trained with 100% securing employment.
- NJ Build Atlantic: This grant is in conjunction with the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America and includes a pre-apprenticeship training program that focuses on a 10-month demonstrated commitment to the rigors of the 5-year carpenter’s apprenticeship program. The project will assist in providing greater opportunities and incentives for individuals by providing pre-apprenticeship training, basic skills instruction, workforce readiness (employability skills) instruction and a structured work experience which will emphasize vocational-based training for entry-level skills in the construction trades. The program seeks to facilitate effective transitions by women and minorities 20 years of age and older to high-skill, high-wage employment in labor demand occupations that are apprenticeable. We have partnered with the Northeast Carpenters Apprentice Training & Educational Fund and Atlantic Cape Community College (ACCC). The program is comprised of four months of activities involving academic improvement and six months of carpentry instruction. The academic improvement component takes place at the local community college. The carpentry instruction is held at the union hall’s training facility. At the conclusion of the training program, the candidates who remain will complete the entrance exam for the apprenticeship program. Those that successfully qualify will be accepted into the program and begin receiving wages at \$18.75 per hour. The program began with 35 women and minority participants. Currently there are 26 customers who continue. The pre-apprenticeship program will conclude in July of 2017.
- Travel Industry Sales Technology: This 300 hour training partnership with Brownstone Groupe and Atlantic Cape May Community College results in the Travel Agent Proficiency (TAP) certification. It prepares participants for entry-level positions in the travel and tourism industry. The Brownstone Groupe is in the process of opening a training facility in Atlantic City to continue to provide training and part of the site will be a call center for those who are unable to work from home.

- Entrepreneurial Training: 60-hour training at Atlantic Cape Community College to assist individuals in developing ideas for a business, write business plans, secure funding, and begin to manage their small business venture. The program has trained two cycles of students so far with three new small businesses that have launched as a result of this training.
- Atlantic County has a major Healthcare Professions Institute at Atlantic Cape Community College.
- Multi-employer training initiatives: Atlantic County WDB has worked to build multi-employer efforts to craft job-readiness and key credential trainings for groups of firms. These efforts bring firms together to discuss their needs, build common curriculum together and provide feedback to the trainers, case managers and job-readiness instructors on candidates to improve the worker preparation. This has been launched in several industries including landscaping and is being developed in conjunction with several of the Talent Networks.

Describe the strategies and services that will be used in the local area in order to better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development.

Atlantic County WDB is working in close partnership with the local economic development entities to coordinate workforce and economic development efforts. In 2014-2015, the County for the first time launched a public economic development entity, the Atlantic County Improvement Authority (ACIA). Previously, the County had an advisory board focused on economic development efforts, but this new entity moves Atlantic County forward in the implementation of coordinated workforce development-economic development partnerships. The WDB is building multiple methods of coordinating at the leadership and staff level with the ACIA including attending one another's meetings, regular staff coordination meetings and more.

See Section V, following, for a comprehensive description of strategies and services Atlantic County is using to coordinate workforce development efforts with economic development.

Describe the strategies and services that will be used in the local area in order to strengthen linkages between the One-Stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs.

Atlantic County follows guidance from the State of New Jersey in coordinating with Unemployment Insurance programs and services. As UI falls under the State Department of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD) and is a core WIOA system partner, LWD guides UI staff in delivering coordinated services. Atlantic County Office of Workforce Development staff collaborate constantly with their UI partners, sharing coordination of customer cases, collaborating on shared activities at the One-Stops and coordinating business services.

The Pleasantville One-Stop Career Center is comprised of all components of the workforce development system including the WIOA local staff, Wagner-Peyser, DVRS, Adult Education and Literacy, Business Services Center and UI services. The Pleasantville One-Stop Career Center holds quarterly building meetings that involve all service partners, both state and local managers. These meetings involve organizational discussions involving the current status of services to customers, policy changes and the impact on all parties. Planning discussions to improve the efficiency of service delivery and increase awareness of all partners' actions and responsibilities as they relate to our collective customers' well-being.

Internal communication within the One-Stop allows for workforce development service activity to be comprehensive and timely. Because the One-Stop services include a full-time UI clerk, those customers who

are having problems managing their unemployment benefits can have their concerns addressed through a face-to-face conversation with a knowledgeable UI representative. Without the availability of this asset, the customer would have to travel 60 miles, to Camden County, to meet with a UI clerk. The ACWD has established relationships with all service components and as a result has created a working collaboration of all services and resources to address both group and individual needs of the customer.

Currently, identified eligible customers are being co-enrolled in Wagner-Peyser and WIOA activities simultaneously. Because of planning discussions and regular joint meetings between state employment services and the local WIOA management staff, the implementation of co-enrollment activities is in place and active.

The New Jersey Office of WIOA Technical Assistance and Capacity Building provides cross-training to Employment Service and WIOA staff members regarding the services available through the core partner programs (WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, DVRS, and Adult Education) as well as UI and TANF. Cross-training in UI includes eligibility and filing procedures to ensure that all One-Stop Career Centers are able to provide customers with meaningful assistance in filing UI claims. The WIOA Technical Assistance webpage provides staff of both programs with cross-training resources.

At the One-Stop Career Centers, New Jersey has been gradually transforming its service delivery model from in-person services at all sites to a focus on concentrating staff at three regional Reemployment Call Centers. While UI will continue to offer in-person services at One-Stops, UI customers are primarily directed to courtesy telephones and online resources at the majority of One-Stops. Wagner-Peyser staff are trained to resolve common and simple non-monetary issues for UI customers, to assist UI customers with access to online resources and the courtesy phones, to maintain accessibility for customers with disabilities, and to provide translation services to non-English speaking claimants.

State's strategy for providing reemployment assistance to UI claimants and other unemployed individuals:

Unemployment insurance claimants receive a worker profiling score upon filing for benefits. The score measures the probability of the claimant exhausting benefits before finding new employment. Those claimants determined most likely to exhaust benefits before finding employment can be served by the RESEA (Re-employment Services and Eligibility Assessment) program. This service is provided to those dislocated workers who are at high risk of exhausting their unemployment benefits before locating their next job as well as those people who are more likely to be successful in locating employment prior to the end of their unemployment benefits. The Office of Labor and Workforce Development assesses all UI recipients to determine those in greatest need of additional services. Benefit recipients are notified within 4-5 weeks if they have been selected to participate in the program. Those customers are required to participate in the RESEA program in order to continue receiving their UI benefits. The goal of this program is to provide unemployed workers who receive UI benefits with early access to specific strategies that can help get them back into the workforce faster. The strategies include developing a reemployment plan, access to relevant labor market information and referrals to reemployment services and training, as well as assessing their on-going UI eligibility.

In Atlantic County, the WIOA One-Stop system follows LWD's lead in utilizing Wagner-Peyser funds to support UI claimants in the following ways:

- The State automatically pre-registers reemployment service-eligible UI claimants into the One-Stop case management system, America's One-Stop Operating System (AOSOS), which feeds the OnRamp

tool at *careerconnections.nj.gov*. This pre-registration is accomplished through a daily electronic batch data transfer from the UI mainframe system to New Jersey's AOSOS database. Almost all UI claimants are pre-registered in AOSOS; only those claimants who are coded as temporarily laid off and those who are attached to a union hiring hall are exempt from this pre-registration. This electronic data transfer enables all One-Stop partners to access identifying information on UI claimants in order to offer reemployment services.

- Strategic targeting of new UI claimants for services based on their likelihood of exhausting UI benefits has gradually replaced in person reemployment orientations that gave claimants an equal chance of selection, but due to capacity limitations only served a small fraction of new claimants. Fine-tuning of the UI claimant profiling model and targeting claimants for services by veteran status, industry or occupational affiliation, and duration of unemployment will increase in frequency over the next two years. This will result in One-Stop Career Center staff more effectively serving jobseeker customers translating into better employment outcomes.
- Federal legislation requires all states to provide reemployment assistance to those claimants who are permanently laid off and are identified as most likely to benefit from One-Stop services. Selected claimants are required to participate in this mandatory program of reemployment services. Unemployment claimants who are identified are referred to reemployment services through the RESEA program. The profiling system also targets individuals with the best chances of quick reemployment by requiring them to attend workshops. The goal is to keep jobseekers focused on the search for new employment and to ensure that those no longer looking for work do not continue to receive UI benefits.
- New Jersey Unemployment Compensation law requires that a claimant for UI benefits be able to work, be available for work and be actively seeking work. Generally, the Division of Unemployment Insurance considers a minimum of three employer contacts each week a reasonable search for work. Telephone, in-person contacts, and applying for job openings or sending resumes electronically using the Onramp tool at *careerconnections.nj.gov* or directly at employer websites, are all acceptable work search methods.
- UI claimants calling LWD for assistance or information may be placed on hold while waiting for the next available customer service representative. Information on One-Stop Career Center reemployment services are shared with claimants as they wait including virtual services available at *careerconnections.nj.gov*.

Claimants filing online are directed to the One-Stop Orientation video (located online at <http://wotcnj.dol.state.nj.us/rborient/index.jsp?sid=nj4jobs>) after completing their application for unemployment benefits. The online orientation provide information on re-employment services including labor exchange, basic and occupational skills training, career exploration, and staff-assisted services such as Jersey Job Club workshops, employment counseling, and program eligibility/assessment services available at *careerconnections.nj.gov* and at the One-Stop Career Centers. Upon filing, claimant information automatically populates the One-Stop case management system (currently AOSOS) to facilitate service delivery and minimize duplicate data entry. Claimants required to attend mandatory workshops (RESEA) receive eligibility reviews, group workshops, one-on-one LMI and re-employment planning, and referral to re-employment services such as basic and occupational skills training, Jersey Job Club workshops, and the *careerconnections.nj.gov* resume builder and job search engine.

In order to provide more proactive services to UI claimants, the balance of UI claimants not selected for RESEA will be required to attend a mandatory re-employment orientation with four weeks of first payment starting in early CY 2016. Claimants not reporting to any mandatory session are referred to UI adjudication staff for a non-monetary review. Claimants and UI applicants visiting a One-Stop Career Center for filing or resolving claims issues are directed by Wagner-Peyser staff to resource room PCs and provided technical assistance on filing or directed to the UI phone back for priority connection to a UI call center. While Wagner-Peyser staff are not UI issues experts, they can assist with technology tools, resolve simple and common UI issues, and encourage claimants to engage in re-employment services. Technology improvements in CY 2016 include the launch of a single sign on web/smart phone application for UI claimants that will provide claimants with a convenient and common vehicle for UI and re-employment services. And, since UI claimants will be required to use the single sign on to certify the continuation of benefits on a weekly basis, engagement with re-employment services will happen on a more frequent basis.

Describe the strategies and services that will be used in the local area in order to create linkage during program delivery between individual customers and employers.

See the prior sections within *Section IV* for content on strategies.

Coordination and collaboration with employers to build direct one-on-one and group linkages for individual customers with area employers and workers includes a number of activities. Employers engage in these to varying degrees, and Atlantic County is working to leverage the commitment of the private sector business members, and all member companies, of our Workforce Development Board to participate in a range of individual customer service activities.

Some examples of the kind of linkages being built may include:

- Presentations by employers to job-readiness classes at the One-Stops. As part of the Job Search/Job Readiness class, customers are introduced to area employers who discuss the work requirements for their employment, the type of skills they look for in a quality employee, including the education and work experience requirements that they look for in an applicant, and insights on workplace expectations, company cultures and application processes. This content is industry-specific as well as valuable insights across industries. The customers get the opportunity to interact with the employers and examine the opportunity for possible career pathways through the employer's frontline portal.
- Informational interviews for job-seekers to learn about the industries and area employers in a more relaxed atmosphere but also to provide practice in interviewing and self-presentation.
- Mentoring by business/employer staff or workers previously placed at a firm for new program participants. One on one mentoring relationships particularly with program graduates are proven to improve program retention, performance and job acquisition for program participants.
- Site visits / tours of employer sites
- Internships, as described in section above.
- Employers visiting training programs or observing workers there as part of their vetting of training curricula. This is an idea to help more deeply engage our industry advisors in the training programs, and a chance to see workers in class and on the job to expand their knowledge of our funded training programs and confidence in their quality.

V. Partnerships with Economic Development

Describe how the local board will drive an effective partnership between workforce development activities and economic development activities in both the local area and in the region. This will include a description of how the local board will coordinate local workforce investment activities with regional economic development activities that are carried out in the local area and how the Local WDB will promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services.

Atlantic County is working to expand its overall capacity at Economic Development. In 2014-2015, the County for the first time launched a public economic development entity, the Atlantic County Improvement Authority (ACIA). Previously, the County had an advisory board focused on economic development efforts, but this new entity moves Atlantic County forward in the implementation of coordinated workforce development-economic development partnerships. The WDB Executive Director, Rhonda Lowery, is cultivating a strong partner relationship between the WDB and Atlantic County Office of Workforce Development, and the economic development Director, Max Slusher. The entities are meeting regularly to discuss how they can better partner to ensure that Atlantic County is meeting the needs of any new business or expanding business in Atlantic County. The Atlantic County Workforce Development Board/WDB will become an active partner with the Atlantic County Improvement Authority/ACIA. Atlantic County's One-Stop teams, and in particular the Business Service Representatives are also coordinating at the line level with economic development staff to coordinate business outreach and interactions and to share workforce intelligence and specific business information wherever possible.

The WDB expects to be represented on the Atlantic County Improvement Authority's Advisory Board via public or private members to assist with policy-setting. This will ensure open communications and a working relationship between the two groups.

The WDB will provide workforce services to the Atlantic County Improvement Authority. Workforce services are a critical tool for ACIA to use as they work to attract new business investment and job creation in our marketplace. Services offered will include: employee assessments, work readiness training and job skill training. WDB will also provide information on employment incentive programs. In addition to traditional services WDB will provide targeted and customized services as agreed to with ACIA including entrepreneurial skills training.

The Business Development Committee of the Atlantic County Workforce Development Board/WDB is charged with developing strategies and services to encourage business engagement and economic development. The committee has established three goals to be implemented as part of this plan.

- The first goal is to routinely survey businesses. Surveys will address what skill sets employers are looking for, what job readiness classes should be offered, address questions employers have regarding WDB services, get information on job openings, determine business awareness of WDB programs, and evaluation of WDB performance in the eyes of business.
- The second goal will be an employer and employee matching program. This will include an outreach program to employers. This will be done in general information industry group meetings, and one-on-one meetings. Technology will be used in the matching program. The Workforce Development Board will bring the employees into the matching program. All existing and some new workforce

development agencies will support these efforts. Information sharing and partnering between the public and private sectors will be key to successfully addressing this goal.

- The third and final goal will be case management. Once a job placement occurs, case management will follow. Policies and procedures for case management will be developed. It will include follow-up meetings with both employees and employers. The follow up will occur on a 30/60/90 day basis. Additional follow-up will take place as needed. Also wrap around social services will be provided.

The committee will establish performance measures for all three goals and these will be approved by the WDB. Following evaluations, recommendations will be made to improve procedures and results.

Following are specific local and regional economic development plans and the Atlantic County WDB's and Office of Workforce Development's roles and coordinated activities with those plans' goals and strategies.

Atlantic County Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan – Workforce Development Components

The following economic development goals and strategies were set in 2015 as part of the first major economic development plan for the County. The Atlantic County Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan was a collaborative public private effort and included on its steering committee the Atlantic Cape May Workforce Investment Board (predecessor to the Atlantic County Workforce Development Board), Atlantic County Economic Development Advisory Committee (predecessor to the Atlantic County Improvement Authority), Atlantic Cape Community College, Atlantic County Department of Regional Planning and Development, Atlantic County Public School Districts, and a range of industry organizations including the County's Chambers of Commerce, the Atlantic County Utilities Authority, Casino Reinvestment Development Authority, and our State partners including the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Goals set in that Plan that the Board and ACWD will coordinate with include:¹⁶

- 1) **Empower Regional Economic Development Activity:** Focusing work locally that has previously been primarily addressed at the statewide level will help Atlantic County work to retain, grow and attract industries that make sense in our community and that will provide good jobs for our workers. The WDB will work to ensure skills training, worker preparation, and business workforce services to supply a qualified workforce for firms in a range of industries.
- 2) **Drive Industry Diversification:** Because of the lack of variation in the historic economy, there were limited jobs for the population beyond the retail and hospitality industry jobs prevalent in the region's tourism industry. The workforce system will support this diversification by training workers for new industries and helping retain workers in the County with skills in targeted industries. The WDB's focus on entrepreneurship training fits closely with the economic Plan's goals of fostering entrepreneurship to spark innovation and creativity, invest in incubator, accelerator, and co-working spaces and help the County grow its own new businesses.
- 3) **Improve the Economic Development Product:** Four strategies to advance the County's economic development product include:
 - Improve Workforce
 - Bring Infrastructure up to Standard
 - Consolidate Municipal Services
 - Integrate Municipal Master Plans
 - Develop a Customer Service Culture

¹⁶ Source: "Atlantic County Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan," September 24, 2015 (ED Plan).

The first and last of these sit squarely within the purview of the WDB, which will continue to provide worker training including advancing customer service curricula and skills among County workers. The WDB will help the County “form strong lines of communication between businesses and skills training institutions to better educate the existing workforce to fit the needs of the local business community as well as targeted industries. Online education should be a component of this effort.”¹⁷

South Jersey Economic Development District, Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy¹⁸

This prior strategic plan for the region of South Jersey includes a number of goals and activities that are supported by Atlantic County’s workforce initiatives. These include the following. Text is taken from the CEDS with sub-bullets outlining Atlantic County activities related to each strategy:

1. Promoting Regional Workforce Cooperation. In coordination with county and municipal governments; workforce investment boards; and industry representatives, investments will be targeted that promote the expansion of a technically-skilled and qualified workforce that meets the demands of existing industries in the region and those that are being recruited.
 - Atlantic County is actively engaged in efforts including projects outlined in the sections above related to worker training, support for growing and new industries, and technical training and retraining for workers. WDB has met with employers in the landscaping industry, utility industry, healthcare industry, and most recently, the Aviation industry to determine what skills and/or training is needed to expand or grow these various industries. The WDB and ACWD are working with the newly developed food manufacturing network via our regional partners to increase and meet the demands of the employers in this field. Because of the significant role of our aviation research park, the Aviation industry is a major area for growth in Atlantic County. The WDB Executive Director is working with the director of Idea Innovations, LLC to pilot an airplane maintenance program to be called the Aviation Maintenance Academy of Southern NJ.
2. Expanding Regional Markets. The CEDS promotes the expansion of markets for existing technology-based industries to ensure their development, retention, and competitiveness. In addition, new industries will be attracted that complement the existing industrial clusters and diversify the region’s economic base.
 - In conjunction with the South Jersey Region, Atlantic County has focused on industries including biopharmaceuticals, advanced manufacturing (including boat building and related activity leveraging County strengths) and others. Worker training is focused in conjunction with industry/employers as much as possible to ensure training is directed to preparing workers for in-demand occupations.
3. Promoting Education and Training. A goal of the CEDS must be to promote an educational and training infrastructure that supports the existing retail, hospitality, arts, and cultural occupational clusters while providing additional technical training that offers opportunity for vertical career mobility.
 - Atlantic County continues to support worker training in hospitality and related tourism activity, building on the County’s major economic strengths.

