

LOCAL UNIFIED WORKFORCE STRATEGIC PLAN

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Submitted by:

The Union County Workforce Investment Board

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION	2
SECTION 2: DESCRIPTION OF THE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD	3
Current Composition and Expected Changes for Compliance	3
Union County WIB and CEO	5
WIB Committees	6
Youth Investment Council	9
Input in the Plan Development Process	9
SECTION 3: REGIONAL PLANNING	11
Job Growth	11
Labor Market	12
Workforce Needs	13
The Overall Economic Development Plan	14
Role of Outside Agencies	15
SECTION 4: NEEDS OF THE BUSINESS CUSTOMER	16
Occupational and Industry Analysis	16
Occupational Skills Assessment	18
SECTION 5: NEEDS OF THE INDIVIDUAL CUSTOMER	19
General Demographic Analysis	19
Subpopulations	20
Education Characteristics	30
Supportive Services	32
Transportation	36
SECTION 6: RESOURCE ASSESSMENT	40
SECTION 7: ONE-STOP SYSTEM DESCRIPTION	42
Union County One-Stop System Management Overview	42
The One-Stop Operator Selection Process	43
One-Stop Partners	44
Continuous Improvement Process	47
How the One-Stop will Respond to Anticipated Needs of Customers	48
SECTION 8: PERFORMANCE STANDARDS	52
Baseline Performance Standard Development	52
Key Indicators of Success	58
Customer Satisfaction	58
Standards Review	58
SECTION 9: CONCLUSION	59
SECTION 10: REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS	60
APPENDIX	68

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

On August 7, 1998, Congress transformed the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) to the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). The Workforce Investment Act consolidated programs and funding streams supporting the labor force, and required job training systems to be customer focused. Key changes under WIA include:

- coordination of federally funded training programs;
- establishment of one-stop delivery systems for all job seekers to access, regardless of their income level;
- development of a certification process for training providers;
- use of individual training accounts (ITAs) for the provision of training; and
- development of minimum standard performance measures.

The transition from JTPA to WIA at the local level has included, and will continue to require an intensive collaborative effort. The Union County Workforce Investment Board (WIB), one of seventeen WIBs in New Jersey, has committed time and effort to establish a workforce development system that is effective, efficient, seamless and integrated. Continuous improvement is anticipated to maintain a high standard of service. The system design will be flexible so that it can adapt to meet the needs of our customers.

New Jersey developed a "Strategic Five-Year Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Investment System" to provide a framework for local workforce investment systems. The local plan guidelines were established to usher the local WIBs through a comprehensive five-year local plan development process that fulfills state and federal policy requirements. This document is the result of that collaborative development process.

The Union County Local Unified Workforce Strategic Plan consists of the following sections:

1. Introduction
2. Description of the Workforce Investment Board
3. Regional Planning
4. Needs of the Business Customer
5. Needs of the Individual Customer
6. Resource Assessment
7. One-Stop System Description
8. Performance Standards
9. Conclusion
10. Required Attachments
11. Appendix

As described in detail within, the Local Unified Workforce Strategic Plan addresses state and federal changes in workforce development as well as describes Union County's newly restructured system. The Plan also includes a review of demographics, an assessment of needs and resources, and guidelines for performance measures.

SECTION 2: DESCRIPTION OF THE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

CURRENT COMPOSITION AND EXPECTED CHANGES FOR COMPLIANCE

Consistent with the 1998 Workforce Investment Act (WIA), the Union County Workforce Investment Board (WIB) is charged with strategic planning essential to successfully transition the current Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) system into a cohesive, collaborative workforce development system responsive to the needs of employers and job seekers. The mission of the Union County Workforce Investment Board is to develop this comprehensive workforce system within the County of Union; a system that will provide job seekers with lifelong learning through employment and training opportunities, and employers with a competent workforce that will stimulate and grow the local business economy.

The Workforce Investment Act affords Union County greater flexibility in designing and implementing workforce development programs. By integrating training programs, employment opportunities, career advancement, and supportive services, the Union County Workforce Investment Board (WIB) will create a holistic workforce readiness service delivery system accountable and suited for all individuals. The County of Union, the WIB, the State Employment and Training Commission (SETC), the State Departments of Labor, Human Services and Education, and other related agencies will heighten their ongoing collaboration and join forces to maximize dollars to improve workforce service delivery in Union County.

Through its Executive Committee, the WIB will expand its role as the oversight entity responsible for planning and implementing the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act. The Committee reflects our County's traditional interdepartmental collaboration that has been effective in streamlining services for clients. The attached WIB Organization Chart and Flow Chart (*Appendices A and B*) visually present the structure of Union County's WIB.

WIB Composition

The Union County WIB does not serve as an incorporated structure but rather functions to provide independent broad based planning and policy guidance within the County Administrative Code. The staff of the WIB report to the Office of the County Manager or his/her designee and is administratively housed within the Department of Human Services. Terms of service on the WIB are fixed and staggered three-year terms, with nominations approved by the Board of Chosen Freeholders and certified by the SETC.

Current WIB membership is comprised of representation from business (majority), county government, education, labor, welfare, employment and training, Human Services Advisory Council, proprietary schools, vocational rehabilitation, and literacy. For a full list of representatives, refer to *Appendix C*. Non-WIB members are continually recruited to serve on various committees, and are encouraged to participate in planning, policy guidance and oversight. The WIB Board, as well as Committees reflect the gender, race and ethnic composition of Union County.

Business representatives includes participation from Bell Atlantic, Elizabethtown GAS/NUI, Wakefern Foods, Rolex, INFINIUM U.S.A., Fleet Bank, the Union County Department of Economic Development, and the Union County Economic Development Corporation. The Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders and the County Manager may provide direct recruitment of members through organizations such as the Employer Legislative Committee, Chambers of Commerce, and professional service groups.