Atlantic County Economic Development Projects:

A number of recent economic development projects are in place in Atlantic County that have a specific workforce component and the WDB are actively involved in their implementation. These include:¹⁹

¹⁷ ED Plan, page 14.

¹⁸ South Jersey Economic Development District, Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy published March 2016.

- **Atlantic City – Eds and Meds:** Philadelphia University, Reliance Medical Group and Stockton University are planning to partner to provide a program that will give Stockton students an opportunity to receive a master’s degree from Philadelphia University’s Physician Assistant Studies program. Upon completion of three years at Stockton, students will then transfer into a two-year program at a future Philadelphia University Atlantic City site. The students will train in clinical settings at Reliance Medical Group locations and area hospitals and will be encouraged to live in Atlantic City.
 - **The WDB is beginning to work in partnership with these efforts to refer job-seekers to these training programs. ACWD may assist with tuition waivers for some of the students who may need assistance with paying for the courses at the colleges.**
- **Tourism Expansions:** The WDB will work to support the worker recruitment, training and retention for a number of new business ventures underway in the County. These include
 - Atlantic Club on the Boardwalk
 - Bader Field Sports Fields Atlantic City
 - Polar Coaster and Observation Wheel
 - Playground at the Caesars Pier
 - Resorts Casino Hotel Expanding Convention Space
 - Steel Pier On-going Renovations
 - Golden Nugget Renovation
 - Launch of new Harrah’s resort
- **Aerospace and Avionics:** Industry work including expansion of university aerospace industry training facilities, a new technology park and Atlantic Cape Community College’s new Science, Technology and Math building catering to educating students in high paying skills sets.
- **Boat Manufacturing:** Several projects capitalizing on the County’s large boating culture, and ACWD will work to identify workers and provide training support to area firms as needed.
- **Pharmaceutical Compounding:** Telligent, a producer of topical creams that has been in business since 1978 is constructing a \$50 million improvement that is incorporating state of the art sterile production equipment that will greatly improve output and quality control, and will add 100-125 additional high paying jobs to the company’s existing 100 workers at build out. ACWD is prepared to identify and train workers.

In addition to specific projects, the WDB and ACIA work collaboratively on a constant basis. When either ACIA or WDB first interact with a business customer and assess their needs, they immediately communicate about that entity’s needs to the other partner. If ACIA, brings a new business into the area and they are in need of skilled workers, they send information to WDB. If the WDB work with a firm that is looking to move to the area to provide services to the residents of Atlantic County, we put them in contact with the ACIA to address their needs.

The WDB has recently put out an RFP for job development, placement and retention services. The selected entities will be brought in to this coordinated work and serve as another partner in the workforce development and economic development collaboration at the line level.

¹⁹ List drawn from “Atlantic County Improvement Authority Major Economic Projects and Activity As of February 2016,” report prepared by Max Slusher, Economic Development Director. These projects and Atlantic County’s plans are also summarized in the South Jersey CEDS from 2016.

Entrepreneurial Skills Training and Microenterprise Services: Mentioned above, the 60-hour Entrepreneurial Training at Atlantic Cape Community College will assist individuals in developing ideas for a business, write business plans, secure funding, and begin to manage their small business venture.

VI. One-Stop Delivery System

Describe how the local board will ensure the continuous improvement of One-Stop operator/ providers of services through the system and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local employers, and workers and jobseekers.

Include in this description the local board's process for selecting and evaluating providers through solicitations (Requests for Proposals) for services; process for utilizing the Eligible Training Provider List (setting of local standards of the Eligible Training Provider List), review of sub-grantee budgets and reports, and a description of the local area's monitoring and compliance unit and their activities.

Continuous Improvement:

The SETC has instituted a One-Stop Certification process. This process must be done every two years. With this, we will be looking at Leadership; Strategic Planning; Customer and Market Focus; Information and Analysis; Human Resource Focus; Process Management; and Business Results. Our One-Stop Oversight Committee will take the lead for doing this certification. As part of the oversight of the One-Stop system, they will make continuous recommendations for improvement as they deem necessary. They meet with the service providers at least quarterly, to continuously monitor and address breakage in services.

Selection and Evaluation of Providers:

Atlantic County's Office of Workforce Development primarily operates the One-Stop Career Center, WIOA Youth programs and all area workforce services through direct staff.

When Atlantic County does seek sub-grantee providers, we follow the detailed "Atlantic County WDB Procurement Policies and Procedures" document, last revised December 7, 2015. The following is drawn from that document.

On a regular basis, typically in June of any given year, funding is made available through the New Jersey State Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJLWD) to the County of Atlantic to fund services for at-risk youth, low income adults, dislocated workers and individuals receiving public assistance of Atlantic County. In return the County of Atlantic releases Requests for Proposals (RFP), Competitive Contracts (CC) and enters into Inter-governmental Agreements (IGA) with eligible entities that meet the qualifications set forth in the aforementioned documents and subsequent contracts. The RFP's, CC's and IGA's are typically made available between in the spring of any given year based on the service period. Eligible entities respond, proposals are reviewed, recommendations of funding are presented to the WDB Board and other required parties and those approved by the Atlantic County Board of Chosen Freeholders are awarded contracts.

RFP's allow reviewers to select sub-recipients to select the best value for the money taking into consideration the highest scorer. RFP's allow for one year contract periods. Negotiations are allowable under an RFP; therefore adjustments may be made to the level of service, budget requests and program design. Reviewers score based on the merits of applicant proposals as compared to the evaluation criteria. Rarely, applicants are denied review.

CC's allow reviewers to select the highest scorer and fund accordingly until all allocated funds are exhausted. CC's allow for multi-year contracts with renewal periods for continuity of program operations and better

retention of quality provider personnel. Negotiations are not permissible under a CC. There can be no adjustments made to the program design, level of service or requested budgets listed in applicant proposals. Reviewers score based on the merits of applicant proposals as compared to the evaluation criteria. Applicants may be denied review based on inaccurate submission of required documents and/or not responding correctly to the CC. During a CC renewal, sub-recipients must submit budgets outlining the anticipated costs. During a renewal year, budgets may be negotiated based on the anticipated allocation in the respective service area. Budgets are forwarded to the Fiscal Office for to ensure costs are reasonable and the budget is accurate. Budgets are forwarded as outlined under Section 11 of this manual.

IGA's are entered into with public entities, such as post-secondary education intuitions. These do not go through the traditional procurement process. This document is created directly between the WDB and sub-recipient.

The procedures for selection and evaluation include:

- Focus Groups to identify best practices and address concerns and issues regarding the operation of programs.
- Release of a solicitation by the Atlantic County Purchasing Department which advertises and releases the procurement document(s) with all required county, state and federal documents, including "Standards and General Assurances" and "20 CFR 683.220; Training and Employment Guidance Letter 39-11, WIOA Innovation Notice." The solicitation is published in the Press of Atlantic City and on the bids.aclink.org website. Applicants under a CC must be given a minimum of 20 days after release of procurement document(s) to respond. Applicants under an RFP must be given a minimum of 30 days after release of procurement document(s) to respond.
- Technical Assistance Meetings to inform potential sub-recipients about the program and procurement process. These are non-mandatory and held approximately 7-10 days after a solicitation is released.
- A Review Committee is formed to review proposals, made up of
- a minimum of three (3) WDB Board members, not making application for funding from both the private and public sectors, and additional reviewers from the WDB Committee related to the funding.
- Applicant proposals are received by the Atlantic County Purchasing Department via a CD or USB. Personnel may not accept proposals. Upon receipt of applicant proposal(s) the submitted budget(s) must be provided to the Fiscal Unit for review. The Fiscal Unit will initial directly on the applicant "composite sheet" of the proposed budget indicating any errors for consideration during the review process. One (1) copy of each proposal is required in a file as per NJLWD.
- Review Process: Reviewers evaluate the proposals and make recommendations for funding based on scores. They may meet as a group to discuss reviews and come to final recommendations to the Committee responsible for the funding/project.
- Selection of Grant Recipients:
 - The WDB Executive Director when applicable will be provided with a Procurement Report identifying the review committee's recommendations, names/addresses of sub-recipients, requested level of service, requested funding amount, funding year/ source and a brief description of the proposals. Funding plans made on behalf of a Committee shall be voted upon by that Committee, who in return will provide recommendations in favor or not in favor of the action to the WDB Board.
 - OR

- In some instances, WDB Board members and Committee members, when applicable will be polled via fax utilizing the prescribed “fax poll” document. The Procurement Report identifying the review committee’s recommendations as explained in Section 9 will be attached to the fax poll. Each member is asked to vote, initial the fax poll and return within three (3) business days of receipt. Fifty one percent (51%) of the membership will vote for an action to be valid (abstentions are included). Likewise, if a Committee vote is required 51% of that membership must vote for an action to be valid. The WDB Board reserves the right to approve or veto the recommendations. In some instances, this step will be omitted when an IGA is issued. [NJSA 40A:11-4.5 (d)]
- A County resolution is prepared to enact the recommendations and begin the process of entering into County contracts with the selected sub-recipient(s).
- A competitive contract memo is submitted to the Atlantic County Purchasing Department and sub-recipients are notified of their awards. Contracts are negotiated as described in detail in the Procurement Policies and Procedures.

Process for utilizing the Eligible Training Provider List:

Annually, the WDB requires training providers to respond and submit information related to their respective programs and complete “Pay to Play” materials to ensure fair procurement practices. New Jersey’s Guide to Training and Education website is utilized to review curriculum, credential, accreditation and costs. Training grants for occupational training are approved if:

1. The training is for a labor demand occupation or as recommended by the local Workforce Investment Board (WDB) and approved by the Director of the NJOICC based on documented local labor market data and conditions, and projected labor market conditions.
2. The training will substantially enhance the worker’s marketable skills and/or earning power; training grants shall not be approved for individuals already possessing identifiable marketable skills in a labor demand occupation, unless those skills need to be upgraded in order for the individual to reach a level of self-sufficiency.
3. The training services are provided in New Jersey by an eligible training provider;
4. It is determined by the individual assessment, evaluation and counseling that the individual is expected to successfully complete the training as indicated in the Employability Development Plan;
5. The training is occupational, remedial, or a combination thereof; and
6. Sufficient funding exists in accordance with the Act.

Training grants for remedial education will be approved only if:

1. The education is needed to enable the individual to develop the skills necessary to attain at least the level of self-sufficiency.
2. The education is needed to enable the individual to succeed in occupational training; or
3. The education is needed by the individual to advance in the individual’s career.

All customers interested in job training must investigate three schools from the ETPL as part of a required search process for trainings in their desired field. In doing their job training research via the ETPL they will be able to determine which trainings are in labor demand occupations. Atlantic County will only contract with training providers listed on the ETPL. Any program description and cost associated with the training must be listed on the ETPL. Customers are also encouraged to use the report card for their selected schools to check a provider’s ratings from other customers.

Further detail on the ETPL is included in Section VII. Adult and Dislocated Worker Services.

Review of sub-grantee budgets and reports, and description of monitoring and compliance unit and their activities:

The Monitoring Unit is responsible for the review and reporting of service and training provider contract compliance. This review includes the all programmatic elements of the contract and the adherence to both state and federal requirements as required of the funding source. The Monitoring Unit provides technical assistance with program requirements, attendance and client progress documentation. Any discrepancies found are reported to the appropriate Unit Manager/Coordinator, and the Executive Director of the Workforce Development Board. Any weakness or deficiency discovered in the course of a monitoring review are reported as noted above and follow-up to ensure corrective action steps have been taken.

The Monitoring Unit will also investigate client complaints and formulate a corrective actions plan for the appropriate Manager/Coordinator to consider as he or she pursues a course to resolve any issue.

Describe how the local board will facilitate access to services provided through the One-Stop delivery system, including in remote areas, through the use of technology and through other means; such as distance learning.

Atlantic County's primary method of delivering services to residents in more remote areas is through our Mobile Van. The Mobile Van is equipped with computers and staffed to allow for a full menu of services at remote locations. With the van we can provide computer access and staff support for resume-writing, career research, communication with employers and completion of online applications, essentially all the services normally delivered in a WIAO One-Stop Resource Center. We have delivered small group resume-writing and other workshops via the van. We have brought virtual job fairs to provider partner locations via the van as well. The real value is that this can be located at sites where other events are going on, so for instance the van has been placed at school open houses, resource fairs, and other community gatherings as an accessible tool for community residents.

Atlantic County provides online adult basic education classes through Learning Link and is currently exploring methods to deliver orientations, career workshops and other classes in an online virtual setting. Currently these plans in development are most limited by the need to identify secure methods to ensure that customers are completing classes online such as a post-test or other method. Atlantic County is committed to exploring further methods of supporting remote access via technology.

Describe how entities within the One-Stop delivery system, including One-Stop operators and the One-Stop partners, will comply with section 188 of the Act regarding non-discrimination, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities.

The Disability Workforce Committee addresses the training needs of the One-Stop Staff in the areas of disabilities. The WDB has at least two in house trainings a year in the area of disability awareness. In the past, we have trained on DVRS 101; Dealing with Customers with Mental Health Issues; Effective Communication

Skills for Customers with Hearing Impairments, and Understanding Social Security as it Relates to Employment. The Atlantic County One-Stop Career Center is handicapped accessible. We are a two-story building with elevators to take you to the second floor. We have six handicap parking spaces located in the rear of the building and the security guard will escort anyone who is handicapped through the employee entrance, located in the rear of the building, if necessary. We also have some visual and hearing impaired equipment to assist those jobseekers looking to utilize the computers in our resource room.

See Plan *Section XIV* for further details on services for persons with disabilities.

Describe the flow of services delivered at the One-Stop centers, including a discussion of the utilization of state and local staff for each area, in compliance with federal and state law. A diagram of customer flow and services provision may be provided as an appendix to the plan, as appropriate.

Employment & Training Customer Flow (10/2016)

- I. Systems Orientation with NJDOL Employment Services
 - a. Discussion of all services available at the One Stop
 - b. Discussion complaint procedures
 - c. Overview of Unemployment Benefits
- II. Career Beacon Workshop
 - a. Job Search in the training field begins
 - b. Self-management Skills- discussion
 - c. Customer is scheduled for eligibility and T.A.B.E
- III. Comprehensive Assessment with Employment Specialist
 - a. Discussion of TABE assessment to determine appropriateness for training selection or referral to Literacy
 - b. Review of training research documents from Career Beacon Workshop
 - c. Job Referral or ITA contract issued

Describe the roles and resource contributions of the One-Stop partners. This should include a description of the local Workforce Development Board's Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) agreements with the local One-Stop partners and resource sharing agreements. Also include a description of the steps taken, and any agreements reached with partners, regarding One-Stop infrastructure costs and shared costs. These local MOUs and agreements should be included as attachments.

The local *Memorandum of Understanding between County of On Behalf Of and One-Stop Partners of Atlantic County* (attached) outlines the roles and responsibilities of all WIOA system partners.²⁰ The MOU includes specific roles for all partners, the ACWD, the WDB. The MOU outlines expectations and commitments regarding the One-Stop Delivery System, Referrals among partners, Access to Services, Performance and

²⁰ Content in this section drawn from: "MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING between COUNTY OF ATLANTIC on behalf of the ATLANTIC CAPE MAY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD and ONE-STOP PARTNERS OF ATLANTIC COUNTY, Effective: July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2018," (One-Stop MOU), page 4-5.

Reporting Requirements, Partner Conduct, Media Communications processes, Record Retention, Dispute Resolution Procedures, and all required Assurances and Certifications. It also includes commitments regarding Resource Sharing in an attached Resource Sharing Agreement. The Plan includes an attachment regarding requirements for the handling and protections of personally identifiable information (PII).

As outlined in the MOU, all partners commit to collaborate on all One-Stop activities including:

- a. Providing performance summaries and reports, when requested and applicable to One-Stop services and customers.
- b. Participating in cross-training to build capacity and ensure that each partner is trained in the delivery of basic career services.
- c. Jointly sharing technology and information related to customer information in accordance with the guidelines and protocol established through the confidentiality consensus of the partners, including assessment scores and progress notes.
- d. Collecting and sharing common registration and service data.
- e. Monitoring common customer satisfaction activities as directed by the consensus of.
- f. Reserving utilization of any One-Stop technology purchases, either hardware or software exclusively for One-Stop activities [20CFR 678.700(a)].
- g. Providing computers to conduct job-search activities in area(s) accessible to all personnel, customers and the public [20CFR 678.700(a)].
- h. Participating in the continuous development of the One-Stop policies and procedures.
- i. Cooperating in a team approach to serve and achieve the performance standards and service goals.
- j. Cooperating to ensure that the service plans, placements and terminations for mutually serve.cl are coordinated.
- k. Acknowledging each other's organizational practices, management structure and regulatory requirements in the provision of services under this Agreement.
- l. Sharing prospective job leads.
- m. Actively attending One-Stop partner meetings.
- n. Agreeing to participate in computer-based communications systems, such as the America's One-Stop Operating System (AOSOS) or other case management systems as directed by County, State or Federal agencies.
- o. Committing to the joint preparation of documents reflective of local unified planning of the workforce development system.
- p. Providing ongoing and continuing notification that "Equal Opportunity is the Law" and providing the same written notification.
- q. Ensuring that local area adheres to record retention and personally identifiable information policies.

The MOU provides a detailed and coordinated service matrix listing all of the services provided through the One-Stop and highlighting which (often multiple) entities deliver that service. Within that Matrix, program partners will also participate in the following²¹:

- a. Basic Career Services: These are services that must be available to all job seekers.

²¹ One-Stop MOU, page 6.

- b. Individualized Career Services: These are services that must be made available if determined to be appropriate in order for an individual to obtain or retain employment. Priority for this service is for customers funding under the Title I adult program must be provided to participants who are public assistance recipients, other low income individuals and individuals who are basic skills deficient.
- c. Follow-Up Services: These services are provided, as appropriate, to participants in adult and dislocated worker activities place in unsubsidized employment, for a minimum of 12 months after the first day of employment.
- d. Assessment: PARNTER entities shall choose the most appropriate means to measure skills, abilities, attitudes, and interests of clients.

VII. Adult and Dislocated Workers

Describe and assess the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area.

Include a description of how your education and occupational training programs will include employability skills training content (soft skills) that prepares workers for a range of workplace activities and behaviors and a range of skills that are required to succeed in today's workforce.

SERVICE STRATEGY

The WDB has worked hard with its One-Stop System and OS partners to make certain that customers receive the referrals and access to additional support services they need to be successful. Each career center has co-located partners and formal and informal relationships with provider agencies to ensure that the One-Stop customers' needs are addressed that may inhibit their ability to learn and become productive workers.

The WDB is charged with the main responsibility of ensuring that universal access to necessary services happens as efficiently and effectively as possible. There is cross membership between the One-Stop Oversight Committee and One-Stop Partners and WDB so that relevant issues are brought to appropriate venues. With that said, the WDB expects that these communication channels will continue and strengthen over time.

Atlantic County Government has been designated as the administrative entity and grant recipient of WIOA and Work First New Jersey (WFNJ) funding for Atlantic County. With that said, vendors that wish to perform services on behalf of Atlantic County Government are required to participate in a procurement process. On an annual basis, typically in June of any given year, funding is made available through NJLWD to the County of Atlantic to fund academic, work readiness, employment and training programs for individuals residing in Atlantic County. In return the County of Atlantic releases Competitive Contracts (CC) or enters into Inter-governmental Agreements (IGA) with eligible vendors. Eligible providers respond, proposals are reviewed, recommendations of funding are presented to the WDB Board and other required parties and those approved by the Atlantic County Board of Chosen Freeholders are awarded contracts. The number of vendors funded depends solely on the local area allocation awarded by the NJLWD minus administrative and operations expenses.

Occupational skills vendors are required to complete a number of forms upon selection to finalize a contract, including W4, sign and return the letter of acknowledgement that they will be reimbursed the costs of training as outlined above, and a "Pay to Play" attestation committing that no outside influence is being leveraged.²²

²² From New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission: Prohibition on Business Entity Contributions (N.J.S.A. 19:44A-20.3 through 20.25):

Contributions by for-profit business entities that have or are seeking New Jersey government contracts, a practice known as pay-to-play, are subject to restrictions. A contribution made prior to the award of a contract may disqualify a business entity from receiving a contract, and the business entity is prohibited from making certain contributions during the term of a contract. These pay-to-play restrictions apply to contracts at the state, legislative, county, and municipal levels of government. In general, regulation of these contributions is a matter of government procurement law.

Disclosure of Certain Contributions by Business Entities (N.J.S.A. 19:44A-20.26, 20.27): The pay-to-play disclosure law requires that prior to entering a contract with a governmental entity of more than \$17,500 that is not publicly advertised, a for-profit business entity must disclose to that governmental entity certain contributions made during the past year. Further, a for-profit business entity that has received \$50,000 or more through government contracts in a calendar year must file the Business Entity Annual Statement (Form BE) electronically with the Commission to report contract information and reportable contributions it has made.

Those that do not complete the necessary paperwork will only be reimbursed up to \$17,500 threshold per fiscal year as directed by the County of Atlantic.

Eligible vendors may include any private-for-profit, private non-profit agencies, organizations, corporate bodies or public entity non-sectarian, public educational institutions accredited by the New Jersey State Department of Higher Education/Vocational Education or New Jersey State Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJLWD). Applicants must have experience in servicing the needs of the population based on the criteria listed in this guide.

Vendors are required to comply with Affirmative Action Requirements of Public Law 1975, c. 127 (N.J.A.C. 17:27) and the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-336).

Vendors must have approval to operate a program/course from the NJLWD in the form of a Chapter 531 Section J and/or as a private vocational school, or other appropriate state certifying entity. All vendors must be approved and prospective job training programs listed on the New Jersey Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) maintained by NJLWD. When an out-of-county fee applies, the vendor is responsible for including this information on the ETPL. For more information about eligibility requirements and how to become an approved vendor, please visit the website www.njtrainingsystems.org. This certificate of approval is a prerequisite for funding. Registered vendors are required to update their profile, program descriptions and participant enrollment and exit statistics on the website. Each prospective participant will be informed of the school's/organizations statistics and the wage percentage change of former participants.

A. Customers

As defined by the WIOA, low-income adults, dislocated workers and at-risk youth ages 16 to 24 with barriers to employment shall be the primary population served. As indicated by the WIOA, the One-Stop System must deliver core, intensive and training services to individuals that match well to their skills, aptitudes and interests and to those of the local labor market. The number of individuals seeking services varies depending on the need.

Currently the service delivery area includes one Comprehensive One-Stop Career Center located at the following site:

One-Stop Career Center: 2 South Main Street, Pleasantville, NJ 08232

- a) Adult Education and Literacy Services
- b) Employment and Training Services
- c) Migrant and Seasonal Worker Programs
- d) NAFTA Transitional Adjustment Assistance
- e) Native American Programs
- f) New Jersey Youth Corps
- g) Public Assistance Social Case Management and To-Work Activities
- h) Title IV Senior Service Programs
- i) Trade Adjustment Assistance
- j) Unemployment Compensation - Authorized under state laws
- k) Veteran Workforce Programs
- l) Vocational Rehabilitation Programs

(<https://wwwnet1.state.nj.us/lpd/elec/ptp/p2p.html>)

- m) Wagner Peyser Act Program
- n) WIOA Youth Services

Customers seeking assistance for career occupational guidance, help with a resume, job search skills, or any other employment assistance may meet with an Employment Counselor. Assessment and employment status are discussed as well as present and future career employment options. Counselors develop an Employability Development Plan (EDP) with the customer to outline the customer's path for future employment. Counselors also assist customers with additional educational help in the form of Tuition Free Waiver for eligible customers seeking additional college courses or a referral to other One-Stop services, such as literacy and job training. There are many specialized programs offered in the One-Stops to improve the likelihood of securing meaningful and sustainable employment. Currently these include, but are not limited to:

1. RESEA (Re-employment Services and Eligibility Assessment)

This service is provided to those dislocated workers who are at high risk of exhausting their unemployment benefits before locating their next job as well as those people who are more likely to be successful in locating employment prior to the end of their unemployment benefits. The Office of Labor and Workforce Development assesses all UI recipients to determine those in greatest need of additional services. Benefit recipients are notified within 4-5 weeks if they have been selected to participate in the program. Those customers are required to participate in the RESEA program in order to continue receiving their UI benefits. The goal of this program is to provide unemployed workers who receive UI benefits with early access to specific strategies that can help get them back into the workforce faster. The strategies include developing a reemployment plan, access to relevant labor market information and referrals to reemployment services and training, as well as assessing their on-going UI eligibility.

2. Jersey Job Clubs

The Jersey Job Clubs are a volunteer driven career development workshop series. These workshops focus on two different areas; the traditional job search topics as such resume writing, interviewing skills, job search techniques, and LMI information and more cutting edge areas of work search such as social media, elevator speech, networking skills and branding statements.

3. Ex-Felon Employment Support

Atlantic County facilitates targeted services for ex-offenders and those re-entering the workforce from the corrections system. The One-Stops are building connections to area New Jersey Department of Corrections Transitional Services sites and programs, and staff make referrals to re-entry programs throughout the county. The One-Stops also have an individual who assist individuals with criminal backgrounds with getting bonded to improve their chances of becoming employed.

4. Low-income Individuals and Dislocated Workers

The WDB considers the relevant needs and characteristics, and the size of the population when determining the number of individuals that should be served through funding. Priorities reflect demographics of the local area and target occupational areas that encompass employer needs and expectations. The WDB is committed to achieving its WIOA training goals. Based on those goals and subsequent analysis of individual and employer needs and the current system's capacities to meet those needs, the Board has placed a priority on low-income adults, dislocated workers, Veterans, the long term unemployed and low-income, out-of-school youth residing in the bi-county region. The Veterans Priority is outlined in a later section of this Plan. Additionally, residents

of the County receive preference over non-residents and waiting lists are maintained when an influx of out-of-county residents may occur.

Universal access to core services is available to any individual that enters the One-Stop System, and there is no eligibility requirement for these services. Core services will be comprised of registration, intake, orientation, disbursement of labor market information and career information, eligibility determination for training services, referral to intensive services and retention/follow-up services. Self-directed assistance, such as access to public computers and resources is also considered a core service. All individuals that access the One-Stop System must first receive core services before advancing to additional services. Since there is no eligibility requirement for this service, everyone must participate and it's anticipated that these services will be in high demand.

Intensive services available include the development of an individualized employment plan (IEP), comprehensive and specific assessment, group counseling, career planning, case management and short-term pre-vocational services. During this phase of service the individual focuses on workplace readiness skills and identifying their skills to address gaps between their abilities and entry to mid-level employment opportunities. The need for these services will be established during participation in core services. Since skill gaps exist in the workforce, it's always anticipated that a large percentage of individuals that do not obtain employment through the core services phase will utilize intensive services. The IEP is a living document that established short-term and long-term objectives with targeted outcomes.

The third phase of the One-Stop System centers on training services. These services include: occupational skills training, on-the-job (OJT) training, workplace readiness, entrepreneurial training, adult education, career advancement training, customized training, job placement and retention and follow-up services. These will be targeted to meet the needs of individuals who have already received core and intensive services. Training is delivered through an individual training account (ITA). Individuals that received ITA funding must show that they have been unable to secure and retain employment to be eligible for this service. Additionally, all other sources of funding such as PELL grants must be utilized prior to applying ITA funding. This process allows individuals to choose providers from the Employment and Training Provider List (ETPL) based on the employment goals listed in their individualized employment plan. It's important to note that WIOA only funds training program in occupational clusters that are deemed in-demand in the State of New Jersey. Exceptions to this rule are permitted with justification (See Policies). Given universal access granted under the WIOA and the need for more intensive services, the One-Stop Coordinator will be responsible to best match the availability of funds with those individuals most in need of training services. Atlantic County highly recommends that individuals seek training in areas that lead to industry valued credentials that will allow the customer the opportunity to grow in the field of training. The agency also look to assist customers with stackable industry recognized credentials.

Training grants for occupational training will be approved only if:

1. The training is for a labor demand occupation, either listed by the New Jersey Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (NJOICC) or as recommended by the local Workforce Investment Board (WDB) and approved by the Director of the NJOICC based on documented local labor market data and conditions, and projected labor market conditions.
2. The training will substantially enhance the worker's marketable skills and/or earning power; training grants shall not be approved for individuals already possessing identifiable marketable

skills in a labor demand occupation, unless those skills need to be upgraded in order for the individual to reach a level of self-sufficiency.

3. The training services are provided in New Jersey by an eligible training provider;
4. It is determined by the individual assessment, evaluation and counseling that the individual is expected to successfully complete the training as indicated in the Employability Development Plan;
5. The training is occupational, remedial, or a combination thereof; and
6. Sufficient funding exists in accordance with the Act.

Training grants for remedial education will be approved only if:

1. The education is needed to enable the individual to develop the skills necessary to attain at least the level of self-sufficiency.
2. The education is needed to enable the individual to succeed in occupational training; or
3. The education is needed by the individual to advance in the individual's career.

All customers have the right to appeal the One-Stop Career Center's decision to deny a grant. In order to appeal, the customer may either appear at the local One-Stop Career Center in person, or make a request by mail to the One-Stop Coordinator. The customer's request for appeal must be received or postmarked no later than ten (10) days after the mailing date of the written denial notice. In those cases when the last day of consideration for appeal fall on a Saturday, Sunday or holiday, the appeal will be accepted on the first work day following. The customer must include his/her name, address and the last 4 digits of their social security number or their birthdate in the letter. The appeal will be thoroughly reviewed by a three person committee, consisting of the One-Stop Coordinator, the Employment and Training Supervisor for the area under appeal, and the Supervisor of the Monitoring Unit. Customers will be notified of the outcome of the review within fifteen (15) days of the appeal request. Customers will be notified of the time of the review and have the right to attend that review.

Occupational skills funding will be made available to WIOA eligible customers every three years. There are federal grants up to \$5,000 and State of New Jersey grants up to \$4,000 available for such purposes. Customers cannot receive both grants, but either grant may be used in addition to Pell Grants and/or Stafford Loans offered by the training providers. These loans must be calculated into the cost of training prior to any WIOA funding applied. Funds are paid directly to the approved New Jersey Training Providers which are listed on New Jersey Training Opportunities (www.njtrainingsystems.org or www.njtopps.com).

Tuition assistance for an in-demand occupational training in excess of the \$4,000 tuition cap is considered on a case by case basis if the individual is experiencing a hardship beyond the scope of being unemployed and/or low-income. Requests to increase the tuition maximum above the tuition cap will only be considered when the training is necessary to obtain a particular job wherein the customer can provide a promise of employment from the employer. The maximum increase will be up to \$1,500 above the tuition cap for a maximum of \$5,500 dollars. Customers may only request an exception to the tuition cap for training once, during the three year durational period.

The customer must inform their Employment Specialist (ES) and provide the promise of employment for verification of such employment and documentation related to their hardship. Also the customer must submit a written statement that outlines why they need the additional funds and how it will help them achieve their short term and long term goals. The Tuition Cap Exception Request Committee (TCERC) will review the

request. This Committee is comprised of representatives from the Job Training Unit, Fiscal Unit, MIS/Support Unit and the One-Stop Coordinator. The One-Stop Coordinator will notify, in writing the decision regarding the tuition cap exception. The customer may appeal the decision made by the TCERC. This appeal must be made in writing and post marked within 30 days of receipt of the TCERC's decision to the Executive Director of the WDB.

Requests for job training, wherein the customer previously utilized WIOA funding within the three years, could be eligible to receive secondary training if they cannot utilize the previous training for reasons beyond their control or they are interested in upgrading the skills previously trained for. Customers that request secondary job training are required to contact a One-Stop Customer Service Representative (CSR) who will verify eligibility status. The customer is required to submit documentation to substantiate their claim of not being able to utilize the previous training. Documentation may include, but is not limited to:

1. Physician's note detailing the reasons why they cannot perform the duties of the job utilizing the previous training
2. Extensive and verifiable job search where they are unable to find suitable work within their field of training or other related jobs
3. A written statement from the customer as to why they cannot utilize the previous training, what type of new training they are interested in and how additional training will help them obtain and retain employment

Customers may only request a second request for training once, during a four-year durational period (based on exit date in the case management system). A Secondary Request Training Committee (STRC) reviews the documentation and formulates a decision based on the customer request on a case by case basis. This Committee will consist of five members: the one-stop coordinator, one representative of the Job Training Unit, one representative from the Monitoring Unit and two representatives from other units within the ACWD not related to the customer request. The One-Stop Coordinator will notify, in writing the decision regarding the request for secondary training. The customer may appeal the decision made by the STRC. This appeal must be made in writing and post marked within 30 days of receipt of the STRC's decision to the Executive Director of the WDB.

The On-the-Job-Training (OJT) program is supervised paid training that takes place at an employer worksite and allows employees to build and upgrade skills and employment competencies. Workers are presented with the opportunity to return to the workforce and earn wages to support themselves and their families while adding new skills or learning new techniques, production or service procedures to meet requirements of a new occupation or industry. Customers are placed in an OJT based on Specific Vocational Preparation (SVP) assessment as reflected in the Job Zones of O*Net that indicates training hours for different occupational titles. Customers are placed in full-time employment with the goal of job retention. Even if the employee does not remain in that position after the length of the OJT, they have still gained valuable work experience and can market those skills to another potential employer. The high success rate of WDB's OJT Program, funded by a National Emergency Grant (NEG) in 2011 is further evidence of the value of actual work experience in a specific field. An example: Dynamic Solar where the four trainees had a "Solar credential" from Atlantic Cape and actual work experience from the employer increased their marketability. One of those trainees left Dynamic Solar and started his own solar installation company.

Apprenticeship continues to be a practical option for individuals interested in the trades. Steering people into the trade areas and technology /energy fields converts into long term employment, with moderate to high wages and health and retirement benefits. These job sectors will always be needed as will computer and equipment repair.

The work based learning component of the One-Stop System is crucial in supporting the needs of the employer. The WDB utilizes many of these work-based programs to enhance the skills training of the workforce and offer beneficial opportunities to both the employer community and the customer. In years past, Schools to Career (STC) initiatives, such as those funded by the New Jersey State Department of Education (NJDOE) developed work based learning components for students to expose them to career experiences. Today, there are few STC programs available as operation of such programs is voluntary. As a result, the WDB has filled the need by providing for these experiences under the WIOA. The young adults (students) are exposed to local labor market information, job shadowing and work experiences. The WDB continues to work with those districts and employers that wish to continue operation of STC programs.

VIII. Rapid Response Activities

Describe how the local board will coordinate workforce development activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities, as described in section 134(a)(2)(A) of the Act.

The state's Rapid Response Team provides appropriate information, referrals, and counseling to workers who are subject to plant closings or mass layoffs, and, when applicable, will have an initial meeting with employers who are planning a layoff event. The state's Rapid Response Team will present information to the affected workforce that explains Unemployment Insurance, Re-employment Services, Training Assistance, and additional services and resources available.

The Atlantic County WDB will work in conjunction with Business Service Representatives to communicate to the public what resources are available at the local One-Stop and discuss wrap-around assistance for specific needs, including utilities, rent, and mortgage payments.

IX. Youth Activities

Describe and assess the type and availability of youth workforce development activities in the local area, including activities for youth who are individuals with disabilities, which description and assessment shall include an identification of successful models of such youth workforce development activities. Local Areas should use their WIA to WIOA Youth Transition Plans as the baseline for this section and may add additional activities and plans if developed since those Plans were submitted.

Describe the design framework for youth programs in the local area, and how the 14 program elements required in § 681.460 are to be made available within that framework.

As an organization, the Local Area received a first place Recognition of Excellence Award from the United States Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration for innovation in the operation of at-risk youth programs, a Corporate Partnership Award from the Garden State Employment and Training Association, and a Theodore E. Small Workforce Partnership Award presented by the National Association of Workforce Boards for our leadership, innovative approaches, and financial support of workforce development programs.

While this past success indicates a strong and efficient focus on youth, the changes included in WIOA will have an impact on youth activities and programs moving forward.

The New Jersey State Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJLWD) has set clear policy direction in creating employment opportunities and career pathways for young adults, primarily targeting out-of-school youth.

This plan endorses an integrated and systematic approach to the delivery of services to youth clients. It supports investment in resources that measure outcomes and meet WIOA performance standards. The Youth Advisory Council lent support to the development of this plan. Members have been invaluable assets in producing this final document.

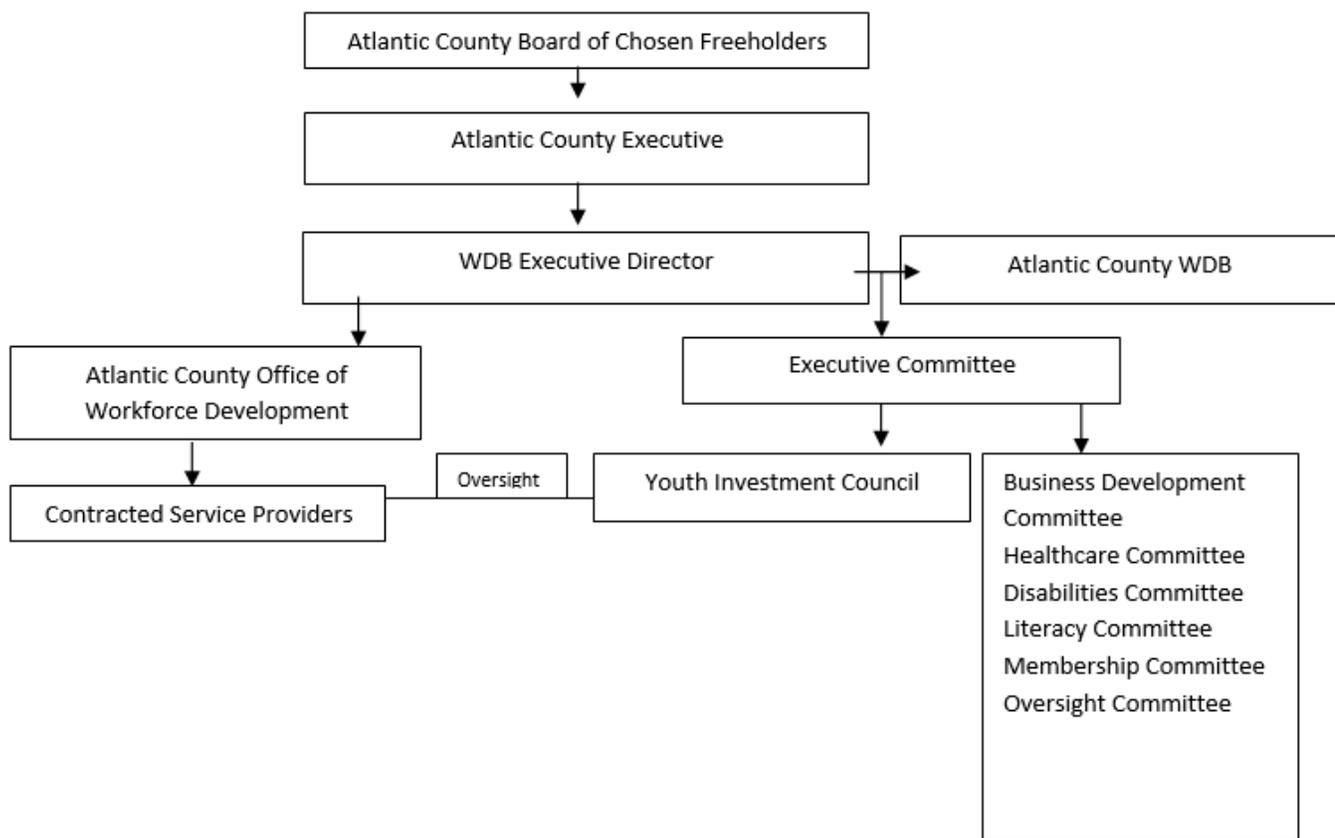
The Youth Advisory Council is well positioned to address the special workforce needs of this population as it's comprised of private sector business, community, faith based and government agencies, and post-secondary education institutions. The Youth Advisory Council anticipates accomplishing the following goals by June 30, 2019:

1. Increase funding for the out-of-school population, ages 16 to 24 to meet the minimum 75% expenditure rate as required of WIOA.
2. Expend 20% of WIOA youth funds on work-based learning experiences.
3. Increase funding in communities with underserved populations, with a high concentration of out-of-school youth, high unemployment and poverty rates and few employment opportunities.
4. Present occupational education opportunities leading to recognized post-secondary education and industry valued credentials.
5. Build relationships with the employer community to provide pre-apprenticeship/apprenticeship and employment opportunities.
6. Align program activities with demand industry sectors to ensure job development and placement into entry level positions is indigenous to the local region.