Projected Activities and Expected Changes for 2000

The following areas were identified by the Union County WIB to provide the planning structure for the transition into the goals outlined in the Workforce Investment Act. To accomplish the tasks and activities that follow in this Plan, WIB staff will utilize transition resources. The activities of the WIB will include, but are not limited to the following during the transition process:

- 1) Provide leadership and planning necessary to implement the 1998 Workforce Investment Act (WIA) requirements, with priority given to the development of a local One-Stop System and the selection of a One-Stop Operator to manage it.
- 2) Lead the planning and guide the utilization of funds based upon workforce strategies designed to ready and prepare the local workforce market for work. These strategies will be primarily influenced by employers' needs and current labor market economics.
- 3) Coordinate the collaboration of School-to-Work (STW) and Economic Development as required by the New Jersey Department of Education Core Curriculum Content Standards.
- 4) Complete the implementation of the Year III One Stop Career Center Technology initiative, with increased marketing of the Workforce New Jersey Public Information Network (WNJPIN), an integral informational service of One Stop Centers.
- 5) Provide Capacity Building in regard to the WIA.
- 6) Develop a fully operational Youth Investment Council and Literacy Committees as required under WIA.
- 7) In conjunction with the NJDOL and the SETC, develop universal performance measures criteria for the workforce delivery system's evaluation and assessment.
- 8) Develop Memorandum of Understanding's between the WIB and the One-Stop Partners and the WIB and Chief Elected Official that will function as a formal agreement to identify functions to be performed by each entity (required by WIA).
- 9) Develop a comprehensive five-year local plan for all workforce related activities. The Plan will indicate the mechanism for continuous improvement of the entire workforce system (required by WIA).
- 10) Evaluate and approve funding for all educational and training programs for eligible youth, adults, and dislocated workers, per WIA.
- 11) Plan for and integrate the different funding "silos" into a seamless service delivery system for the County's labor market area.

The One-Stop concept is very similar to the service delivery system Union County has utilized for many years. The County's integration of service delivery to clients precedes the One-Stop initiative. The design of the One-Stop System is of primary importance, particularly the ties among partnering agencies, coordination among core partners and affiliated members, and leveraging of resources.

Due to the dissolution of the JTPA system as of July 1, 2000 meetings have been held with staff and the appropriate stakeholders to keep them informed of the transition process, allay fears of how the transition may impact staff and service delivery, minimize misinformation, and explain the changing roles in the evolution of the local workforce development system. These individuals were invited to participate in the transition process, and ongoing WIA activities.

Youth

The Youth Investment Council (YIC), a subcommittee of the WIB, is charged with developing the youth portion of the Plan, and guiding youth activities under WIA. The YIC is responsible for setting clear policy direction in creating employment opportunities and career pathways for all youth between the ages of 14-21, whether in or out-of-school. Special emphasis will be directed towards at-risk youth, pregnant teens, high school dropouts/out-of-school youth, and students residing in the two Abbott districts: Elizabeth & Plainfield. The spectrum of youth programs will also include adjudicated youth, youth with disabilities, homeless, and learning deficient youth ages 14-21.

Projected activities and changes for 2000 include the following:

1. Disseminate a survey to identify the types of programs and services offered to youth (assessment of resources).
2. Develop the standards and criteria for a comprehensive out-of-school youth program. Develop a draft budget for providing those services to determine how much funding to set aside from the allocation (minimum of 30%)

3. Develop the minimum services to be provided for the 12 month follow-up. Services, might include: connection to ongoing programs and services, year round case management, connection to supportive services, academic monitoring, leadership development, career exploration, on-going counseling offered on a routine basis, employability skills assessment and development of a career plan.
4. Initiate planning for a Youth One Stop as part of the One Stop Operators services.
5. Develop budget for administrative costs and create a budget for numbers of youth to be served through summer program along with follow-up services.

THE UNION COUNTY WIB AND CEO

The Union County Workforce Investment Board, (WIB) was authorized by Governor Christine Todd Whitman in Executive Order 36, on May 12, 1995. The WIB replaced the Private Industry Council (PIC) with an extended agenda relating to workforce readiness concerning all Union County residents, including the economically disadvantaged. The WIB operates by committee structure to meet its multi-faceted role and commitment to prepare all residents for the labor market.

The County WIB is a local analogue to the State Employment and Training Commission (SETC). In partnership with the County's Chief Elected Official (CEO), the WIB promotes a client centered and labor market driven workforce readiness system. This mission is achieved through leadership, coordination and partnership amongst government, industry, labor, education and other significant members in the workforce system. The WIB also ensures that lifelong learning opportunities are delivered to all Union County residents in the most cost-effective manner.

The general roles/responsibilities of the Union County WIB embody the following:

- Select a One-Stop Operator with agreement of the CEO.
- Prepare administrative and One-Stop budgets.
- Prepare program strategies and plans in partnership with CEO.
- Negotiate Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) with the One-Stop Operator and CEO.
- Negotiate performance levels with agreement of the CEO.
- Establish processes for appeals, audit resolutions and incident reports.
- Negotiate contracts and purchase orders.
- Oversee the workforce partnership system with the CEO.
- Public relations and marketing activities.
- Develop systems/procedures including information systems.

The current goals of the Union County WIB are:

- 1) To operate in conjunction with the County of Union's CEO in a manner guided by the established and agreed upon WIB/CEO Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).
- 2) To work closely with the County of Union, the Union County Alliance and Economic Development agencies to develop a competitive world class workforce.
- 3) To involve business in the development of pertinent and timely school-to-work programs that will enable students to acquire skills necessary to enter the labor force.
- 4) To provide lifelong learning opportunities for the residents of the County through cooperative business and educational efforts.
- 5) To develop relationships amongst all participants in the workforce system, primarily with business entities.
- 6) To provide accessible and up-to-date labor market information to citizens, business, training and education institutions.
- 7) To ensure that career opportunities are provided through a client-centered labor market driven system, responsive to the needs of businesses and economic development.

- 8) To provide all customers, including the economically disadvantaged, youth, women, minorities, the disabled, public assistance recipients, etc. access to labor market information through user friendly technology.
- 9) To provide job training for the disenfranchised, the dislocated worker, and at-risk youth to enhance their employment opportunities.
- 10) To develop a cohesive computer networking technology that will reduce duplication and inefficiency and facilitate cooperation of various government agencies and the community at large.
- 11) To establish a computer network that offers all persons access to current information on employment opportunities, local labor market data, support services, career development, and employers.
- 12) To provide businesses with a work-ready labor pool of prospective employees.

The CEO's general responsibilities include:

- Select the One-Stop Operator with agreement of the WIB.
- Approve administrative and One-Stop budgets.
- Approve MOUs.
- Negotiate performance levels with agreement of the WIB.
- Disburse workforce grant funds at the direction of the WIB.
- Oversight of all aspects of workforce development planning and programs in partnership with the WIB.
- Approve appointments to the WIB, with agreement by the WIB.