Governance

The WDB Executive Director reports directly to the Atlantic County Executive as governed by the Atlantic County Board of Chosen Freeholders. The Board’s mission is to ensure a coordinated and efficient delivery of the region’s workforce development resources. This is primarily accomplished through its membership which provides leadership, direction, and accountability for the Atlantic County area. The WDB is comprised of 35 representatives within Atlantic County with more than half its membership representing the private sector. The WDB has eight (8) working committees, one (1) of which is the Youth Advisory Council.

The Council has a membership of approximately 20 members from both the public and private sectors. The Youth Advisory Council Chair is a member of the WDB Executive Committee, which meets quarterly to ensure the Atlantic County Office of Workforce Development is satisfactorily progressing towards meeting performance measures.



Resource Investment

The National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) has stated that “WDB’s are tasked with the development of workforce strategies and leveraging education and economic development stakeholders within their local communities, to ensure that state and local workforce development and job training programs meet the needs of employers. These investments in workforce development create a comprehensive system to provide a highly skilled workforce that competes in the global economy.”

There is consensus among the Council that a collaborative approach to the provision of youth workforce services is essential to the success of this plan. Therefore, the Council will take a lead role in ensuring the following:

1. Existing partner agencies are inventoried to determine the types, availability and capacity of programs and services in Atlantic County.
2. Award contracts through a competitive process as aligned with the NJLWD State Plan criteria based of available funds from NJLWD with a minimum of 75% allocated to the out-of-school population.
3. The youth workforce system, expends 20% of WIOA funds on work-based learning experiences.
4. The youth workforce system develops Inter-Governmental Agreements with post-secondary education institutions to provide services wherein there is lack of availability or access to services upon completion of the competitive procurement process.
5. Develop Memorandums of Understanding (MOU's) with key stakeholder entities, community and faith based agencies and One-Stop partners for program elements not currently available through procured service providers or through the Atlantic County Office of Workforce Development to improve the youth workforce system.
6. Continually monitor performance and expenditures to assure funding is allocated efficiently, strategies are effective and outcomes are satisfactory.

Atlantic County Government has been designated as the administrative entity and grant recipient of WIOA funding for Atlantic County. With that said, agencies that wish to perform services on behalf of Atlantic County Government are required to participate in a procurement process.

On an annual basis, typically in June of any given year, funding is made available through NJLWD to the County of Atlantic to fund the youth workforce system. In return the County of Atlantic releases multi-year Competitive Contracts or enters into Intergovernmental Agreements with eligible applicants/agencies. Eligible providers respond, proposals are reviewed, recommendations of funding are presented to the Council and then the WDB and recommendations made to the Atlantic County Board of Chosen Freeholders. The number of agencies funded depends solely on the local area allocation awarded by the NJLWD minus administrative and operations expenses.

Demographics

The Council understands that we live in a society that values reading and writing skills and we have an educational system that favors those who do well with these skills. Those that are not strong in these academic modes generally experience less success. Those that subsequently are not successful in traditional learning systems receive less formal education, are challenged in developing a strong sense of worth and ultimately are at a distinct disadvantage competing in the labor market. Education is clearly associated with employment opportunities and financial success. Yet many of those youth at the bottom of the education ladder struggle to achieve the same level of success as their counterparts when entering into adulthood.

According to the New Jersey Attorney General's Opinion #88-0161, students who have left school prior to graduation and have not indicated an intention to complete their education at another educational institution are considered a drop-out. As listed on the New Jersey State Department of Education's (NJDOE) website, in the 2013-2014 school year, it is estimated that more than 300 youth in 9th through 12th grades drop out of high school in the local area. The following high schools experienced above average drop-out rates for that

same time period and include: Atlantic City (60), Egg Harbor Township (24), Greater Egg Harbor Regional (35), and Pleasantville (14).

According to the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce and its *LearnDoEarn* program, in order to attain a middle class standard of living (earnings between \$40,000 and \$60,000 per year), youth must complete a minimum of one (1) year of college and obtain an industry recognized certification in an in-demand skill set. Furthermore, in order to access post-secondary education opportunities and entry level jobs, youth must attain a minimum of a 9th grade level in reading and mathematical reasoning. The report continues by stating that “youth should be able to use digital tools to access, manage, evaluate and synthesize information in order to solve problems individually and collaboratively to create and communicate knowledge.”

In general, the poverty rate coincides with the unemployment rate. However, in some case the number of students in poverty can be high despite low unemployment rates. The latest data from the State Division of Family Development shows that Atlantic and Cape May counties had the highest caseload in the state over the past year, up 4.5 and 9 percent respectively, while almost every other county in the State of New Jersey has seen a decrease. That same report found that 77 percent of eligible residents participated in New Jersey’s Food Stamp program.

According to the New Jersey Municipal-County Offense and Demographic Data Report, the municipalities with the highest rate crime index in 2010 included in Atlantic County: Atlantic City (4,109), Egg Harbor Township (1,110), Hamilton Township (1,292) and Pleasantville (762). All crime rates are based on permanent, year-round populations. The crime rate index includes both violent and non-violent crimes.

It is well known that at-risk youth are more likely to have short-term or part-time jobs leaving them vulnerable to the pendulant swing of the local economy. Moreover, these same individuals are typically employed in occupations with lower status and less stability. As a result, there is a much greater presence of workers in low skilled jobs than in intermediate or high skilled occupations. The opportunity for workers with limited workplace skills depends not only on the type of employment sought, but also the kind of work that is available and in-demand. Furthermore, many Youth may possess poor work ethic, which has been passed on from generation to generation, lack family support and have limited guidance and direction. These are issues that clearly impact workplace competencies and employment status.

During the past five years, Atlantic County has faced economic challenges. As a result, the local labor market is oversaturated with job seekers, which has left all youth at a disadvantage; competing for employment with credentialed, experienced “adult” workers. According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the youth labor force, ages 16 to 24 years of age working or actively looking for work grows sharply between April and July of each year in this bi-county area. During these months, large numbers of high school and college students search for or take summer jobs, and many graduates enter the labor market to look for or begin permanent employment.

Service Strategy

There are two (2) populations of youth that may access services through the youth workforce system under WIOA. They are in school youth ages 16 to 21 and out-of-school youth ages 16 to 24. The Youth Advisory Council supports the provision of an integrated service strategy that focuses on client evaluation, services, activities and outcomes. This strategy enables the Atlantic County Office of Workforce Development to assess

youth client's existing aptitude, skill-sets and work competencies, select appropriate supports services, provide activities and improve outcomes.

The Council is interested in procuring service providers that use an industry-focused approach to prepare youth for employment in demand occupations. Therefore, the Council intends to procure and contract with providers that use nationally recognized, industry based skill standards and occupational certifications as the basis for developing competency based learning objectives, curricula, instructional methods, teaching materials and classroom activities.

The Council endeavors to provide a service strategy based on five key areas: client recruitment, evaluation, services, activities and outcomes.

Recruitment: The WDB has long recognized that outreach to and recruitment of target populations is essential to successfully achieving workforce development goals. With that said, a critical component to the success of this plan is outreach to rural areas with high concentrations of out-of-school youth, communities with high poverty and unemployment rates, community and faith based organizations that serve foster children and youth offenders, and school districts with high drop-out rates. Equally important is reaching out to the youth involved in or on a parent or guardian Work First New Jersey (WFNJ) grant in need of services. There is something to be said about reaching key stakeholders and key communicators. Specific outreach should be conducted with family, teachers, counselors, etc., so they too may actively engage youth in the workforce development system.

Client Evaluations: The fundamental component of the youth workforce development system for this population is the comprehensive assessment, which evaluates academic levels, vocational, employability and social skills. A secondary element of equal importance is the development of an Individual Service Strategy outlining education, career and employment goals. These are the basic instruments to record decisions made relative to the combination and sequence of services.

Client Services: This service is centered on those identified support services to retain program activity and include: case management, support services, incentives, transition, job development and follow-up services.

Case management services provide emotional support and motivation to continue working towards goals. Counseling may be available and include 1) create positive contact with sub-recipient staff, 2) review of assessments, aptitudes, interests and abilities, 3) update of the Individual Service Strategy, 4) providing a listing of free community resources and 5) resolving personal matters that may affect a youth client's achievement in measured outcomes. In addition, referrals to partner agencies will be made. These referrals may include, but are not limited to housing, transportation, legal aid, mental health, among others.

Support services are available to aid youth clients in maintaining program activity and achieving specific outcomes. These may include: costs related to childcare, HSE testing fees, driver's education, motor vehicle license fees, job related uniforms and tools, post-secondary education application fees, post-secondary education admissions exam fees and transportation related to work experience, pre-apprenticeship/apprenticeship, and employment and eligibility documentation.

An incentive is a monetary compensation, gift item or gift card that is offered to youth clients for achieving specific outcomes. Incentives for out-of-school may be paid for the following: achievement of a high school

equivalency credential, enrollment in post-secondary education and retention of unsubsidized employment for 30 days after placement for more than 20 hours per week. Incentives for in-school youth may be paid for the following: increased school attendance, retention in an alternative school setting and substantial learning gain of one grade level in any academic area on a report card in which the youth was previously failing.

Transition services help youth prepare for and transition to unsubsidized employment, occupational education or post-secondary education. Individual or group career counseling sessions may be available to create a seamless transition from the program to measured outcomes. Activities may include: refining job search skills, applying for post-secondary education institutions, including vocational schools, completing financial aid applications, registering for college or taking entrance exam.

Job development services will be provided to develop unsubsidized part-time and full-time employment opportunities that match youth with appropriate work based on their individual skills, knowledge, abilities and experiences.

Follow-up services will ensure the success of the youth client in the outcome(s) that was achieved.

Client Activities: To assist youth clients achieve the goals of this youth workforce system, a holistic program approach that integrates academic education, career development activities, work readiness training, work experiences, community service learning projects, pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunities and occupational education is sought. Client activities may run concurrently.

- a) *Academic Education:* The goal of this activity is to support youth clients in achieving academic progress to obtain their high school diploma or equivalency diploma and/or fully utilize other program activities. Curriculum is aligned to meet the Pathway to College and Career Readiness standards.
- b) *Career Pathway Activities:* The primary goal of this activity is to prepare youth for unsubsidized employment or target post-secondary education or occupational education interests. This activity should improve the employment and education prospects of youth clients through activities that focus on career development through researching labor market trends, identifying occupational interests; resume writing, improving interviewing skills, and job search that increases the participant's employment opportunities.
- c) *Work Readiness Training:* This activity offers youth client's opportunities to enhance certain employment related skills that reinforces their marketability and employability such as: digital literacy training, workplace competencies, financial literacy training, customer service and work values. In addition, this activity should focus on basic work ethic training consisting of: positive attitudes towards work, respect for others, and showing up for work, being punctual, self-motivation and self-initiative, team building and leadership development.
- d) *Community Service Learning Project:* This activity provides youth clients with opportunities to build self-esteem, develop team building skills and become contributing members within their communities.
- e) *Work-Based Experience:* This activity is designed to serve youth clients who are in need of intensive employment related services. This activity is intended to exhibit a youth client's skillfulness, aptitude, and attitude and work competency to a worksite. This activity includes job shadowing and internships.
- f) *Pre-Apprenticeship/Apprenticeship:* This activity is sponsored by an employer and is designed to instruct youth clients on the general skills, training, and knowledge and work habits necessary to obtain employment in a particular occupational title/cluster. This activity is designed to serve youth clients who have indicated a strong interest in the particular occupational title/cluster.

- g) *WIOA Program Elements*: These required elements must be infused into all aspects of the youth workforce system. These may be procured through a competitive contract, an Inter-Governmental Agreement or a Memorandum of Understanding.
- h) *Occupational Education*: This activity is designed to prepare youth clients for in-demand occupations in Atlantic County (or nearby areas where employment is accessible) and should help clients more easily transition to employment with a career path and social/economic self-sufficiency.

Client Outcomes:

- a) *Unsubsidized Employment*: The term unsubsidized employment means wages, not subsidized with public funds. Full-time employment is defined as 35 hours per week. Part-time employment is defined as less than 30 hours per week. Retention is included in this outcome.
- b) *Attainment of an Industry Recognized Credential*: This outcome is defined as earning a recognized industry credential from a qualifying agency.
- c) *Attainment of a Secondary School Diploma or Equivalent*: This outcome is defined as earning a high school diploma or a high school equivalency credential issued by the New Jersey State Department of Education.
- d) *Enrollment in Post-Secondary Education*: This outcome is defined as enrollment in a community or four-year college pursuing a degree.

Program Design

WIOA promotes the integration of adult education with occupational education and training and workforce preparation. It also supports the creation of career pathways for youth clients. The legislation also emphasizes the importance on expending 75% of local area funds on out-of-school youth. For this reason, the program design outlined below primarily focuses on that population.

Out-Of-School Youth: The Atlantic County WDB has identified several entities within the local area that are well positioned to provide adult and occupational education. For this reason, the Youth Advisory Council plans to competitively procure sub-recipients to provide (as outlined in this plan) client services and activities, while the four (4) post-secondary education institutions provide both adult and occupational education through Inter-Governmental Agreements. The Atlantic County Office of Workforce Development will recruit, provide an orientation, conduct client evaluations and case manage sub-recipients to ensure youth are placed in activities that are meaningful, appropriate and aligned with their individual goals. All programs will operate on a continuous basis for 12 consecutive months beginning July 1st and ending June 30th of any given year. The Atlantic County WDB will engage in multi-year contracts, with renewal periods, where allowable for continuity of services and to encourage contracted sub-recipients to retain qualified instructors.

Out-of-school youth, ages 16 to 24 will be provided adult education for those youth clients without a secondary school diploma or equivalent or those clients deemed basic skills deficient, WIOA program elements, career pathway activities, work readiness training, work-based learning experiences, pre-apprenticeship/apprenticeship opportunities and occupational education. All youth will participate in monthly community service learning projects. Actively enrolled youth will be paid a daily stipend for completing hours of participation in client activities. These activities may operate concurrently. Only those youth ages 18 and older may participate in occupational education.

In-School Youth: The Youth Advisory Council plans to competitively procure sub-recipients to conduct recruitment, orientations and provide client evaluations, services and activities. The Atlantic County Office of

Workforce Development will case manage sub-recipients to ensure youth are placed in activities that are meaningful, appropriate and aligned with their individual goals. All programs will operate on a continuous basis for 12 consecutive months, including a summer component beginning July 1st and ending June 30th of any given year. The Atlantic County WDB will engage in multi-year contracts, with renewal periods, where allowable for continuity of programs and to encourage contracted sub-recipients to retain qualified instructors.

In-school youth, ages 16 to 21 will be provided adult education for those youth clients deemed basic skills deficient, WIOA program elements, career pathway activities, work readiness training, work-based learning experiences and pre-apprenticeship opportunities. All youth will participate in monthly community service learning projects. Actively enrolled youth will be paid a daily stipend for completing hours of participation in client activities. These activities may operate concurrently.

Employer Engagement Strategies

The Youth Advisory Council will partner with the WDB Business Development Committee, which is chaired by the Executive Director of the Atlantic City Chamber of Commerce and comprised of education institutions and private sector business. The Business Development Committee is charged with educating the business community about the workforce development resources available to help grow their business. This Committee will be tapped to encourage employers to provide pre-apprenticeship and employment opportunities. The WDB, when appropriate will promote on-the-job training and subsidized employment as hiring incentives for youth client's 18 years of age or older.

This Committee comprised of local employers stated that soft skills are essential in the preliminary stages of employment and workforce professionals deem workplace literacy skills and job readiness as essential in today's global economy. Furthermore, these employers state there are five basic skills that they look for during an interview and include: adaptability, communication, and interdisciplinary skills that cut across industries and job titles. For this reason, the Youth Advisory Council built client activities around this premise. It is the WDB's hope that in doing so, youth client's will be prepared for employment and meet the expectations of the business community.

The Atlantic County has an established Business Resource Center, staffed by one Business Services Representative (BSR). The BSR has focused on helping businesses navigate the labor market exchange system, recruit qualified workers and fully recognized hiring incentives.

Best Practices and Challenges

Best Practices

The New Jersey Youth Corps model is both effective and efficient in its method to successfully progress youth from academic deficiencies through outcomes in post-secondary and occupational education and unsubsidized employment. The State may want to consider components of this model in the development of future WIOA strategies.

Challenges

Atlantic County faces geographic barriers that challenge the cost-efficient delivery of services. Poor and non-existent mass transit routes, lack of enough affordable quality childcare slots, and high concentration of demand in distressed economic areas present accessibility challenges that demand creative solutions.

Unfortunately, scarce resources make it difficult to risk inventive ideas and moving both providers and youth clients to accept change in methods and channels of delivery is a time-consuming and labor-intensive endeavor.

Problems continue for those in rural areas with limited public bus service. In Atlantic County “The English Creek/Tilton Road Community Shuttle” is available, which connects rural areas with major New Jersey Transit routes. In spite of this additional transportation option, limitations still make it difficult for youth clients to access services and travel to and from work with some commutes taking over one hour and requiring multiple connections. These restrictions may include, but are not limited to: accessibility, non-traditional work schedules and location of residence among others. In addition, for unemployed or underemployed individuals the cost associated with public transportation may be a barrier. The Council will provide solutions, whenever possible, to lift transportation barriers that effect searching for and securing unsubsidized employment.