The WIB-CEO MOU agreement attachment (*Section 10: Attachment 1*) details the role and responsibilities of the Union County WIB and CEO.

WIB COMMITTEES

The WIB, with input from the committees, plans, oversees and implements its workforce readiness objectives. Each committee of the WIB is structured to maximize expertise in needed areas. Committees formed for the transition process include Performance and Accountability, One-Stop/MOU, CEO/WIB Executive Committee, School-to-Work and the Youth Investment Council. There is no limitation as to type or number of committees, and additional committees, including ad hoc committees may be formed as deemed necessary. At present, committees in addition to those previously mentioned include:

- Education and Literacy
- Resource Analysis
- Economic Development (Program Planning ad hoc)
- Program Promotion/Marketing
- Welfare-to-Work

Performance and Accountability

The Performance and Accountability Committee's major priority is to establish quantifiable and objective performance measures for programs and services. **Committee Goals:**

- Determine customer satisfaction as it relates to all three levels of WIA services.
- Define how continuous improvement is expected to impact on performance accountability.
- Identify performance levels in a quantifiable and measurable form with state direction.
- Determine how the local WIA intends to improve job seeker and employer satisfaction with the services to be provided (Continuous Improvement).
- Review the core indicators of performance with emphasis on how they are to be met.
- Determine how to develop customer feedback and how it will be used to improve services.
- Review current training provider accountability with state proposed accountability.
- Establish a local system of sanctions/incentives to relate to all areas of program performance.

One-Stop/MOU Committee

The One-Stop/MOU Committee was created to determine and put in place the designated One-Stop Operator, and set up the operating and reporting procedures for all partners to the One-Stop System. The first task of the One-Stop/MOU Team was to select an Operator of the One-Stop System that will tie together and manage the core partners and member agencies. The Committee is also accountable for ensuring easy client-access to information through user-friendly technology systems. **Committee Goals:**

- Establish the MOU between the County of Union and the Workforce Investment Board.
- Recommend a One-Stop Operator for the local WIA.
- Determine what services are to be delivered and how they are to be delivered through the One-Stop System.
- Create an ongoing program of staff development.
- Develop outreach strategies.

CEO/WIB Executive Oversight Committee

The mission of the CEO/WIB Executive Oversight Committee is to establish and guide the local WIB, receive and monitor all funds for use and distribution through the Board approval process. **Committee goals** included completing and ratifying a MOU Agreement with the Union County Workforce Investment Board, and determining a liaison assignment to Board.

School-to-Work Committee

The School-to-Work Committee's role is to cultivate positive relationships between businesses and educational institutions to provide an effective school-to-work transition of the labor force. **Committee goals include:**

- Encourage joint ventures among various local school districts, the County College and the County Vocational Technical Schools.
- Provide business input and support to develop local school curriculums.
- Identify local school limitations and needs for systematic and comprehensive changes in the delivery of education.
- Encourage business support and adoption of school-to-work initiatives.
- Emphasize the emerging school/work based learning practice and provide opportunities for such.

The Committee conducted focus groups with leaders representing various sectors of industry to gather information about demand occupations, the expectations of employers concerning entry-level skills, and employers perceptions on School-to-Work Initiatives. As a result, youth will be afforded practical information, education and development of skills while still in school to prepare them for transition into the labor market.

Education and Literacy Committee

The mission of the Workforce Investment Board Education and Literacy Committee is to address the needs of individuals to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to become literate, obtain and maintain employment, and become self-sufficient. The Committee will also identify and address the needs of employers to ensure that workplace readiness and literacy skills are relevant to employment opportunities. This includes: assisting parents in developing the educational skills to become full partners in the educational development of their children; assisting adults in the completion of a secondary school education; fostering collaboration of youth and adult literacy providers throughout Union County; providing a unified network of resources to assist with the implementation of a high quality performance-based and customer-driven system of lifelong learning; and monitoring performance levels of service providers. These activities will be carried out while remaining consistent with the goals of the Union County Workforce Investment Board, and adapting to future changes as needed.

The **committee goals** of the Union County Education and Literacy Committee are:

- To implement a working relationship among literacy service organizations that will establish a system of connectivity with these organizations.

- To identify and address the needs of employers so that workforce readiness skills and employment opportunities are matched.
- To help establish a quantitative performance measurement for provider organizations to ensure they meet levels of service.
- To explore early intervention programs and initiatives in conjunction with the public educational system that will aid individuals with learning difficulties.

The members of the Committee have diverse interests, varied concerns, and are committed to helping raise the literacy levels of individuals in need. The Committee's current challenge is to articulate its unique vision for Union County and to focus on key components in the development of the local literacy plan.

Resource Analysis Committee

The Executive Committee of the WIB, and staff, recognize the importance of a needs assessment as key to transitioning to the Workforce Investment Act. Consistent with the WIA, a countywide needs assessment and inventory of resources to determine the region's capacity to provide the appropriate workforce development services was developed. The Resource Analysis Committee of the WIB, utilizing transition funds for consultant services, will steer and conduct the County's workforce needs assessment and develop an inventory of available workforce resources. The resources will include organizations that provide employment, education/training and support services within the local workforce investment area. This needs assessment and resource inventory will yield information that is basic and key to determining strategies to better utilize resources and identifying the focus of workforce development service delivery for our residents.

Economic Development (Program Planning) Committee

The Economic Development Committee of the Union County Workforce Investment Board is responsible for projecting the training needs of the local labor market area and researching and recruiting employers. The Program Planning Committee, an ad hoc committee of the WIB, reviews training programs to determine their appropriateness in the development of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs). Appropriate ITA development is critical as we consider training needs of our clients in preparation for successful labor exchange.

These two committees are employed as one to guide the WIB and concurrently the County's transition to the Workforce Investment Act. The Economic Development/Program Planning Committee of the WIB will develop an information bank of employers to include their needs and nature of business (SIC CODE), the number of employees their company maintains, and the individuals within the company who initiate the hiring process. The Economic Development/Program Planning Committee will use the Resource Analysis Inventory to guide decision making around allocation of resources to better integrate services and leverage dollars for the benefit of employers and our clients.