Some other challenges the WDB faces include:

1. Education of the business community to diversify pre-apprenticeship and employment opportunities.
2. Current services are delivered in the geographic locations where the highest probability of finding eligible youth exists. There are other geographic clusters of potential participants, but they are more dispersed.
3. There is no consistent or thorough means of collecting research based data to ensure that the demand for services is effectively being provided.
4. There is a noticeable disconnect between the youth workforce system and social service agencies.
5. Adequate funding for job development, marketing and non-traditional hiring incentives for out-of-school youth.

Job development and marketing of youth as an untapped employment source are critical elements to the success of the youth workforce system, yet little state resources are dedicated to local areas for such endeavors. There is only so much the WDB, and in this case the Business Development Committee can do without dedicated assets. There is disparage between the number of resources (funding, personnel, sub-recipients) allocated to the education and training of youth as compared to those dedicated to job development, placement and retention. There is debate as to what the differences between an adult and an out-of-school, 18 years and older youth job seeker. Perhaps, a discussion about expanding the role and responsibilities of the BRS to include advocating employment of out-of-school youth would be appropriate.

Traditional hiring incentives, such as OJT, Work Pays and other subsidized programs are not appropriate for this population, because the wage and hour requirements are strict and eligible job titles limited. It is well known that young adults are more likely to have short-term or part-time jobs and are typically employed in occupations with lower status and less stability. As a result, there is a much greater presence of workers in low skilled jobs then in medium or high skilled occupations. The opportunity for youth depends not only on the economy, but the type of employment sought and available. To meet WIOA outcome standards, the WDB would advocate for waivers to these traditional hiring incentives or the development of a set of new ones for this population.

Describe how your area will satisfy the requirement for 75% of WIOA Title I Youth funds to be used for Out-of-School Youth, and 20% of total youth funds to be used for work experience activities.

The Atlantic County Workforce Development Board will address the 75% Out-of-School Youth requirement by using the public assistance population between the ages of 18 and 24 to fulfill their work activity requirements through participation in the youth services activities. Because 15-20% of the young adult population receiving public assistance is between the ages of 18 and 24, and is required to participate in a work activity, having the youth services referrals coming from this population offers several advantages for both workforce development and the customer. Because the public assistance population is mandated to be in a work activity, the need for active recruitment of the population will be limited to the identification of customers who are receiving cash assistance or food stamps.

The Work First New Jersey case managers will identify referred customers between the ages of 18 and 24 for referral to the youth services programs. Because of the relationship between the work activity staff and the youth services staff, and the fact that they are located in the same building on the same floor, the referral process that is already well-defined with the current work activity vendors will simply be transferred to the young adult population. Once the young adult population understands the benefits of participating in youth activities, the 75% requirement should be easily achieved and maintained.

Clarify how and if the area will be securing any youth program elements without the procurement of programs and services.

The following are Youth program elements that Atlantic County plans to secure and utilize with the process of procurement. Rather than procure and contract with sub-recipients, our office will facilitate an in-house out-of-school youth program. The program will operate according to WIOA regulations. Details are as follows:

Program Summary:

Youth ages 16-24 with or without a high school diploma may be enrolled. Youth in need of earning a diploma will receive academic instruction centered on preparation to take the HSE Examination. Those already possessing a diploma and are assessed as Basic Skills Deficient will receive training centered on work readiness preparation as well as academic classes that will enable them to meet the required Educational Function Level (EFL) increases. Those not Basic Skills Deficient will receive work readiness preparation classes. All students will receive wrap-around support services as needed.

The term of enrollment will be on a 4 cycle per year system. Each cycle will be 90 days. Some students may be carried over from one cycle to the next should there be justifiable rationale. Upon successful completion of the program, youth will receive transition services which will include secondary and post-secondary education, vocational training, military, pre-apprenticeships, and part-time and full-time employment.

The program will be located on the campus of the Atlantic County One-Stop Career Center. The program staff will include all staff employed by the Atlantic County Office of Workforce Development:

- Youth Coordinator - Oversees the day-to-day operations of the program
- Guidance Counselor - Case manages youth as well as provides personal counseling
- Career Counselor - Instructs work readiness classes as well as assists with transitional services
- Academic Instructor - Instructs academic classes
- Crew Leader - Oversees and supervises service learning projects

X. Education Activities

Describe how the local board will coordinate education and workforce development activities carried out in the local area with relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services.

The One-Stop Career Center places an emphasis on the importance of credentials for furthering the customer's career pathways opportunities. From the moment that a customer enters the One-Stop, orientation, literacy, and education are highlighted as essential skills and accomplishments to promote career opportunities. The Out-of-School Youth programs, including the agency's youth services and Youth Corps programs, place great emphasis on the state's High School Equivalency diploma. The agency's Youth Corps program has consistently maintained a high school achievement rate for the at-risk youth population at nearly 50% of all enrollees.

Atlantic County also places significant importance on secondary education by maintaining its own testing site within the One-Stop itself. This allows for timely notice of all customers who successfully achieve the attainment of the high school credential.

The adult and dislocated worker populations are counseled on the importance of the high school diploma in establishing viable career pathways. In an effort to link customers who have successfully completed the high school equivalency test with post-secondary options, the local community college has agreed to partner with the Atlantic County WDB and the Atlantic County One-Stop to hold a graduation ceremony at the college campus. In our most recent graduation ceremony, 16 graduates received their diplomas in the same location as that of the graduates of the Atlantic Cape Community College. The Atlantic County WDB maintains close relationships with both the local community college and Stockton University to assure that both training and academic advancement occur in a coordinated fashion.

The On-the-Job-Training (OJT) program is supervised paid training that takes place at an employer worksite and allows employees to build and upgrade skills and employment competencies. Workers are presented with the opportunity to return to the workforce and earn wages to support themselves and their families while adding new skills or learning new techniques, production or service procedures to meet requirements of a new occupation or industry. Customers are placed in an OJT based on Specific Vocational Preparation (SVP) assessment as reflected in the Job Zones of O*Net that indicates training hours for different occupational titles. Customers are placed in full-time employment with the goal of job retention. Even if the employee does not remain in that position after the length of the OJT, they have still gained valuable work experience and can market those skills to another potential employer. The high success rate of WDB's OJT Program, funded by a National Emergency Grant (NEG) in 2011 is further evidence of the value of actual work experience in a specific field. An example: Dynamic Solar where the four trainees had a "Solar credential" from Atlantic Cape and actual work experience from the employer increased their marketability. One of those trainees left Dynamic Solar and started his own solar installation company.

Apprenticeship continues to be a practical option for individuals interested in the trades. Steering people into the trade areas and technology /energy fields converts into long term employment, with moderate to high wages and health and retirement benefits. These job sectors will always be needed as will computer and equipment repair.

The work based learning component of the One-Stop System is crucial in supporting the needs of the employer. The WDB utilizes many of these work-based programs to enhance the skills training of the workforce and offer beneficial opportunities to both the employer community and the customer. In years past, Schools to Career (STC) initiatives, such as those funded by the New Jersey State Department of Education (NJDOE) developed work based learning components for students to expose them to career experiences. Today, there are few STC programs available as operation of such programs is voluntary. As a result, the WDB has filled the need by providing for these experiences under WIOA. In both counties young adults (students) are exposed to local labor market information, job shadowing, and work experiences. The WDB continues to work with those districts and employers that wish to continue operation of STC programs.

It has been agreed that the Tabulation of Adult Basic Education (TABE) shall be used to measure educational functioning level (EFL) and to determine basic skills needs and attainment. Exceptions may be made for testing individuals with disabilities. When considering system capacities to manage literacy services, one must measure the WDB based on those services located in the career center and those provided off site and through partner agencies. There are few occasion wherein a partner agency is co-located within the career center setting to provide services, but this is not a typical occurrence.

XI. Supportive Services

Describe how the local board will coordinate workforce development activities carried out under this title in the local area with the provision of transportation, including public transportation, and other appropriate supportive services such as; child care and public housing.

Certain temporary services shall be available to a WFNJ TANF/GA recipient, as appropriate, in support of the recipient's efforts to work. This shall not be interpreted as conferring an entitlement to supportive services; likewise, these services shall be provided only as a last resort when no other source of support is available. Supportive services include, but are not limited to, transportation services, child care, and housing assistance.

The County faces geographic barriers that challenge the cost-efficient delivery of services. Poor or non-existent mass transit routes, lack of enough affordable quality childcare, and high concentration of demand in distressed economic areas present accessibility challenges that demand creative solutions. Unfortunately, scarce resources make it difficult to risk inventive ideas and moving both employers and customers to accept change in methods and channels of delivery is a time-consuming and labor-intensive endeavor. Given this, the WDB will work to improve supportive services in the County by continually identifying and decreasing gaps in service within the County and will apply for, and/or collaborate with entities to find, funding to address gaps in services. The WDB will also search for other resources that may exist in the County to increase supportive services such as transportation, child care, and housing.

Supportive services are critical to successful outcomes of One-Stop customers. Policies regarding supportive services are approved via vote by the WDB. Any such policy may be rescinded by vote of the WDB at any time during the duration of this plan with just cause. The policy elements for Adults and Dislocated Workers include:

| Supportive Service | Eligibility for Service | Vendor Reimbursement Requirements | Programmatic Submission Requirements |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Participant Transportation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployed with no income. • Enrolled in a job training program. • \$15 daily in-county and \$18 out-of-county not to exceed \$2025 in-county and \$2430 out-of-county. | Bi-weekly attendance record for time in job training program wherein the transportation supportive service is provided. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verification of no income and unemployment. • Verification of enrollment in a job training program. • Verification of public assistance application approval or denial. |
| Exam/License/Credential Fees | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrolled in job training program. • Enrolled in post-secondary education. • Costs are not included in the tuition of the training entity. • Necessity of a license/credential for employment or career advancement if currently employed. | Copy of course description citing that the exam/license/credential is not included in the tuition. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verification of enrollment in job training program or post-secondary education or verification of employment. • Verification that the license/credential is a necessity for employment or career advancement. |

Needs Based payments will only be made after a customer exhaust any unemployment compensation and apply for public assistance. If a customer is approved for public assistance they will no longer be eligible for Needs Based payments under Adult/Dislocated/Youth funding.

Transportation

The WDB will provide solutions, whenever possible to lift transportation barriers that affect searching for and securing unsubsidized employment. This may be achieved by making all reasonable efforts to secure transportation services for WFNJ recipients who are working, looking for work, engaged in a work activity, or taking WFNJ/TANF children to child care in conjunction with work or a work activity, but only when all other avenues of assistance with this expense have been explored and it has been established that there are no other available sources of support.

Employed WFNJ recipients shall receive transportation services, as appropriate, until receipt of their first full paycheck. The county or municipal agency shall, upon request and with the approval of the DFD, continue the provision of transportation services beyond this point if, in the agency's estimation, based on factors such as but not limited to mode of transportation and frequency of travel, the income received from employment is insufficient to permit the recipient to fully pay his or her own reasonable costs of transportation.

The county or municipal agency, as appropriate, shall make transportation services available in one or more of the following ways:

- Provision of public transit fare via tickets or passes for available public transit bus, light rail, or rail services to recipients in work or work activities. Fare shall be provided prospectively or retrospectively, at the discretion of the county/municipal agency, to best facilitate the recipient's use of public transportation.
 - Where available, the WorkPass Program, enables the CWA to purchase and issue monthly bus, light rail, and rail passes/one-way tickets, as well as, provide transit information to WFNJ/TANF participants.
- An allowance of up to \$6.00 per day shall be offered to recipients in work or a work activity as a way of subsidizing a recipient's transportation expenses. An amount more than \$6.00 per day may be provided, subject to the approval of the DFD which shall consider, in addition to those factors referenced in N.J.A.C. 10:90-5.4(a), unforeseen expenses and multiple work activities, when arriving at its decision.
- Subject to written authorization from the DFD, county, or municipal agencies shall partner with community transportation agencies to make all reasonable efforts to secure available transportation services through means other than those listed above, such as but not limited to, transportation brokers, third party contracts to provide van pool service, feeder service or livery service, and so forth.

Through the Extended WorkPass Program (EWP), the appropriate CWA shall make available post WFNJ/TANF transportation services to those eligible individuals whose cases have been terminated due to earned income or other circumstances within the last 24 months. The individual must be employed at least 20 hours per week, at or above the minimum wage.

To improve transportation services, the Atlantic County WDB will seek opportunities to build/expand relationships with the South Jersey Transit Authority, the Port Authority Transit Corporation, New Jersey Transit, and other identifiable means of public transportation.

Child Care

Payment of child care services, including after-school child care in the case of a child over six years of age and care for children with special needs, shall be available for WFNJ/TANF eligible dependent children during the recipient's period of eligibility and for the 24 consecutive months following ineligibility for cash benefits because of earned income or other circumstances.

The child care services provided, both during the period of eligibility and during any post-eligibility period, shall be considered appropriate and available when the child care:

- Is in the best interests of the child and shall consider the individual needs of the child, including the reasonable accessibility of the care to the child's home and school, or the parent's place of employment or work activity, and the appropriateness of the care to the age and special needs of the child.
- Is located within reasonable commuting distance from the participant's home, place of employment or work activity. The hours of child care provided are reasonably related to the hours of participant's work activity participation or employment and shall be sufficient to accommodate the hours required by the employer or work activity. Parental preference shall be accommodated within the child care options available.
- Meets applicable standards of State and local law.

Payment for child care following loss of eligibility for WFNJ cash assistance due to increased earnings or hours of employment shall be available only if WFNJ benefits were received in the month preceding the first month of ineligibility and there are no other appropriate child care arrangements available.

Housing Assistance

The WDB will work to connect with partners in public housing, such as Pleasantville Housing Authority and Atlantic City Housing Authority. WDB partners with the County Welfare Agency who assist residence who are receiving public assistance and qualify for temporary rental assistance. Atlantic County has an Atlantic City Rescue Mission, who houses our homeless population on a daily basis. WDB has partnered with several other agencies such as OCEAN Inc. and Clarifi, who also provide some assistance to low income families in need of rental, mortgage and utility assistance.

XII. Coordination of Services

Describe plans and strategies for, and assurances concerning, maximizing coordination of services provided by the State employment service under the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.) and services provided in the local area through the One-Stop delivery system, to improve service delivery and avoid duplication of services.

The operational philosophy of the Pleasantville One-Stop Career Center is to truly act as a 'one-stop' center for any customer needs related to workforce development. The mission of the organization is uniformly understood by all parties and is implemented with the same united understanding that the services are established to provide an efficient, convenient system to meet customers' needs. Joint service delivery has been a mainstay of the Pleasantville One-Stop Career Center for years. As an example, several years ago the state workforce development system decided to eliminate the required re-employment orientation for all customers receiving unemployment. Through joint discussion between the local one-stop services and the state Wagner-Peyser services, both parties agreed to provide a joint orientation twice a week for new workforce development customers. The orientation is presented in a joint fashion with information of one-stop services provided by the Wagner-Peyser staff and Career Beacon and training-related information provided by local customer service staff. Other examples include the use of state employment services staff for the initial orientation of the assistance and the food stamp populations with coordinated data entry and follow-up to assist customers' employment-related needs.

The employment services manager, DVRS manager, UI manager and one-stop coordinator meet on a quarterly basis to discuss changes in local policy, state mandates and updates on the impact of changes in the local economy. Strategies are discussed to address how best to jointly meet the needs of the workforce development customer so that there is little duplication of service and a smooth customer flow. Daily and weekly activity schedules are shared between the state and local service areas so that customers can easily be directed to their desired location.

Positive recruitments involve individual employers who are looking for qualified candidates to fill vacant positions within their organizations. As these events are scheduled, the Wagner-Peyser manager sends out an e-mail blast to all workforce development components to notify them of the hiring opportunity. Staff from all units review their current caseloads to identify appropriate candidates to notify of the hiring event. The Wagner-Peyser staff also utilize 'focus assist', a key word search program associated with the America's One-Stop Operating System to locate customers with a skill set that matches the employer's needs. As employer's needs are identified from any aspect of the workforce development system, the Wagner-Peyser manager is notified of the need, the skills desired by the employer are placed within the program and a number of candidates are identified. Those candidates are then contacted by Wagner-Peyser staff and notified of the hiring event.

The joint understanding and commitment to efficient customer service has been the foundation of the local one-stop operation for some time. Equal distribution of the responsibilities and a willingness to 'go the extra mile' if it will benefit the customer are the tenets that drive the day-to-day operations of this workforce development services. While the MOU formalizes the obligations and responsibilities of individual parties, it is the relationship and respect for each other that drives the service delivery system.

There is agreed upon specializations for both parties that include labor market exchange as the exclusive domain of the state employment services and occupational training opportunities by the WDB local employment specialists. Joint efforts include rapid response, one-stop orientation, general assistance, and food stamp orientation for new benefit recipients.

The One-Stop Oversight Committee also meets on a quarterly basis to discuss the current status of services and service access within the One-Stop system. Participants in this meeting include local service providers, Wagner-Peyser, DVRS and local WIOA staff. Discussions involve a review of service delivery, effectiveness of services and service outcomes. The meeting's purpose is to problem solve those areas that are presenting with barriers to successful outcomes and to collaborate and brainstorm possible solutions.

XIII. Adult Education and Literacy Activities

Describe how the local board will coordinate workforce development activities carried out under this title in the local area with the provision of adult education and literacy activities under Title II in the local area, including a description of how the local board will carry out, consistent with subparagraphs (A) and (B) (i) of section 107(d) (11) and section 232, the review of local applications submitted under Title II. This sections must include:

(a) A description of how the local area will effectively refer One-Stop clients to WIOA Title II programs and how Title II program recipients will access One-Stop center services. Include information about existing and planned efforts for co-location and co-enrollment of title II activities within the One-Stop system.

Atlantic County's WIOA Title I funded One-Stop system works in close connection with the Adult Education system under Title II.

Literacy services are located at the County's One-Stop centers. Workers from both WIOA and Adult Education/Literacy work collaboratively together.

Whenever a job-seeker individual comes into the One-Stop seeking services beyond the self-accessed ones available in the resource center, they are assessed for a range of possible needs. During the triage system that Atlantic County has set up (described further above in the section on Adult/Dislocated Worker services), the Customer Service staff schedules the person to take the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) and conducts additional assessments and an assessment interview to determine needs, goals and workforce development plans.

Based on TABE results, staff identify what Adult Education services are appropriate:

- If the individual falls below the needed skill levels for the skills training they seek, and/or it is evident their reading/math basic skills level is not sufficient to secure their employment goals, they may be referred directly to Literacy and Adult Education services on-site or through the Literacy Consortium's two (2) sites across the County.
- For those individuals without a high school diploma, a referral is made to Learning Link, described in the next section. They may work within that system for a period until their skills are at the 10th grade level, at which point they may be referred to a class for high school equivalency preparation.
- For those whose skills may be appropriate given the TABE test, or after individuals have enrolled in Learning Link, Literacy/Adult Education or other services, Atlantic County can administer the high school equivalency test (GED) on-site at the One-Stop.

Atlantic County and our training partners are working to develop Bridge programs with contextualized basic skills as another transitional step for those with lower skills who are seeking vocational skills training. The best example of this activity is the use of the pilot program for the ESL customers that attended a combination of ESL and front desk, customer service trainings for job placement with local hotels and casinos in the delivery of front desk services.