Program Promotion/Marketing Committee

The necessity of marketing to employers, community-based organizations, and service providers is pivotal to achieve the awareness for the continuum of services for our clients. It is essential to raise the profile of the WIB for the acceptance and "buy in" of its workforce readiness agenda to ensure a cohesive service delivery system. The Program Promotion/Marketing Committee of the WIB will make a concerted effort to enhance this awareness and encourage the participation of employers in the One-Stop System. The Resource Analysis Committee will provide the Program Promotion/Marketing Committee with tools to effectively enhance the local workforce readiness labor market, and to facilitate the cooperation of job seekers, employers and service providers.

The WIB will educate the community as to the benefits of the One-Stop System and target employer participation. The information used will show the advantages of involvement in and cooperation with the Union County Workforce System, and the goals of securing employment in conjunction with the provision of training and supportive services needed. The use of the Workforce New Jersey Public Information Network, Union County Home Page and enhancements to WIB information on the Internet will be inclusive of ongoing marketing efforts. The continual exchange of information, and discussions concerning the improvement of our service delivery system and

programs will be piloted by letter campaigns, seminars, training, capacity building, and other forms of information dissemination.

Welfare-to-Work Committee

As implied by its name, the Welfare-to-Work Committee's contributions focus on issues relating to WorkFirst NJ initiatives as they relate to education, training and job placement.

THE YOUTH INVESTMENT COUNCIL

The Youth Investment Council (YIC) provides guidance and planning for youth focused workforce activities, and a forum for members to consider the impact that local policy-making has on the lives of the County's youth. The mission of the YIC, which is currently under development, will be to provide youth with vocational goals and develop strategies to identify appropriate programs to achieve these goals. The role of the YIC includes assessing the needs of industry and youth, setting policy and priorities, marketing to the private sector, and building collaborations and partnerships. Increasing awareness of important youth issues, improving the coordination of youth services by consolidating resources and programs, and supporting and encouraging local school improvement efforts are methods that the YIC will use to enhance youth program effectiveness. Under WIA, additional roles of the YIC include selecting, overseeing, and awarding contracts to providers of youth activities, conducting oversight and recommending local performance outcomes. Specifically, this includes academic, occupational learning and employment readiness training customized for the ongoing identified needs of youth in Union County. Both summer and year-round programs will be linked into the comprehensive delivery system.

The membership of the YIC consists of: representatives from the WIB, youth service provider agencies, juvenile justice and local law enforcement, Public Housing Authorities, jobs corps, substance abuse agencies, parent advocacy groups, businesses, apprenticeship representatives, County agencies, school districts (including the Abbott districts of Elizabeth and Plainfield), Union County Youth Services Commission, Union County College, Division of Youth and Family Services, NJ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Union County Superintendent of Schools, Union County Vocational-Technical Schools, NJ Department of Human Services Youth Council. A membership list is included within *Appendix C*.

A summary of the goals of the Youth Investment Council:

- Establish linkages with all organizations in the community that service youth.
- Review issues that might impact youth in the local labor market.
- Develop local youth employment and training policy.
- Determine the design, elements and parameters of the proposed youth training programs.
- Establish the services to in-school and out of school youth.
- Determine the specific destinations of year-round youth programs versus summer youth programs.
- Market youth employment and training to the local community.

INPUT IN THE PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Since the transition process for the Workforce Investment Act began, the Workforce Investment Board has encouraged/solicited participation in the plan development process. Entities involved in the existing system, additional targeted entities and entities voluntarily seeking to provide representation and the general public provided the requested solicited input. Volunteers representing community based organizations, service providers, businesses, County divisions, public officials, education districts, and advocates joined in the planning process.

As stated in Section 2, partners and providers were invited to take an active role in the transition process. The process has ultimately led to the development of this Plan, and ongoing input is anticipated. The various

committees will work over the next couple of years to fine-tune workforce strategies, as well as adapt strategies to reflect economic shifts.

Public Input

Beginning March 13, 2000, a 30-day public comment period began for review of Union County's Local Unified Workforce Strategic Plan. Notice of the Plan availability for public comment was published on Thursday March 9, 2000 in *The Courier* and *The Star-Ledger*, and was posted on Union County's Home Page (www.unioncountynj.org), for viewers to comment via email. The WIB also conducted a public hearing to elicit comments during this period. All public comments were given full consideration, and are included in the Plan. The public was also represented by Human Services Advisory Council, Board of Chosen Freeholders (as public representatives, active members of WIB committees), and Freeholder Public Forums.

SECTION 3: REGIONAL PLANNING

Union County, incorporated in 1857, operates under a County Manager form of government. The nine members of the Board of Chosen Freeholders are elected to three-year terms, with three seats up for election each year. Day-to-day operations of the county government are administered by the appointed County Manager. Union County is a highly urbanized and densely populated County located in the northeast portion of New Jersey. Comprised of 103.4 square miles, and 21 municipalities, the County is located within the New York Metropolitan Region and along the Boston-Washington Corridor. This area is known for having the heaviest concentration of population and industry in the nation. Union County is bordered by Essex County to the north, Morris and Somerset Counties to the west, Middlesex County to the south, and the Arthur Kill (river) to the east.

According to the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, this region is the world's richest business, industrial, financial, and a communications center with an equivalent gross national product (GNP) larger than most nations on Earth. Union County's location within the New York/New Jersey metropolitan area makes it an ideal center for domestic and international commerce with great potential for new job growth.

The County is unique in its economic diversification due to its location and excellent infrastructure, including a system of Interstate and State Highways, rail lines, and one of the largest container terminals in the world. Newark International Airport, located in both Union and Essex Counties, is one of the region's busiest airports.

JOB GROWTH

Two out of every three new jobs in New Jersey were created in the region this year, and the Newark labor area posted the largest increase in jobs (17,000) of any labor area in the state (NJ DOL: *Employment and the Economy, Northern NJ Region*). Most of the region's 1999 job gains were recorded in the services and wholesale/retail trade industry divisions, while the manufacturing division continued its long term decline.

Services led the region's divisions in overall job growth in 1999. Employment in *services* (e.g., business, health, personal and engineering/accounting/management services) increased by 29,500 from 1998. Job growth in business services has been dramatic over the last four years as demand for computer professionals and other support firms remained strong. For most of this decade, health services, the largest component in this division, has been an industry of sustained job growth driven by changing demographic trends and advancing medical technologies. To cut costs, hospitals have been forming affiliations. In addition to contract renegotiations, improved materials management and reduced length of patient stays, the possibility exists that future staff reductions will also be a factor in hospital cost containment efforts.

Another important contributor to the regions growth was *wholesale/retail trade*. Strong consumer confidence allowed for further expansion in the division. From 1998 to 1999, employment increased by 10,900 as the development of shopping centers, large discount stores and supermarkets continued in the region. Employment in wholesale/retail trade will get a big boost in the year 2000 from a number of projects in the area. In October, 1999, shoppers celebrated the grand opening of Jersey Gardens Outlet Mall.

Over the 15-month period, employment in *transportation/communications/public utilities* increased by 4,000 due mainly to strength in the transportation component. Increased cargo traffic at Newark International Airport, flourishing passenger ridership and a growing economy contributed to job growth. Construction of the second phase of an air cargo handling facility provided about 200 new jobs. At Port Newark/Elizabeth, the dredging of the waterways leading to the port has begun. The waterways will be dredged by the year 2004 to accommodate the new "mega ships". With continued growth in cargo and air travel activities, transportation job totals will remain on the upswing. For telecommunications and utilities, however, there have been opposing trends. Major restructuring by some of the larger firms has resulted in slow growth and even some contraction in employment. At the same

time, there has been the development of new ventures in the Internet, data and wireless communications markets that could result in future job gains.

From July 1998 to September 1999, there were 2,800 jobs created in *finance/insurance/real estate*. Consolidation, restructuring and merger activities in the banking industry appear to have slowed from the pace of the past several years. As a result of the big bank mergers, some smaller banks have expanded in the area due to increased demand by customers who prefer to deal with a local bank.

Manufacturing employment in the labor area decreased by 700 (-0.5%) over the 15-month period, but the rate of decline was much less severe than the statewide loss of 2.5 percent. After several years of significant job losses, factory employment seems to be stabilizing. Nevertheless, small, concentrated job gains in durable goods industries (500) were overshadowed by losses in nondurable goods industries (-1,200) The manufacturing division lost 7,400 jobs over the 13-month period due mostly to downsizing and closings.

LABOR MARKET

The 1990 Census counted 268,931 persons age 16 years and over in Union County's labor force. At that time, 93.8% were employed. Private wage and salary workers comprised 82% of the labor force, while government workers represented 13%. Self employed workers accounted for 4%, and unpaid family workers represented the remainder of the labor force.

Of the persons 16 to 19 years of age, 2,298 were not enrolled in school and/or were not high school graduates. The majority of these individuals, 45%, were not in the labor force. Approximately 40% of the population, or 930 individuals were employed or in the armed forces, and 15% were unemployed.

In 1997, the NJ Department of Labor provided projections on the total labor force of Union County. Between 1995 and 2010, the Department projected an increase of 7.6% in the labor force, from 264,700 to 284,800 persons. The greatest increase was projected to occur between 1995 and 2000, with gradually less growth during each 5-year projection.

The current unemployment rate (November, 1999) in Union County is 4.2%, slightly higher than the statewide average of 3.9%. Five of the County's twenty-one communities exceed the statewide unemployment average. The communities with the highest rates of unemployment are Elizabeth at 6.7% and Plainfield at 6.4%. Unemployment is lowest in Berkeley Heights and Summit, at 1.9% and 2.0% respectively. (NJ DOL)

Labor Force and Employment, Unemployment Volume and Rate Total 1992-1997

Year	Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
1992	253,700	231,100	23,100	8.8%
1993	251,200	231,100	20,800	8.0%
1994	261,800	246,800	18,600	7.2%
1995	258,700	241,600	17,000	6.5%
1996	262,200	245,700	16,500	6.3%
1997	265,716	251,385	14,331	5.4%

Source: NJ Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Force Statistics, March 1998.

Wages

The following table includes data collected on occupation annual wages by the New Jersey Department of Labor. In 1989, construction employees earned the highest average wage, at \$36,251. Seven years later, these employees only increased their average annual wage by \$5,799, thus preventing the industry from holding the lead in wages. Rather, in 1996, the communications and utilities had the highest annual average wage of \$57,652. This industry also experienced the greatest net change between 1989 and 1996, with an increase of \$21,862. In both 1989 and

1996, the retail trade industry had the lowest annual average wage. The high net change in communications and utilities is largely due to the increased demand for qualified, skilled technical employees. Conversely, retail service employees are less likely to require higher levels of education and/or technical skills.

**Average Annual Wage per Employee
Comparison by Industry 1989 Annual to 1996 Annual**

Type	1989 Annual	1992 Annual	1996 Annual	Net Change 89-96
Goods Producing				
Agriculture	\$18,704	\$20,406	\$25,409	+\$6,705
Construction	\$36,251	\$40,897	\$42,050	+\$5,799
Manufacturing	\$34,527	\$43,284	\$46,704	+\$12,177
Service Producing				
Transportation	\$32,808	\$42,863	\$39,095	+\$6,287
Commun.& Utilities	\$35,790	\$48,348	\$57,652	+\$21,862
Wholesale Trade	\$33,957	\$39,509	\$44,773	+\$10,816
Retail Trade	\$16,352	\$17,764	\$20,230	+\$3,878
Fin./Insur./Real Estate	\$28,434	\$34,817	\$43,003	+\$14,569
Services	\$25,865	\$30,693	\$34,141	+\$8,276

Source: NJ Department of Labor, Labor Marketing & Demographic Research, 1998.

Corporate Salary/Wage Levels (1996)

Office Workers Avg. Weekly		Plant Workers Avg. Hourly	
Acctg. Clerk III	\$406- 595	Maint. Mechanic	\$15.69
Comp. Operator II	\$413- 700	Tool and Die	\$17.74
Engineer Tech.	\$517- 825	Hand Pkr. & Pkgr	\$ 7.41
Registered Nurse	\$735-1,071	Material-Mov. Equip	\$13.30
Key Entry Operator	\$334- 458	Shipping clerk	\$11.51
Word Processor	\$355- 510	Electrician	\$23.34

Source: NJ Department of Labor, 1998

WORKFORCE NEEDS

Focus groups facilitated by the Union County Workforce Investment Board (WIB) found that the view was nearly universal in that the lower-skill positions lost in the last decade have been replaced with fewer positions demanding higher skills and producing higher-valued goods or services. These focus groups also determined that Union County and the region are high-cost production centers in an era when global price competition, technological innovation, and regulatory functions allow companies in virtually any industry to shift costly operations to low-cost production sites. The result is that there is very little demand for unskilled and semi-skilled labor in this region. Further, countywide infrastructure deficiencies, particularly the lack of sufficient and affordable transportation have also impeded economic progress.