Also, recent job training opportunities for the gas industry line locator position required passing a Bennett Mechanical test as well as achieve an 8th grade level on the TABE test. Those customers that qualified received additional mechanical and educational training through the Atlantic Cape Community College then were transferred to the training site of South Jersey Gas utility system for hands-on training and certification.

More recently, the workforce development board has partnered with the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, to offer a combination of academic improvement and basic carpentry training, to prepare customers for the opportunity to become part of the carpenter union's five –year apprenticeship program.

Currently there is no co-enrollment of literacy customers who have been referred from either the employment or training unit or from Work First New Jersey. Automatic co-enrollment will begin on July 1, 2017, in accordance with the Workforce Innovation Notice published by the New Jersey Office of Labor and Workforce Development. Currently, the only population that is being co-enrolled in both WIOA and Wagner Peysers services is the RESEA identified customers.

(b) A description of all literacy services including those provided through the workforce learning link, WFNJ and any other WIOA program and services.

Atlantic County's literacy services are well provided to job seekers and others through a coherent arrangement between the One-Stops, Literacy Committee, Atlantic Cape Community College and other providers.

The County's Literacy Committee and Title II Consortium lead literacy services.

English as a Second/Other Language (ESL/ESOL) is delivered through the Adult Education Title II Consortium through Atlantic Cape Community College with services in both Atlantic City and Mays Landing campuses.

Learning Link is the hub for delivery of services for those with a ninth (9th) grade reading level and above.

The Atlantic County system leverages support from Volunteers for America for one-on-one Literacy and Adult Education services.

And Atlantic County is in the process of piloting several Bridge programs in conjunction with training providers to support low-literacy students in the transition from basic skills remediation through skills training in key in-demand occupations.

Details on these programs follow.

Literacy Services

According to the NJLWD, the Workforce Learning Link (WLL) program was established as a "second chance system" to ensure that every New Jersey resident has the ability to upgrade the basic skills needed to enter the workforce. The mission of the WLL is to provide short-term services to enhance basic skills in order for customers to secure or improve their level of employment and attain an increased level of self-sufficiency. The program provides overall readiness to:

- a) Enter the workforce
- b) Further career opportunities
- c) Advance to higher education
- d) Enhance already acquired skills

Since 2001, The ACWD under the auspices of the Atlantic County WDB has operated the Workforce Learning Link (WLL) program. Currently, the WLL's program operates in the Pleasantville site. The WLL site utilizes the New Jersey Network (NJN) software and provide educational services based on the Equipped for the Future (EFF) standards. ACWD staff at the center provides the counseling and education services to the customers. Customers elect or are referred to participate in the WLL program. All customers are required to meet with the Instructor of Employment and Training to develop an Employability Plan or its equivalent. The plan consists of the TABE score and other relevant information such as the attendance and activity logs.

In 2004, the WDB assumed management of the GED Testing Center in Atlantic County. The Atlantic County GED Testing Center operates with staff paid directly through the WDB discretionary WIOA and WFNJ funds.

Although the WDB recognizes that there are many individuals with low level literacy needs, limited funding has strained the system. As such, literacy services should provide relevant, short-term academic remediation that leads to employment. Individuals that require intensive, long term literacy services should be funneled through community and faith based organizations. There are many cost free adult education programs that help consumers improve their reading, math, and communication skills in preparation for employment. These services, located within a career center setting, may or may not be appropriate based on the individual needs of the customers. They are as follows:

1. Workforce Learning Links: This program helps individuals enter the workplace, prepare to take enrollment test, or advance to further training by providing self-paced tutorials. These activities are computer based with assistance from an instructor and open to the public. There is no registration required. Customers may learn at their own speed. Participants are required to register "for work," enter into employment counseling and develop an employment/education plan with assistance from an employment counselor. Customers must function at the High Intermediate Basic Education, Low Adult Secondary Education and High Adult Secondary Education literacy levels for enrollment.
2. Learning Labs: This program helps individuals enter the workplace or advance to the next educational functioning level for enrollment in the WLL program. These activities are paper-pencil and computer based intensive instruction in small group settings. Registration is required and customers must be referred following employment counseling and assessment. This program is available for individuals that need small group intensive instruction. Customers must function at the Low Intermediate Basic Education literacy level for enrollment.
3. Atlantic Cape May Consortium: Since 2007, The Atlantic Cape Consortium (Atlantic Cape Community College, Literacy Volunteers Cape Atlantic, Pleasantville Public Schools and Cape May Technical School District) have worked collaboratively with the WDB, in concert with the WDB's *Strategic Plan for Adult Literacy* to offer integrated services to the Atlantic County region. The consortium is linked for student referral/support with the agencies of the One-Stop System as well as community-based organizations.

The Consortium utilizes a variety of methods to identify and recruit participants, especially those adults who are at the lowest level of literacy and non-native speakers of English and need instruction. The Consolidated Adult Basic Skills and Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Grant Program will

enable the consortium to continue to deliver high quality educational services for adults who lack the basic skills necessary for literate functioning, productive employment, effective parenting and citizenship.

Currently there are personnel at the career center that can read, write and communicate in Spanish. The WDB is grateful that some of these individuals have volunteered to assist at the request of customers or Employment Specialists, even though it's not a requirement of their job function. Unfortunately, there are limited personnel that are able to do the same in other languages. PathStone Corporation employs staff that speaks Spanish, Haitian Creole and French and Literacy Volunteers Cape Atlantic (LVA) has staff that speaks Spanish (See Literacy Workforce Plan for details).

(c) A description of the referral process to move an individual out of a literacy program and into a career pathway.

As customers progress through the identified literacy curriculum, they are periodically assessed to determine their progress. When they have successfully achieved their goal and achieved the level necessary to either qualify for an Individual Training Agreement (ITA) or pursue the high school equivalency exam, the customer is transferred to the employment specialist who referred them to literacy services as part of their employability plan. The customer will then complete the remaining activities that are part of the training contract process or will be referred to the orientation and registration for the high school equivalency test. Once the customer successfully passes the high school equivalency exam and receives his diploma, he is again referred to his assigned employment specialist to obtain a training grant. For those customers who are interested in obtaining immediate employment once they receive their high school diploma, the employment specialist will meet with them to help create the longer-term plan while preparing them for the initial job placement. All referrals are completed using the One-Stop's universal referral form to and from literacy services.

XIV. Services to Individuals with Disabilities

Describe the replicated cooperative agreements (as defined in section 107(d) (11)) between the local board or other local entities described in section 101(a) (11) (B) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 721(a) (11) (B)) and the local office of a designated State agency or designated State unit administering programs carried out under title I of such Act (29 U.S.C. 720 et seq.) (other than section 112 or part C of that title (29 U.S.C. 732, 741) and subject to section 121(f)) in accordance with section 101(a)(11) of such Act (29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11)) with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration, and coordination. Describe in this section what internal mechanisms will support these initiatives and how these technical assistance initiatives are coordinated with or supported by the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation and the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visual Impaired.

The Workforce Development Board has a cooperative agreement with the local New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (NJDVRS) in Atlantic County to administer and carry out services under Title I. NJDVRS defines an individual with a disability as having any physical or mental impairment that is a substantial impediment to employment may qualify an individual for vocational rehabilitation services. The following programs and services are provided under Title I by DVRS to individuals meeting the defined eligibility:

- A. Vocational Counseling & Guidance – Providing assistance to the consumer in handling the job search issues that impact employability, job maintenance strategies, and developing the overall techniques needed to be successful in a work environment.
- B. Placement Services - Development of job leads both with and for the consumer and support during the job search; could include On the Job Training (OJT), Supported Employment (SE) or Time Limited - Placement and Coaching (TLPC)
- C. Job Seeking Skills - Guidance in work search activities such as resume writing, interviewing skills, job search organizations.
- D. Supported Employment - Through referral to an SE provider, one-on-one assistance in job searching, interviewing, applying for jobs; followed by coaching on the job to facilitate learning job duties and adjusting to the work environment; followed by periodic follow-up to ensure job retention
- E. Time Limited Placement and Coaching - The first two categories of Supported Employment Services without periodic follow-along
- F. Job Accommodations - Guidance on changing the worksite's physical environment or adding equipment that will allow an individual to do more work tasks independently, effectively, and safely
- G. Skills Training - Vocational school, technology or trade School, business school, etc.
- H. College Training - 2 or 4 year programs leading to a degree
- I. Physical Restoration - Equipment or therapies which improve physical or cognitive functioning so that a person is able to work; examples could be physical, occupational, or speech therapy; cognitive therapy which includes those modalities; prosthetics or orthotics such as artificial limbs, braces, special shoes, hearing aids, and eyeglasses (in some instances)
- J. Emotional Restoration Services – Short-term individual, group or other types of counseling to reduce symptoms of mental health problems and improve work-tolerance and the ability to get and keep a job.
- K. Mobility Equipment

- L. Driver Training - Assessment of driving ability and equipment needed to drive safely; assistance in purchasing driver training lessons if needed to reach a specific work goal.
- M. Vehicle Modification
- N. Home Modifications, if needed to reach a specific work goal.

For those individuals with disabilities that do not wish to utilize NJDVRS services, the NJLWD operates Employment Services at the career centers in Hammonton & Pleasantville and that help individual's find full-time or part-time employment. All services focus on their existing job related experience and abilities.

For those individuals with disabilities that do not wish to utilize NJDVRS services, the NJLWD operates Employment Services at the career centers in Pleasantville and that help individual's find full-time or part-time employment. All services focus on their existing job related experience and abilities.

Although the WDB does not have formal MOUs with the following services, they are accessed when appropriate for individuals with disabilities

1. Atlantic County Department of Family and Community Development (CWA)
2. New Jersey State Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Employment Services Unit (Pleasantville)
3. Atlantic County Office of Intergenerational Services.

In addition to DVRS and other service providers, the Disabilities Workforce Committee (DWC) of the Atlantic County Workforce Development Board is an integral internal mechanism to enhancing the service delivery needs of individuals with disabilities in Atlantic County. Committee members consist of Supported Employment Providers, non-profit organizations serving the needs of persons with special needs, mental health providers, Atlantic County Office of Intergenerational Services. The goals of the committee area as follows:

1. Enable individuals with disabilities to have universal access and integrated services within the One-Stop Career Center.
2. Increase the number of individuals with disabilities securing and sustaining unsubsidized employment in the workforce.
3. Ensure that the services for individuals with disabilities are integrated into the One-Stop system.
4. Increase OSCC personnel knowledge and practices through scheduled training series and on line learning professional development opportunities.
5. Continue to develop and coordinate an annual Employment Disabilities Awareness Awards event to recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of individuals with disabilities and recognize the contributions of professionals and employers in the business community that have assisted this population in obtaining employment.

The Committee has identified key priority areas to be implemented in the next four years that will contribute to enhancing the provision of services. Through Committee participation, DVRS will be an integral partner in supporting and planning these initiatives. They are as follows:

1. The Committee recommends that funding for an Employment Services Mentor (formerly Disability Navigator) be implemented as a standard funded position that is not reliant on grant funding. The key role of this position is to be the link that connects individuals to appropriate services to avoid getting lost in the system, determine if there is a need for mental health screening, a learning disability assessment or other specific screenings. Over the past several years the challenge has been present of

individuals accessing employment services who do not disclose their disability or who may not be aware that they have and underlying disability. In addition, many individuals with disabilities are not aware of the services available and those that are may not be equipped to navigate the myriad of departments, eligibility requirements and paperwork associated with enrollment.

2. To enhance information sharing, distribution to the community the OSCC Resource Booklet that identifies OSCC services, community service providers and state programs that are essential sources of information and assistance to individuals with disabilities seeking to obtain or retain employment in the community.
3. A resource link on the Atlantic Workforce Development's website providing direction to individuals with disabilities, or their family members on how to access services at the OSCC.
4. In response to WIOA, enhance the outreach, awareness and availability of employment of services to in- school youth with disabilities between the ages of 16-21.

Regarding cooperative efforts with employers, DVRS provides a multitude of employer based incentive programs, including:

- A. Training Reimbursement: DVRS will pay up to half of a worker's salary while the individual learns the essential knowledge and job skills required, in an on-the-job training program.
- B. Tax Incentives: DVRS will show you how to obtain tax credits you may be eligible for when hiring workers with disabilities.
- C. Placement Services: DVRS can provide pre-screened, trained, motivated, qualified workers. They work to identify employer needs and match the right worker to the right job.
- D. Recommendations on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): DVRS will help you understand ADA laws and make "reasonable accommodations" in the workplace.
- E. Job Modification and Barrier Removal Consultations: DVRS will evaluate your worksite to identify possible barriers and propose solutions that will benefit not only employees with disabilities, but also customers with disabilities.
- F. Assistance Dealing with Troubled Employees: DVRS will provide counseling services for employees with disabilities who are experiencing problems.
- G. Follow-Up and Adjustment Services: DVRS counselors maintain close contact with employees to ensure that they are adjusting to the job and that both employer and employee are satisfied.
- H. Annual Career Information Fair
- I. Schedule A Events for federal employment.

XV. Grant Funds

Identify the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds described in section 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III), as determined by the chief elected official or the Governor under section 107(d)(12)(B)(i).

The County of Atlantic is the receiver of WIOA grant funds and is responsible for their disbursement for use for the County's One-Stop Career Centers and other WIOA functions.

The Atlantic County Office of Workforce Development, an office of County government, is the direct Title I administrator for WIOA.

The County Treasurer's Office is responsible for receipt and disbursement of WIOA funds allocated from the State of New Jersey and delivers them to the Office of Workforce Development for the operation of the County's WIOA system.

XVI. One-Stop Operator Selection

Describe the competitive process to be used to competitively select the One-Stop Operator, and to award the sub-grants and contracts in the local area for activities carried out under WIOA Title I.

As per Circular Number A-133, sub-recipients are defined as those no federal entities that expend federal awards received from a pass-through entity to carry out a federal program, but do not include an individual that is a beneficiary of such a program. A sub-recipient may also be a recipient of other federal awards directed from a federal awarding agency. That same circular defined a vendor/provider as a dealer, distributor, merchant or other seller providing goods or services that are required for the conduct of a federal program. These goods or services may be for an organization's own use or for the use of beneficiaries of the federal program.

The WDB employs four full-time employees that work to ensure proper implementation of the County's competitive process: Executive Director, Contract Administrator (currently vacant), Administrative Coordinator, and Fiscal Agent. The WDB, under the guidance of the Atlantic County Purchasing Department, is responsible for the development of policy and procedures to competitively award grants and contracts for activities and services of the One-Stop System.

Atlantic County Government has been designated as the administrative entity and grant recipient of Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA), Work First New Jersey (WFNJ), and Title I Literacy and other federal and state funding for Atlantic County. With that said, providers that wish to perform services on behalf of Atlantic County Government are required to participate in the following procurement process.

Scope, Sequence, and Frequency

On a regular basis, typically in June of any given year, funding is made available through the New Jersey State Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJLWD) to the County of Atlantic to fund services for at-risk youth, low-income adults, dislocated workers and individuals receiving public assistance of Atlantic County. In return, the County releases Requests for Proposals (RFP), Competitive Contracts (CC) and enters into Inter-governmental Agreements (IGA) with eligible entities that meet the qualifications set forth in the aforementioned documents and subsequent contracts. The RFP's, CC's and IGA's are typically made available between in the spring of any given year based on the service period. Eligible entities respond, proposals are reviewed, recommendations of funding are presented to the WDB Board and other required parties and those approved by the Atlantic County Board of Chosen Freeholders are awarded contracts.

RFP's allow reviewers to select sub-recipients to select the best value for the money taking into consideration the highest scorer. RFP's allow for one-year contract periods. Negotiations are allowable under an RFP; therefore, adjustments may be made to the level of service, budget requests and program design. Reviewers score based on the merits of applicant proposals as compared to the evaluation criteria. Rarely, applicants are denied review.

CC's allow reviewers to select the highest scorer and fund accordingly until all allocated funds are exhausted. CC's allow for multi-year contracts with renewal periods for continuity of program operations and better retention of quality provider personnel. Negotiations are not permissible under a CC. There can be no adjustments made to the program design, level of service or requested budgets listed in applicant proposals.

Reviewers score based on the merits of applicant proposals as compared to the evaluation criteria. Applicants may be denied review based on inaccurate submission of required documents and/or not responding correctly to the CC. During a CC renewal, sub-recipients must submit budgets outlining the anticipated costs. During a renewal year, budgets may be negotiated based on the anticipated allocation in the respective service area. Budgets are forwarded to the Fiscal Office for to ensure costs are reasonable and the budget is accurate. Budgets are forwarded as outlined under Section 11 of this manual.

IGA's are entered into with public entities, such as post-secondary education intuitions. These do not go through the traditional procurement process. This document is created directly between the WDB and sub-recipient.

Procedures

The County of Atlantic and the Atlantic County WDB have agreed to the following process for this local area. Please follow these steps in order as written.

Focus Groups

On an annual basis, when appropriate sub-recipients and personnel focus groups are held to identify best practices and address concerns and issues regarding the operation of programs. These recommendations are considered during the development stages for the next procurement period by program area. Focus groups are not mandatory, but rather recommended to improve program design. If needed, focus groups shall be held in January of any given year. A copy of focus group results is required in the procurement file as per NJLWD.

Development

All program elements and allowable costs shall be included in the procurement document(s). Signatures of approval are required from the WDB Executive Director prior to the release of an RFP, CC or IGA (see step 18 for process to execute an IGA). Once approved, the document(s) shall be submitted to the Atlantic County Purchasing Department. A copy of the RFP, CC or IGA is required in the procurement file as per NJLWD. [NJSA 40A:11-4.]

Release

The Atlantic County Purchasing Department advertises and releases the procurement document(s) with all required county, state and federal documents, including "Standards and General Assurances" and "20 CFR 683.220; Training and Employment Guidance Letter 39-11, WIOA Innovation Notice." The advertisement or public notice is advertised in the Press of Atlantic City, Atlantic County edition, unless otherwise requested approximately 14 to 24 business days after submission to the Atlantic County Purchasing Department and posted at bids.aclink.org. Applicants under a CC must be given a minimum of 20 days after release of procurement document(s) to respond. Applicants under an RFP must be given a minimum of 30 days after release of procurement document(s) to respond. This procedure does not apply to the procurement of services through an IGA. A copy of the advertisement/public notice is required in the procurement file as per NJLWD. [NJSA 40a:11-4.5 (A) 29 CFR 97.36 (D) (3) (I)]

Potential applicants should be advised to register on the Atlantic County Purchasing Departments Bid Portal and select #25 to receive electronic bid notices, forms and clarification.

Technical Assistance Meetings

If opted, a non-mandatory technical assistance meeting is held approximately seven (7) to ten (10) business days after the procurement document(s) have been released through public notice. This meeting is held for sub-recipients to answer questions related to the procurement process and released document(s). This is not a requirement and in many instances is forgone as all questions related to the procurement process and released document(s) must be submitted in writing to the Atlantic County Purchasing Department. After the technical assistance meeting, when held or upon receipt of questions, clarifications shall be written and faxed to all sub-recipients. This fax is distributed through the Atlantic County Purchasing Department. Sub-recipients must return the fax with a signature acknowledging receipt of the clarification(s). In the case of an IGA, there is no technical assistance meeting. If consideration is made to not hold a non-mandatory technical assistance meeting, this must be approved by both the WDB Executive Director and the Atlantic County Purchasing Department. A copy of a sign in sheet, with date and time, clearly marked “non-mandatory,” if held is required in the procurement file as per NJLWD.