In *"Forward Action for Union County,"* developed by DCG Corplan Consulting LLC in December 1999, the analysis illustrates how academic and vocational training institutions need to ensure that curricula and educational standards are consistent with the demands of the labor market. In order to be competitive with its surrounding PMSA counterparts, Union County needs to produce effectively trained graduates - trained with skills that can be applied to careers in industries where growth is projected. Additionally, the study concluded the County should strengthen the connection between basic academic skills and the workplace, e.g., mathematical skills for machine operators. The analysis summarizes key components to attracting and retaining industry commitment; training and education must be provided in a targeted framework.

Despite the stagnant growth of the manufacturing sector, due to its geographic location, access to major modes of transportation, and the port area of Elizabeth, Union County still stands as a strong and viable base for value-added manufacturing, particularly in the plastics and transportation industry. With this in mind, the vocational system will need to continue to place great emphasis upon these two industries and the required core skills.

THE OVERALL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders recently charged the Overall Economic Development Committee to develop an Overall Economic Development Plan (OEDP). The purpose of the OEDP is to frame the initiatives, projects, and plan of action that will enable the County to experience economic growth, increased job opportunities, and provide a positive business climate. The OEDP is a comprehensive and coordinated approach to building the economy; it establishes a framework to set forth core infrastructure, economic and workforce development activities. The County's OEDP also places a great emphasis upon maintaining and expanding certain activities that are key support mechanisms to economic and commercial growth, particularly as it relates to improving the education and occupational skills of the workforce. This emphasis demonstrates the County's recognition of the direct interrelationship of workforce development and job creation.

Major OEDP objectives include (1) Transportation/Infrastructure Improvements; (2) Commercial Revitalization; (3) Industrial Redevelopment; and (4) Supporting Activities. Outcomes of the Transportation/Infrastructure Improvements objectives embody ongoing development, maintenance, rehabilitation, enhancement and upgrading of transportation infrastructure to accommodate the needs of passenger, mass transit and freight travel via land, air and water. The revitalization of urban shopping areas, through the enhancement of shopper amenities (parking, security, etc.), assisting municipalities in developing Special Improvement Districts (SID) and façade improvement, and conducting assessment and marketing programs are direct activities that will be inclusive of meeting commercial revitalization objectives.

Industrial development seeks to encourage existing industries to remain, modernize, and/or expand in Union County, as well as encourage new manufacturers, industries and businesses to locate in the County. The fourth objective of the OEDP, Supporting Activities, includes endorsing projects and initiatives that foster economic development. Direct activities consist of working with municipalities, educators, businesses, organizations, and other entities to plan, coordinate, enhance, strengthen, and assist advances in economic development.

The Union County alliance's Strategic Plan also identifies economic development as a priority area in the County. The goal that directly relates to the OEDP and County Master Plan involves concentrating resources on the expansion and/or retention of existing businesses as well as attracting new business in the County.

Economic Outlook

In the year 2000, the region's economy can be expected to continue to expand at a moderate pace. Services will again generate most of the new jobs followed by wholesale/retail trade. More gains in construction payrolls are possible as major projects continue or start throughout most of the region. The employment outlook for the Newark Labor Area is one of guarded optimism as the pace of economic expansion could begin to cool off somewhat when compared with 1999. Several factors, however, should work to help stimulate the local economy and to produce jobs in the year 2000. Some of these factors include the global economy's recovery from the Asian crisis, record high levels of employment, strong consumer confidence and relatively low inflation. However, fears about rising interest rates and inflation could soften economic expansion. The employment outlook in services, especially business services, should remain steady as companies continue to look to temporary help services and outside contractors to reduce costs.

Following an examination of available entry level/low skilled jobs, it was estimated that approximately 60% of the available jobs are during standard weekday hours, 20% during evening hours and 15% during weekends. According to the JOBLINKS website the municipalities with the largest number of available jobs currently being

offered include the cities of Elizabeth, Plainfield, and Union, which concurs with the information from the WIB and the Union County Department of Human Services.

As for the number and percentage of jobs that are estimated to be located within the county versus outside the county, 1990 Journey-to-Work data, supplied by the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, suggests that approximately 52% of all Union County residents traveled to work at jobs within the county, 14% to jobs in Essex County, 10% are in Middlesex County, 5% travel to Somerset County, 5% travel to New York City, with the remaining percentages scattered to a variety of other locations throughout New Jersey.

ROLE OF OUTSIDE AGENCIES

The information for the Union County Local Unified Workforce Strategic Plan was derived from multiple sources. Advice has been solicited from state and county divisions and agencies, and integrated where appropriate. In particular, the County Department of Economic Development, the New Jersey and Union County Department's of Labor, the County Department of Human Services and its Division of Employment and Training's resources were utilized extensively to identify needs and lay the framework in developing the system that will address the identified areas. Ongoing reassessment based on updated data from these sources is imperative to effectively deliver a ready workforce.

SECTION 4: NEEDS OF THE BUSINESS CUSTOMER

OCCUPATIONAL AND INDUSTRY ANALYSIS

Business and Industry

The two types of businesses that are frequently found in Union County are pharmaceutical companies and hospitals. Pharmaceutical companies, such as Merck and Company, Schering-Plough, and Novartis, have a strong presence in Union County. The businesses with the largest number of employees in Union County is diverse in composition. The types of businesses offer a wide variety of job opportunities.

Ten Largest Non-Government Businesses In Union County by Employment

Firm	Location	Nature of Business	Number of Employees
Merck & Co.	Rahway	Pharmaceuticals	6,500
Schering-Plough	Kenilworth & Union	Pharmaceuticals	4,745
Overlook Hospital	Summit	Hospital	3,000
General Motors	Linden	Auto Assembly	2,750
Lucent Tech.	New Providence	Communications	2,000
Elizabeth General	Elizabeth	Hospital	1,900
Novartis	Summit	Pharmaceuticals	1,500
Wakefern Foods	Elizabeth	Food Distribution	1,400
Muhlenberg	Plainfield	Hospital	1,300
Exxon	Linden	Refinery	1,250

The number of employees shown above are approximate. Source: Major Employers List, UCEDC, 1998.