Selection of Reviewers

The review committee should be comprised of a minimum of three (3) WDB Board members, not making application for funding from both the private and public sectors. In addition, if the WDB oversees a Committee related to the funding, two (2) additional reviewers shall be included from the respective Committee. Membership on a review committee is voluntary. Email all Board/Committee members, when applicable to solicit volunteers. Each reviewer must sign a “conflict of interest” document. This document shall be kept in the procurement file as per NJLWD. This step shall be completed simultaneously with steps 6, 7 and 8. [NJAC 5:34-4.3 (f)]

Preparation for Review

Select a date. Volunteers for the review committee shall be notified via email of the date, location and time of the review at least seven (7) days prior to the review date. A formal in-person review is not always necessary. In this instance approval to opt out of holding an in-person review must be approved by the WDB Executive Director. Collection of documents and a conference call is acceptable. Reviewers shall consider the criterion listed in the RFP or CC, cost analysis, past performance and expenditure rates, when applicable, scoring applicants. As such these documents shall be prepared and distributed prior to the review date. See step 8 for additional details. [20 CFR 97.36 (f) (1) FAR Sec. 15; 404-1(c)]

Receipt

Applicant proposals should be received approximately 20 to 45 days from the release date, as determined by the type of procurement albeit RFP or CC. Applicant proposals are received by the Atlantic County Purchasing Department via a CD or USB. Personnel may not accept proposals. Upon receipt of applicant proposal(s) the submitted budget(s) must be provided to the Fiscal Unit for review. The Fiscal Unit will initial directly on the applicant “composite sheet” of the proposed budget indicating any errors for consideration during the review process. One (1) copy of each proposal is required in a file as per NJLWD.

Review Process

In a CC “conflict of interest” forms must be released and received for the Atlantic County Purchasing Department to release proposals to the WDB. In return said documents are then released to reviewers. In an RFP this is not the case. Reviewers make recommendations for funding based on scores. Review meetings shall be held in –person or not in-person, based on the availability of reviewers, time constraints and necessity within ten (10) business days of receipt of applicant proposals. Each reviewer shall receive one (1) copy of the

technical specifications document, one (1) copy of each applicant proposal, one (1) cost analysis form, past performance records by applicant (if awarded a contract in the prior year under an RFP or up for contract renewal under a CC), expenditure reports and copies of the evaluation tool. Initial procurement under CC's do not require past performance records. Effective July 1, 2010, all documents related to procurement shall be hand delivered to reviewers. Original score sheets is required in a file as per NJLWD. In the event that the Fiscal Unit finds errors, these must be shared with reviewers at the time the applicant proposals are released for review. These shall be issued via email or in writing to reviewers. Reviewers are asked to return review materials. [NJSA 40A:11-4.4]; [20 CFR 97.36 (f) (1) FAR Sec. 15; 404-1(c)]; [29 CR 97.36 (b) (8)]

Selection of Grant Recipients

In a CC, the WDB Executive Director when applicable will be provided with a Procurement Report identifying the review committee's recommendations, names/addresses of sub-recipients, requested level of service, requested funding amount, funding year/ source and a brief description of the proposals. Funding plans made on behalf of a Committee shall be voted upon by that Committee, who in return will provide recommendations in favor or not in favor of the action to the WDB Board.

In an RFP, the WDB Executive Director when applicable will be provided with a Procurement Report identifying the review committee's recommendations, names/addresses of sub-recipients, recommended levels of service, recommended funding amount, funding year/ source and a brief description of the proposals. Funding plans made on behalf of a Committee shall be voted upon by that Committee, who in return will provide recommendations in favor or not in favor of the action to the WDB Board.

In some instances, these steps shall be omitted and substituted for the following step. This is omitted in an IGA is issued. [NJSA 40A:11-4.5 (d)]

Approval of Grant Recipients

WDB Board members and Committee members, when applicable will be polled via fax utilizing the prescribed "fax poll" document. The Procurement Report identifying the review committee's recommendations as explained in Section 9 will be attached to the fax poll. Each member is asked to vote, initial the fax poll and return within three (3) business days of receipt. Fifty-one percent (51%) of the membership will vote for an action to be valid (abstentions are included). Likewise, if a Committee vote is required 51% of that membership must vote for an action to be valid. The WDB Board reserves the right to approve or veto the recommendations. In some instances, this step will be omitted when an IGA is issued. [NJSA 40A:11-4.5 (d)]

Resolution Preparation

When applicants respond to an RFP, a resolution summary is submitted to the WDB Fiscal Office with three (3) copies of the procurement document and successful applicant proposals. This task shall be submitted to the Fiscal Office within three (3) business days of the WDB Board approval of the proposal for funding. The Fiscal Office shall submit a resolution summary, EUS forms, if applicant and required documentation via inter-office to Roe D'Arcangelo at d'arcangelo_roe@aclink.org or COB, 7th Floor. Important Note: Resolution summaries and documents should not be forwarded until all materials are modified and accurate. All resolution summaries in a specific category shall be sent at one time. For the purposes of this manual, below is a description of each document utilized in an RFP process. [NJSA 40A:11-4.5(e)]

- *County Resolution Form*: The County Resolution Form should be utilized and include: the name and address of the sub-recipient/provider, the funding source, the contract year, the contract amount, and

if applicable mark off the appropriate payment method and type of contract. This form should be sent via interoffice. This component shall be completed by the Fiscal office upon receipt of the resolution summaries.

- *Freeholder Summary:* The resolution summaries should include the sub-recipient/provider name/address, level of service, funding amount, funding year/ source and a brief description of the proposal. The Fiscal Office will forward all documents via inter-office to Roe D’Arcangelo at d’arcangelo_roe@aclink.org or COB, 7th Floor.
- *EUS Forms:* A EUS form must be completed for all sub-recipients/providers that do not fall under the category of a public educational institution. The Fiscal Office will forward these forms via interoffice to Roe D’Arcangelo at d’arcangelo_roe@aclink.org or COB, 7th Floor
- *Required Documents:* Provide three (3) copies of the procurement document(s) and three (3) copies of each proposal (an original is sent from Atlantic County Purchasing Department) for the resolution process. These shall be provided to the Fiscal Office.

When applicants respond to a CC, a competitive contract memo is submitted to the Atlantic County Purchasing Department with one (1) scanned copy of the applicant proposal(s) individual and cumulative score sheet(s). This memo includes two (2) sections. The first section includes: the release date, list of applicants, and description of each proposal, date of establishment, level of service, budget request (with breakdown between personnel salary/fringe and operating costs), reviewer names/affiliations and overall points. The second section is a summary of the first section, but with recommendation(s) or non-recommendation(s) of funding with the contract period. The second section includes similar information to section 1, but must be repeated in the second section. [NJSA 40A:11-4.5(e)]

Award Notification

Prior to award notification, a Notice of Obligation (NOO) from the funding source, in a specific area must be received and approved by the Atlantic County Board of Chosen Freeholders prior to formalizing final award notification.

When applicants respond to an RFP, they should receive a letter from the WDB indicating that the program “has been recommended to Atlantic County Board of Chosen Freeholders for approval.” These letters should also request any clarifications and re-submission of budget modifications as per the review committee, and the WDB Executive Director. This letter should also state that funding amounts and level of service “will be negotiated in June of any given year.” Sub-recipient(s)/provider(s) not funded shall also receive a letter indicating the reasons why funding was denied. Successful sub-recipient(s)/provider(s) are required to submit a letter of acceptance with seven (7) business days from the date the applicant is notified of grant approval. A second letter shall be issued once the Atlantic County Board of Chosen Freeholders has formally approved the applicant. This letter should outline funding amounts and levels of service. Copies of all correspondence shall be kept in a file as per NJLWD.

When applicants respond to a CC, a competitive contract memo is submitted to the Atlantic County Purchasing Department with one (1) scanned copy of the applicant’s proposals and individual and cumulative score sheet(s). This memo includes two (2) sections. The first section includes the release date, list of applicants, and descriptions of each proposal, date of establishment, level of service, budget request (with breakdown between personnel/fringe and operating expenses), reviewer names/affiliations and overall points. The second section is a summary of the first section, but with recommendation(s) or non-

recommendation(s) of funding in the contract period. This second section includes similar information to section 1, but must be repeated in the second section. Applicants receive a letter from the Atlantic County Purchasing Department either in favor or not in favor of funding. If denied funding, the letter will provide the reasons why funding was denied. Successful sub-recipient(s) are required to submit a letter of acceptance within five (5) business days from the date the applicant is notified of grant approval. This correspondence shall be maintained by the Atlantic County Purchasing Department. In a renewal period of a CC, notification of award will be issued by the WDB Office, with a copy to the Atlantic County Purchasing Department. Renewal correspondence shall be kept in a procurement file as per NJLWD.

Negotiation

This is only allowable if services are procured via an RFP. The Executive Director of the WDB must receive a written request from the sub-recipient(s)/provider(s) to negotiate an approved proposal. This letter must be received by the close of business no later than seven (7) working days from the date the applicant is notified of the status of the proposal. When available, review committee members are asked to participate in negotiation meetings. In some instances, this step will be omitted. Minutes from the negotiation meeting shall be taken and filed as per NJLWD.

Appeals

As approved by the Atlantic County Law Department, the following appeal process is in place:

“Pursuant to 29 CF 97.36(b)(12) the Executive Director of the WDB must receive a written request by the close of business no later than seven (7) working days from the date the applicant is notified of the status of the proposal. The letter must include any information the applicants wishes to use/have considered, and an explanation why the information was omitted from its original submission. On behalf of the County of Atlantic, the WDB Board will review the letter and decide whether to hear the appeal based on the position presented in the letter. The applicant will be notified in writing, within ten (10) working days from the receipt of the appeal. The determination of the WDB Board shall be final. These procedures shall in no way provide an applicant with the ability to access the scoring records of the competitive contract, no provide access to the individuals scoring the application. Copies of all appeal correspondence shall be kept in a file as per NJLWD. [29CFR (b) (12)]

Contract Execution

The final contract is executed by the Atlantic County Law Department. The Atlantic County Law Department will mail the contracts to the sub-recipients. Personnel shall not accept contracts. One (1) executed copy of the contract is forwarded to the WDB Fiscal Office and maintained in a file as such.

Budget Modifications after Freeholder Approval

Budget modifications must be requested in writing to the WDB Executive Director. Upon WDB and Fiscal Unit approval, a letter of approval shall be sent to the sub-recipient(s)/provider(s). Budget modifications that remain within the initial awarded amount do not need to be approved by the Atlantic County Board of Chosen Freeholder Board again. Those that reflect a change in the overall awarded amount (plus or minus; up to 20%) must be processed through an amended resolution to the Freeholder Board following the steps above. The request letter must include: a letter from administrator making the request, a narrative of the change(s) and budget pages issued with the RFP, CB or IGA reflecting the change. Copies of correspondence related to budget modifications shall be kept in a file and provided to the Unit Manager of the respective program area and Monitoring Unit. The Fiscal Unit is responsible for these processes and maintaining files.

Inter-governmental Agreements

These are entered into with public entities, such as post-secondary education intuitions. IGA's shall be created in the county prescribed format with a program description and detailed budget attached. These are developed between the Contract Administrator at the direction of the WDB Executive Director and the entity. A signature page shall include at a minimum: the signatures of the WDB Executive Director, WDB Chair, representative from the agency requesting funds, Atlantic County Executive, Law Department, and Clerk's Office. IGA's are contracted expedited quicker than RFP's and CB's. Provide one (1) copy of the IGA when executed to the respective Unit manager, Monitoring Unit and Fiscal Office.

Alternate Contracting Method

Job Skills Training, better known as Individual Training Accounts (ITA's) do not follow the same process of procurement as outlined above. This program area's contracts are accepted through an "alternate contracting method." This method requires the completion of the State P2P contract documents. These documents provide for a fair and equitable procurement process by which vendors that plan to provide job skills training programs affirm their political contributions.

On an annual basis an Employment and Training Provider Guide and the P2P contract is distributed to providers from the previous program year for review, completion and return. Providers that return the executed contract are placed on an established list of provider for the County of Atlantic. Providers that do not return the executed contract may still provide job skills training services, but only up to a threshold of \$17,500. The amount is set by the County of Atlantic as the maximum amount one (1) provider may be paid in a given fiscal year. The process for initial procurement of job skills training services is as follows:

- Development or update of Provider Guide
- Distribution of P2P State Business Disclosure Form
- Receipt of executed P2P Contract
- Follow steps 11, under RFP

Accurately submitted provider materials may be submitted as received to the Atlantic County Law Department via resolution as directed in Step 11, under RFP. Throughout a program year, providers may complete and execute a P2P contract to be added to the established list of providers. It's important to note that the County of Atlantic only enters into alternate contracts with providers approved on the State List of Eligible Training Providers (ETPL).

Renewal of Competitive Contracts

On Behalf of the County of Atlantic, the Atlantic County WDB has the option to renew contracts based on the contract terms listed in the original CC. Sub-recipients receive written communication to submit narratives and budgets covering the renewal period. This letter must be issued a minimum of 30 days prior to the conclusion of the current year contract terms. Sub-recipients are given 14 business days to submit the required materials for review. Steps 5, 6, 8, 9 and 10 apply to the renewal process. Upon approval, narratives and budgets shall be submitted to the WDB Fiscal Office to ensure accuracy. The Fiscal Office will then submit a resolution summary to the Atlantic County Board of Chosen Freeholders to authorize contract execution. Step 15 explains the issuance of contracts.

File Management

A procurement file shall be developed per program area that shall include at a minimum focus group results, procurement documents, advertisements/public notices, and technical assistance sign in sheets, if applicable resolution summaries, if applicable, Board/Committee fax poll results, reviewer conflict of interest forms, and validation that the Atlantic County Board of Chosen Freeholders approved the measure. One file per applicant (“provider specific”) shall be developed and shall include at a minimum: submitted proposal(s), evaluation score sheets, modifications to the proposal(s), if applicable, vendor notification letter(s), past performance/expenditure rates, cost analysis forms and correspondence(s) with the vendor. These shall be kept in the Contract Administrator’s office.

Provide one (1) copy of the procurement document(s), successful applicant proposal(s), and amendments 15 days in advance of program start date to the Manager of the respective unit and Monitoring Unit. A mailing list will also be provided as per NJLWD to the Manager of the respective unit, and Monitoring Unit. The Fiscal Office should receive a copy of the approved budget. Create and maintain a sub-recipient database.

GRANT APPLICATIONS**Scope, Sequence, and Frequency**

On occasion, the Atlantic County WDB applies for federal, state and foundation grant funds. Authorization to apply for grant funds is required. Those approved to authorize such application are the Atlantic County WDB Executive Director.

Procedures**Resolution Preparation**

A resolution request must be submitted to the Atlantic County Law Department prior to submission of a grant application. This resolution shall read: “Resolution requests to authorize the County Executive to submit a grant application to (insert grantor agency) and further authorizes to accept the grant funds in the amount of (insert dollar amount) should they be awarded by (insert grantor agency). If grantor agency funds LESS than the original budget request a separate resolution must be completed citing the initial resolution and indicating the reduction in funds. A copy of the grant application must accompany the resolution request.

Submission of Grant Application

The County of Atlantic permits the Atlantic County WDB to submit grant applications without further interruption so long as the resolution request to submit has been completed and approved.

File Management

An application file shall be developed per grant application that shall include at a minimum of: planning meeting notes, concept paper, if applicable, proposal, budget and correspondence from the grantor agency. These shall be kept in the Contract Administrator’s office. Provide a copy of the budget to the Fiscal Office. Provide one (1) copy of the Monitoring Unit, One-Stop Coordinator(s) and/or respective Unit Managers 15 days in advance of program start date.

XVII. Performance Measures

Describe how the local levels of performance negotiated with the Governor and chief elected official, pursuant to section 116(c), will be used to measure the performance of the local area and will be used by the local board for measuring the performance of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers under subtitle B, and the One-Stop delivery system, in the local area. Describe any additional performance measures developed or used locally.

An annual evaluation shall be conducted to determine how successful the One-Stop System has been in cultivating employer relationships and meeting performance standards set by NJLWD and to ensure the quality and effectiveness of services. Performance measures will be negotiated with the Governor and CEOs to ensure that local area performance is adequately tracked and measured. Any such measures need to be measurable and be aligned with the goals and objectives of the local area. Performance measures should be in accordance with the State performance requirements for each local area. The goals of the board will trickle down to performance of local operations. If the local area is meeting the needs of local businesses that means people are being moved through the workforce development system properly.

Establishing PY16 and PY17 performance targets are challenging as the transition from the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) introduces substantial programmatic and technical changes which will require evaluation, testing and modification as mentioned in the Combined State Plan.

Performance Goals for Core Programs:

- a) Evaluate the One-Stop System
- b) Development of data collection tool to assess employer needs
- c) Conduct online customer satisfaction surveys
- d) Review feedback from customers, business and partners to address continued improvements
- e) Maintain 90% performance in all program areas
- f) Provide financial literacy instruction that allows an individual to make informed and effective decisions through their understanding of finances

PY 2017 Performance Standards:

- a) Evaluate the One-Stop System
- b) Conduct online customer satisfaction surveys
- c) Review feedback from customers, business and partners to address continued improvement
- d) Maintain 90% performance in all program areas
- e) Develop a Youth Work Readiness credential backed through accreditation and recognized by the NJLWD

XVIII. Local Board

Provide a list of Board members and indicate alignment with new requirement per SETC policy #2015-01 and WIOA. Include description of how membership aligns with New Jersey key industries and local area priorities.

Discuss recruitment plans to address any deficiencies.

Describe development/training programs with board members.

A list of the Atlantic County Workforce Development Board Members can be found online at www.atlanticcountywdb.com.

Our local Board members consist of 14 Private Sector, 15 Public Sector, two Labor, and one Freeholder Official, totaling 32 total members. The enactment of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) required States to establish Workforce Investment Boards (WIB). In accordance with this legislation, the Atlantic County WIB was formed. For more than a decade, this Board has worked in conjunction with the Chief Elected Officials from providing recommendations to plan for and integrate the delivery of services and coordination of partners to provide quality, effective, and efficient workforce development programs for residents of Atlantic County. With the authorization of WIOA, this board became known as the Atlantic County Workforce Development Board (WDB) and continues to help advance workforce development initiatives in the area. The WDB meets quarterly to provide oversight, planning, and direction for the area and lent support to the development of this plan.

This plan will highlight the Board's accomplishments, establish new policy, and lay the groundwork for future planning of emerging and innovative service strategies and initiatives. This plan is compatible with the New Jersey State Department of Labor and Workforce Development's (NJLWD) plan and meets the requirements established in WIOA.

The Board has established partnerships with local businesses, community and faith based organizations, educational institutions, and government agencies to plan for a seamless system of employment, training and social services for residents in the County. Furthermore, the Board is tasked with building an extensive network of private and public sector partners to increase business participation in the workforce system, while fostering an environment for provider collaboration and partnerships.

WDB Structure

The Atlantic County WDB is comprised of 32 representatives from Atlantic County. The private sector represents over half of the membership, which provides for a diverse and informed Board drawn right from the community. The Board implements workforce strategies at the county level to provide funds to address the employment, training, and social service needs of adults, dislocated workers, and youth. The system is charged with providing a workforce development system that meets the needs of area businesses and job seekers. Board members are asked to oversee the development and planning of new employment and training programs and to support the current services and ongoing projects of the WDB.

Committees

In 2016, the WDB Board updated its by-laws to meet the new WIOA legislation. These by-laws are intended to govern the administration of the Board as it oversees federal, state and workforce readiness policies, and manages funding into a single labor market driven system. According to the by-laws, the Board shall be comprised of leaders from the fields of business, labor, education, and government, with at least 51% percent from the private sector, under the guidelines of the WDB Certification Manual published by New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission (SETC).

Members are asked to serve on at least one (1) committee. The WDB has added a membership committee to help keep the board at the proper ratio of business members and to ensure new members are oriented on the board and put into committees. This committee helps target industries in the county to ensure that industries have proper representation on the board. The Membership Committee also has an orientation process for new board members as well.

The WDB employs four full-time employees, an Executive Director, Administrative Coordinator, Contract Administrator (currently vacant) and Fiscal Agent. The WDB, under the guidance of the Atlantic County Purchasing Department is responsible for the development of policy and procedures to competitively award grants and contracts for activities and services of the One-Stop System.

The operating structure of the WDB will remain the same as defined in the original plan, with the committees reporting to the full board. These committees are responsible to address their respective objectives and meet established goals. The Board has eight standing committees with members drawn from both the board membership and community. The following is a description of the current committees. These include:

1. The Executive Committee consists of the Officers of the WDB and a minimum of two at-large members appointed by the Chair. The purpose of this Committee is to oversee the operations and administration of the WDB and to make policy recommendations to the full Board. This Committee establishes the parameters to facilitate WDB goals and objectives to accomplish WDB tasks. The Executive Committee has the authority to vote on behalf of the full Board when time does not permit a full board session. Members are appointed by the WDB Chair.
2. The One-Stop Oversight Committee oversees and evaluates the One-Stop System services, which directly delivers employment, training and social service related services to the public. This Committee is comprised of both private and public sector members from both counties appointed by the WDB Chair.
3. The Disabilities Workforce Committee consists of representatives from private business, community, faith based and government agencies, and post-secondary education institutions. The goal of the Committee is to increase access and integrate services within the employment and training delivery system for individuals with disabilities and to ensure that the WDB's policies and program strategies provide employment outcomes for this population.
4. The Business Development Committee consists of local labor market analysts, economists, and businesses to develop a network of private/public sector business, educate the community about the workforce development resources available to help grow businesses and engage local business in the labor exchange system. The members interact with both the established and potential business community on a regular basis and provide a regional perspective as most professionally work in all or most of Southern New Jersey.

5. Healthcare Workforce Committee: This Committee is made up of employers in the Healthcare Industry that plan, coordinate and implement strategies to address labor shortages in and develop training for the industry.
6. The Literacy Workforce Committee consists of the public and private industry representatives as well as representatives from the Literacy Consortium program. The planning committee will provide direction and oversight of the operations of the literacy system in the County. The Committee develops strategies to address issues of workplace literacy that impact job readiness and employment. The literacy system includes: Adult Basic Education (ABE), General Equivalency Diploma test preparation (GED), English as a Second Language (ESL), Workforce Learning Links, and Consortium programs.
7. The Youth Advisory Council is comprised of members from the private and public sector and educational institutions. As a collaborative committee, the group is charged with developing a broad-based plan to address the education, employment, and training needs of the youth population, specifically at risk, out-of-school youth. Additionally, the committee members are responsible for participating in a comprehensive planning effort to identify service gaps in the youth workforce system and evaluating performance of contracted service providers.
8. The Membership Committee was formed in 2010 to recruit and retain members. The Committee consists of four Board members to maintain and accept nominations for membership, develop procedures for nomination and appointment, and create an orientation guide to provide ongoing professional development. The Committee has stated that the most difficult membership category for the Board to fill is private sector members. To ensure a diverse membership, when vacancies occur on the Board, the Membership Committee will solicit nominations from partnering agencies such as the Chambers of Commerce to maintain the composition of the Board.

One-Stop Partners

According to WIOA, the WDB is required to partner with specific community agencies and post-secondary education institutions to deliver a seamless system of complimentary and wrap-around services to its customer base. The One-Stop Partners have been diligent in bringing together the required partners to facilitate the delivery of a workforce development system of complimentary services. All required partners have membership on this committee and all have an equal vote and opportunity to participate in planning processes. Each partner is asked to participate in professional development trainings held by both local and state agencies to improve operations and coordinate service strategies with the One-Stop System. The partners have realized the commitment of time, personnel, and resources they must contribute to the system for its overall success and have willingly done so for more than a decade.

The partners agree that the best model to deliver service is to co-locate as many services as space allows within the One-Stop Career Center. This group meets quarterly to identify gaps in service, discuss the implementation of programs and come to a consensus on the operation of said services and programs. The partners will continue to convene on a quarterly basis to refine the system and address new areas of concern. The goals remain the same as in the original plan, but flexibility in approach and accommodations will be critical to the success of this partnership.

Oversight of the One-Stop System

The One-Stop Oversight Committee of the WDB has continually strived to offer quality programs in a cost-effective manner to better service the residents of Atlantic County. Initiatives that strengthen program development and staff development have been a focus of the Committee for the past two years.

The Committee provides local regulatory supervision of the One-Stop System to ensure compliance with state and federal guidelines, evaluate the service delivery system, and recommend improvements to assure performance standards are met. The members have a baseline performance standard to work from and endeavor to make modifications based on system needs. As such, the Committee meets on a quarterly basis and reviews system progress, staff performance, and statistical data related to the operation of programs and services available in the One-Stop system.

Describe the actions the local board will take toward becoming or remaining a high-performing workforce development board, consistent with the factors developed by the State.

The WDB is not currently a high-performing workforce development board but is moving toward becoming one. Policies such as having each Board member serve on at least one committee will help achieve this. The WDB has moved to a more open-conversation structure to ensure all points of view are heard and discussed. This allows for each member to be more involved and have more of a stake in the proceedings of the Board.

XIX. Staff and Partner Development and Training

Describe staff and partner development and training efforts. Provide plans/timeline for such trainings. Include both local and partner staff efforts.

Staff development activities in Atlantic County are coordinated in conjunction with the Region and State Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

The County coordinates most staff and partner training efforts in conjunction with the Garden State Employment and Training Association (GSETA) the statewide association of WIOA providers and programs. GSETA is in the process of re-convening its Training Institute, which was in place for a number of years and provided a central hub for a range of staff training and professional development activities across New Jersey's workforce development system. Atlantic County will engage actively in the GSETA Training Institute in developing and accessing training for our staff and team.

Staff and line managers make suggestions to Atlantic County leadership of what training they may need to improve their job performance or customer services. In particular with frontline staff training, it is important for supervisors to identify needs. Supervisors or individual staff may make requests or recommendations at any time to the Executive Director about trainings they may want to attend. The Executive Director makes determinations of the overall training calendar for Atlantic County, but in general, budgets allowing, these recommendations and requests from staff and management are honored or (if cost or timing is prohibitive), a similar training offered in another location/time is identified.

Staff and supervisors go to a number of national and regional conferences, attend local training workshops (both multi-day courses and single-session workshops), take online courses, and participate in other continuous improvement and professional development activities.

Atlantic County also partners with Atlantic Cape Community College on continuing education for staff.

Supervisors participate in a supervisor/manager training conducted by Innovations, Inc., a local management consulting firm.

Innovative Leadership's "The Making of an Effective Manager Course" is designed to improve the performance skills of your management team. Your management team is the single most important factor in the achievement of your business goals. Ineffective managers negatively impact your overall company environment contributing to inefficiency, poor morale, and high turnover. Our Course focuses on the management development skills that make "high achieving" managers. We believe that people don't leave a good company, they leave a bad manager.

The professional development processes are ad hoc and based on need and trainings that arise, so there is no regular yearly calendar of professional development activity.

Atlantic County also accesses any and all trainings that are offered by the State of New Jersey, State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) and Department of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD). As noted in the State WIOA Plan, New Jersey's frontline service delivery staff funded by WIOA programs across

the state are one of our greatest strengths and a key to our capacity to deliver high quality programs. The work of our strong staff across all WIOA Titles is supported by ongoing professional development and staff training activities. WIOA Title I, Employment Service, Adult Education and other staff will participate in professional development that is provided directly by, or coordinated by, the WIOA Office of Technical Assistance and Capacity Building. Professional development will utilize multiple delivery modes to reach part-time and other hard to reach staff. This includes a mix of in-person meetings, synchronous online events and resources made available online. Key to all of this professional development system will be the requirement that Workforce Development Boards conduct joint planning and training for One-Stop, adult literacy and WDB staff directed toward establishing partnerships, resource sharing and appropriate and necessary student referrals. Additionally, professional development resources will be made available to all One-Stop Career Center staff through the WIOA Technical Assistance webpage. LWD also will incorporate training opportunities for One-Stop staff relating the provision of services to individuals with disabilities, in coordination with DVRS and CBVI.

Employment Service staff, as well as other program areas, will participate in professional development that is provided directly by, or coordinated by, the WIOA Office of Technical Assistance and Capacity Building. This professional development will take several forms, including online, in-person training and webinars. Additionally, professional development resources will be made available to all One-Stop Career Center staff through the WIOA Technical Assistance webpage. LWD also will incorporate training opportunities for One-Stop staff relating the provision of services to individuals with disabilities, in coordination with DVRS and CBVI.

See also the section in *Section XIV: Services for Persons with Disabilities* regarding cross training of staff.

XX. Provision of Training Services

Describe how training services under chapter 3 of subtitle B will be provided in accordance with section 134(c)(3)(G), including, if contracts for the training services will be used, how the use of such contracts will be coordinated with the use of individual training accounts under that chapter and how the local board will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how the training services are to be provided. Within this section, be sure to address how training will lead to industry-valued credentials.

Customers who are interested in job training must come in and attend what is called Systems Orientation, which includes a Career Beacon Workshop (CBW). At this time the customers are oriented to the One-Stop System and services. They get a brief overview of the Labor Market, Career Choices where we recommend the customer utilize the NJ Career Assistance Navigator (a free web-based career guidance system) to help determine which career options best fits them. The ES will give a brief overview of industry-valued credentials and how finding training that will provide the customer with opportunities to gain a degree, diploma, certificate or certification that will enhance a customer's opportunity to gain meaningful and sustainable employment where they can grow within the chosen industry. We also discuss resume writing, interviewing skills, and applying for jobs. The last part of the CBW is the discussion of choosing the right school by completing the mandatory three-school search. During this search, we highly suggest to the customers to visit at least three schools offering their choice of training, talk to the school representatives and students to get a feel of the school's environment, and determine whether that school is conducive to the customer's learning style.

After the customer selects the school to provide their training they must complete the three-school search packet and meet with the Employment Specialist (ES) to complete a comprehensive assessment. During this appointment the customer and the ES will discuss any barriers facing the customer, as well as our expectations while in training and after the training is complete. The ES will also review the customer's resume if they have one completed.

As long as the customer completes the three-school search packet before coming to the comprehensive assessment, the ES will issue the customer a participant cost form to return to the school of the customer's choosing. The cost listed on this form must match the cost on the NJ TOPPS training portal. Once completed the school or the student can fax, email, mail, or hand deliver the form back to their ES. The ES will put the completed training packet together, inclusive of the three-school search final selection form with customer signature, a program description, and provider description printed from the NJ TOPPS portal, and the completed participant cost form. This information will then be submitted to the training supervisor for review and submission to the fiscal department for contract number assignment. Once the packet is assigned a contract number the supervisor of training will email or mail a contract approval letter along with time sheets and monthly evaluations to the training provider. The ES will also contact the student informing them of the contract approval or completion.

XXI. Local Plan Process

Describe process to create the local plan, and provide assurances that it was an open and transparent process, including:

(a) List and describe any meetings of workgroups, taskforces or similar efforts. Documentation of these meetings, including minutes and attendees, must be maintained locally. Include a list of the participants and their organizations. (This should include local elected officials, local public entities, regional and local economic development partners, WIOA system partners such as Adult Education and Literacy providers, community colleges, Talent Networks, Talent Development Centers and other entities with a stake in the local workforce system and plan.)

The Workforce Development Board and leadership staff together led the development of this plan.

The Board is comprised of 32 representatives from Atlantic County with more than half its membership representing the private sector. The group meets to provide oversight, planning and direction.

This Plan was developed during the summer and fall of 2016 through full Board, Board Committee and staff input on specific Plan sections. Sections were drafted by the lead staff related to certain program or policy areas or members of the Board Committees. Board Committees that met and worked collaboratively on sections of this Plan include:

- One-Stop Oversight Committee
 - Drafted Sections II, III, IV, VI, VII, VIII, XI, XII and XXII in conjunction with other Committees and portions of other Sections.
- Business Development Committee
 - Drafted Sections IV, V, VIII and XX in conjunction with other Committees
- Healthcare Workforce Committee
 - Drafted portions of Sections IV and V in conjunction with other Committees
- Literacy Workforce Committee
 - Drafted Section XIII and portions of other Sections.
- Disabilities Workforce Committee
 - Drafted Section XIV and portions of other Sections related to Disabilities.
- Youth Advisory Council
 - Drafted Section IX and Youth portions of other Sections on Youth services.

Key planning meetings included:

- Committee meetings held during September and October 2016
- October 14th meeting of Board Committee chairs and key staff
 - Rhonda Lowery, Alicia Oatman, Riaz Rajput, Elizabeth Denham, Dan Konczyk, Eric Reynolds, Jim Drew, Joseph Kelly
 - October 16th meeting of key program staff
- October 16th meeting of key program staff
 - Rhonda Lowery, Denita Bethel, Mona Tally, Rev. Odinga Maddox, Dan Adams, Fran Kuhn, Shirley Smith, Alicia Oatman

- Full Board Meeting on September 22, 2016 at Stockton University

All input was considered by the Board and has laid the foundation to set new goals. Members have been invaluable assets in producing this final document.

The WDB invited public comment by posting this plan in draft form on the WDB website at www.atlanticcountywdb.com.

(b) Describe the process used by the local board to make available copies of the proposed local plan to the public, through electronic and other means such as public hearings and local news media; ensuring that the document was made available in accessible formats.

This is being finalized as of October 31, 2016 submission but the following steps will be taken:

- Plan to send copies to all libraries and municipal buildings in Atlantic County
- Place on both County and WDB website
- Send announcements to local Press of Atlantic County directing residents to the websites and libraries
- Possible radio announcements if funds permit directing residents to the libraries and websites
- Send email to all WDB members and committee members

(c) Describe the process used to provide an opportunity for public comment, including comment by representatives of businesses, representatives of labor organizations, and representatives of education and input into the development of the local plan, prior to submission of the plan. Describe any additional local requirements or processes for local public comments. Provide a list of stakeholders who were notified of the opportunity for public comment. Include as an attachment to the Local Plan any such comments including those that represent disagreement with the plan.

Atlantic County will provide a form online that anyone can use to submit comments and will have a printed form available at the County's public libraries for comments to be submitted.

Further details on this process as it was implemented will be supplied in the final draft of this Plan.

XXII. One-Stop Intake and Case Management Information System

Describe how One-Stop centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under this Act and programs carried out by One-Stop partners.

Atlantic County actively utilizes the New Jersey case management system for the WIOA program. New Jersey currently utilizes the AOSOS system across all One-Stops, and all core partner programs are able to utilize it as the primary case management resource, for recording and accessing all jobseeker customer data, as well as for reporting on DOL performance measures. Staff in Atlantic County use the system in collaborative case management across sites and the multiple staff working with customers. New Jersey is in the process of undertaking a comprehensive assessment of the State's case management system needs as well as identifying any new or updated requirements for case management and reporting systems in WIOA. This work will be undertaken in coming years, but for the present AOSOS will remain for current and immediately expected purposes. Atlantic County will adopt any more technology-enabled intake and case management system that is developed and disseminated statewide.

The Atlantic County MIS Division is responsible for the overall quality control of data entry and data-related program compliance. It also acts as the data analysis arm of the local workforce development system. MIS reviews programs and data enters all authorized service contracts in the American One-Stop Operations System (AOSOS) This unit also enters data into the Work First New Jersey (WFNJ), Department of Human Services (DHS) systems for WFNJ activities and referrals. Using the AOSOS reporting system, the MIS unit also works in conjunction with the monitoring unit to assure services follow federal and state regulations, as well as local board policy, by conducting periodic case sampling and data analysis to determine the level of compliance with the performance standards and objectives of WIOA, WFNJ, and other special grant-funded programs.

MIS unit reviews and validates all WIOA, WFNJ, and special funded program files and data entry in the AOSOS to track and ascertain if the customers are receiving proper training and/or benefits according to contractual agreements and/or federal guidelines. It also assures supporting documents submitted from staff and or sub-recipients are data entered into the AOSOS to report activity to meet state performance requirements. In addition, this system component facilitates the WFNJ DHS systems time and attendance data for the state participation rate in a timely manner. The AOSOS compiles program records to collect factual data on the programs to determine program compliance with contracted proposals or federal guidelines.

MIS compiles and interprets data for and prepares reports containing factual information, conclusions, and recommendations of each program. These reports are compiled and distributed to the WDB Director, coordinators/ managers, supervisors, and staff, giving each unit a snap shot of the participants and sub-recipients service actions. These documents are maintained for the state, federal, and county yearly reviews.

XXIII. Priority of Service

Describe how the local board will ensure priority for adult career and training services will be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient consistent with WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(E) and § 680.600.

The WDB considers the relevant needs and characteristics, and the size of the population when determining the number of individuals that should be served through funding. Priorities reflect demographics of the local area and target occupational areas that encompass employer needs and expectations. The WDB is committed to achieving its WIOA training goals. Based on those goals and subsequent analysis of individual and employer needs and the current system's capacities to meet those needs, the Board has placed a priority on low income adults, dislocated workers, Veterans, the long term unemployed and low income, out-of-school youth residing in Atlantic County.

Atlantic County follows New Jersey SETC policy and LWD procedures on priority of service for veterans and other targeted populations. This Policy was recently updated in New Jersey Workforce Innovation Notice 11-16(A): Priority of Service under Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I programs, dated October 25, 2016.

Atlantic County residents are given priority over Out of County residents. We usually do not have waiting list, as we have had National Emergency Grants to supplement our funding for dislocated workers. With the new WIOA employer driven demand occupational training, we will prioritize our funds in the local employer demand occupational skills and trainings.

Veterans Services: Each local area must develop and describe its policy for providing Veterans services and maintaining the Priority of Service as required by USDOL, including a description of the Local Area's process to ensure adequate signage.

See extensive section above in Section III regarding Veterans Services and the item immediately above regarding the Priority of Service.

- Atlantic County residence is given priority preference for any of our funded training services.
- Veterans are given priority as long as all other factors of eligibility are equal

After this, the same priority of services identified previously in this plan applies.

XXIV. Additional Local Elements

Local boards may include any additional elements to the local plan that they believe are relevant that do not fit within the framework outlined above. In order to retain formatting and order of elements, all additional sections should begin with this item number and be placed here at the end of the plan.

Atlantic County will work to enhance the coordination of regional efforts. Activities that the WDB may take to achieve this include:

- Coordinate regional business meet and greets (show and tells events)
- Coordinate one or more regional career/job fairs

Coordinating events on a regional basis will allow for larger participation numbers, more diversity in what is shared and learned, and offers the potential for cost sharing.