During the 1990 Census, Union County industries employing the most employees included retail trade (14%), nondurable goods manufacturing (10%), finance, insurance, and real estate (10%), durable goods manufacturing (9%), and health services (8%). The industries with the least amount of representation were mining (0.17%), agriculture, forestry, and fisheries (0.63%), and entertainment and recreation services (1.04%) in 1990. In December 1998, the New Jersey Department of Labor reported services (including private education), manufacturing, retail trade, and public sector industries employed the largest portion of the population. Projections for 2006 indicate these industries will continue to employ the largest portion of the population.

The industries with the greatest employment growth and largest decline in employment were also reported and projected by the Department of Labor. The industries expected to incur the greatest growth between 1996 and 2006 were transportation services, social services, auto repair/services/parking, business services, and health services. Health services, business services and social services are expected to have the greatest increase in the number of positions.

Miscellaneous manufacturing industries, water transportation, electronics, electronic equipment, and industrial machinery/equipment were the industries expected to incur with the largest decline in employment. The industries with the greatest decrease in the number of positions included water transportation, industrial machinery/equipment and fabricated metal products.

Number of Companies and Employment Totals
Comparison by Industry In Union County

Type	Union County Residents Employed			Total Employed Workforce*		
	1989 Annual	1992 Annual	1996 Annual	1989 Annual	1992 Annual	1996 Annual
Goods Producing						
Agriculture	224	234	245	834		-132
Construction	1,508	1,412	1,392	11,346	8,901	8,784
Manufacturing	1,159	1,057	1,006	63,440	50,253	48,951
Service Producing						
Transportation	652	673	710	15,907	14,077	13,577
Communications & Utilities	78	93	107	4,683	5,767	5,782
Wholesale Trade	1,530	1,544	1,533	23,236	18,589	18,268
Retail Trade	2,781	2,924	2,933	34,951	29,216	32,187
Fin./Insur./ R.Estate	1,098	1,083	1,133	14,899	12,116	11,593
Services	4,607	4,883	5,446	62,863	59,117	62,210
Total	13,639	13,902	14,505	232,159	198,738	202,376

Source: NJ Department of Labor, Labor Marketing & Demographic Research, 1998.

*Employment of Union County residents and non-residents working in Union County.

Please Note: 1996 is the most recent year for annualized figures for companies and employment covered by unemployment Insurance from the NJ Department of Labor.

Occupation Data and Projections

According to the 1990 Census, the occupations with the largest number of employers in Union County were administrative support (20%), professional specialty (14%), executive, administrative, and managerial (14%), sales (11%), and precision production, craft, and repair (10%). Between 1980 and 1990, occupations in the County experienced an average employee increase of 4.2%. The occupations that experienced the most significant increases in the number of employed persons were farming, forestry, and fishing occupations (32.8%), technicians and related support occupations (27.8%), sales occupations (24.1%), and executive, administrative, and managerial occupations (22.1%). Machine operators, assemblers, and inspectors (-33.1%), and private household occupations (-14.5) experienced the most significant decreases.

In January, 1999, the New Jersey Department of Labor released 1996 data and 2006 projections for occupations in Union County. This report identified systems analysts, home health aides, adjustment clerks, child care workers, and nurses aides/orderlies as occupations projected to have the greatest number of job openings. The analysis completed by DCG indicated that occupations with the greatest expectancy for new positions includes computer and programming services, sales and management occupations, science technicians and technical support jobs, and clerical and manual skills.

Occupations projected to have the greatest growth, by percentage, were systems analysts, home health aides, and adjustment clerks (NJDOL, 1999 projections). Occupations with the greatest likelihood to experience a decline in employment were mail machine operators, computer operators, typists, machinists, and bank tellers.

In 1996, occupations with the largest employment were secretaries (excluding legal and medical), general office clerks, and retail salespersons. Projections for 2006 also identify those occupations as having the largest employment. The occupations in Union County with the most annual average openings were cashiers, retail salespersons, and waiters and waitresses.

OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS ASSESSMENT

The County of Union also commissioned a study to analyze what specific occupational skills are essential in order to be consistent with industry growth patterns. As indicated previously, the study performed by DCG Corplan Consulting also confirmed that job growth will continue to grow within the services industry. Over the next six years, over 2,000 jobs will be created in the following occupational sectors:

- Computer and data programming services
- Management and consulting services
- Miscellaneous plastics products
- Research and testing services
- Medical and dental laboratories

Now that the needs have been identified/evaluated, and the One-Stop Operator has been selected, information regarding the types of training required to reflect economic, industry and workforce needs will be developed according to the data presented in this Plan, including current training resources of partners and providers. The WIB will determine the basic skills and education needed to align training to meet the job requirements. Partners and providers may have to realign their training offerings to meet the business industry needs.

SECTION 5: NEEDS OF THE INDIVIDUAL CUSTOMER

GENERAL DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Income

The median household income in Union County was \$41,791 in 1990, which was comparable to the statewide average of \$40,927. Median income levels were the lowest in Elizabeth at \$27,631 and Winfield Township, \$28,802. The communities with the highest median household incomes in 1990 were Berkeley Heights at \$75,122 and Mountainside, \$74,629. The median *family* household income level, \$48,862 was higher in Union County, while non-family households had significantly lower incomes at \$22,419. In 1990, per capita income was \$25,643 in Union County. Approximately 80% of households derived income from wages and salaries. The three next frequent sources of income were: interest, dividend, or net rental income (50%), Social Security (29%), and retirement income (17%).

INCOME IN 1989

Households	179,966
Less than \$5,000	6,655
\$5,000 to \$9,999	11,233
10,000 to \$14,999	10,542
\$15,000 to \$24,999	21,905
\$25,000 to \$34,999	23,853
\$35,000 to \$49,999	32,678
\$50,000 to \$74,999	37,455
\$75,000 to \$99,999	17,400
\$100,000 to \$149,999	12,115
\$150,000 or more	6,130

US Census Bureau

Poverty

The overall poverty level in 1990 was 7.2% in Union County. For persons 18 years of age and over, the poverty level was lower, at 6%, and persons 65 years of age or over had a poverty level of 7.9%. Children experienced the highest rates of poverty. Eleven percent of children under 18 years, and 11.8% of children under 5 years of age were living in poverty in 1990. In 1993, 11% of all Union County children were living below the poverty line, and 19% were living in a single-parent household. (UCDHS, 1993)

Age Distribution in Union County

Individuals between the ages of 30 and 39 represented 16% of the population in the 1990 Census. This was the most frequently portrayed group. The median age was 35.9 in 1990. The age range with the least representation were residents 80+, who portrayed 3.05% of the population. The following table breaks down the number and percent of residents in each 10-year age range grouping (US Census Bureau).

Age Range	Number of Residents	Percent
0-9 years	60,938	12.34%
10-19	59,164	11.98%
20-29	77,121	15.62%
30-39	80,608	16.32%
40-49	66,942	13.56%
50-59	50,040	10.13%
60-69	49,581	10.04%
70-79	34,368	6.96%
80+	15,057	3.05%
TOTAL	493,819	100%

Race and Origin Profile

The residents of Union County are predominately white. Census data from 1990 and 1996 revealed approximately 75% of the population has been consistently represented Caucasian residents. Consistency in the number of Black residents over the past 6 years was also demonstrated. The number of Hispanic/Latino residents has grown from 14% to its current rate of 17%. The increase in foreign born residents has contributed to this growth.

In urban centers, such as Elizabeth and Plainfield, minority groups are represented in significantly higher proportions than countywide patterns. For example, over one-half (53%) of residents in the Elizabethport Area of Elizabeth are Hispanic, one-quarter (25)% are White, and about one-fifth (21%) are Black. The Third and Fourth Wards of Plainfield has an ethnic composition of: 78% Black, 12% Hispanic, and 10% White.

Comparative Race Profile of Union County: 1990, 1996

Race	% of Population 1990	% of Population 1996
White	74%	76%
Black	19%	20%
American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut	0.14%	0.20%
Asian or Pacific Islander	3%	4%
Other	4%	-
Hispanic*	14%	17%

*May be of any race

Source: US Census Bureau

Household Composition

Seventy-three percent of households in Union County in 1990 were family households. Over three-quarters (77%), consisted of married-couple families. A total of 487,238 persons lived in Union County's 132,406 family households, creating an average of 2.71 persons per family. Female householders, with no husband present, accounted for 17% of families in Union County. The 1996 Consumer-Based Needs Assessment coordinated by the Union County Department of Human Services and the Union County Human Services Advisory Council (HSAC) as well as secondary sources revealed that over the past ten years, the number of single-headed households has significantly increased. There were 6,581 persons living in group quarters when the 1990 Census was conducted. Fifty-nine percent of these individuals were institutionalized.

Forty-five percent of families included children under 18 years of age. Approximately 5% of all family households lived below the poverty level. In families with children under 18 years of age, 9% lived below the poverty level. Almost one-fifth (19%) of families with a single female householder lived below the poverty level in 1990. Children under 18 years of age were represented in just over half (52%) of these families, with 32% living below the poverty level.

SUBPOPULATIONS

Youth

The Youth Investment Council (YIC) identified the following areas that activities serving the youth population should be geared towards:

- Addressing "label" barriers
- Developing basic social skills
- Introducing and developing work ethics
- Including comprehensive and holistic services
- Using proven models
- Providing leadership development

The YIC recognized that outreach strategies to address these areas should consist of using non-traditional methods, such as incentives, peer leadership and peer groups, and industry involvement. Five sub-workgroups were developed within the YIC to conduct assessment, resource allocation, program strategies, employer recruitment, and evaluation activities.

Pre-Adolescents

There is a particular concern related to the limited resources and services that specifically address the distinct and complicated issues that affect the 'pre-adolescent' age group of 11 to 14. Change is the persistent theme for youth in this age group. New feelings, physical characteristics, and gender-related attributes dominate the socio-emotional development of these youth. They spend most of their time attempting to understand and cope with the ever-changing make-up of their physical and emotional being. Many youth, as well as their families, have great difficulty in confronting these new life changes, and, for these youth, the results are frustration, impaired self-image, and 'acting-out' behavior.

Urban youth have to deal with the difficulties of this time in age development concurrent with the urban challenges that face them, i.e., gang involvement, negative peer influence, family conflict and abuse, and violence. It is absolutely critical that the community overall establish mechanisms to (1) improve the identification of problematic risk indicators for this age group; and (2) institute more effective "transitional" programs that better equip and prepare these youth for 'upper-age' movement and progress.

Child Well-Being

It is also important to mention that family conditions in the County overall have deteriorated. In 1997, the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) reported a drastic caseload *increase of 62%*, as compared to the previous two years. DYFS reports that the number of youth disenfranchised from the families is at the greatest level ever in Plainfield. The New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Youth and Family Services report: Children At Risk 1995-1996, reported 1,876 reports of child abuse or neglect in Union County. Of these cases, 54% were neglect cases, 32% were physical abuse, 6.4% were sexual abuse, and 1% were emotional abuse cases. Approximately 6% of the reported cases included multiple types of abuse or neglect. Only 516 cases were substantiated. Neglect cases were also the highest substantiated cases (61%), 27% were physical abuse, 7.8% were sexual abuse and 1.9% were emotional abuse cases. A total of 3% of cases included multiple types of abuse. The municipalities with the highest number of abuse/neglect reports and substantiated cases in 1996 were Elizabeth City, Plainfield City, Linden City, Union Township, and Roselle Borough.

Substance Abuse

A 1997 Youth Services Commission Survey of ninth grade students indicated that they had or currently use cigarettes, 34.8%; alcohol 34.8%; and 21.7% Marijuana. *According to Union County's Municipal Alliance Needs Assessment the average age of first use for Alcohol and Tobacco was 10 1/2 and for Marijuana was 13; and data indicates a 15% increase in Heroin use and a 58% increase in Marijuana use.*

A 1997 Union County Youth Services Commission Survey of ninth grade students found that over 34% had already attempted, and still currently consume alcohol. Over 21% of the respondents had also experimented, and/or still use marijuana. The 1998 National Council for Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (*Union County affiliate*) found a 15% increase in heroin use, and 58% increase in marijuana use among high school students, from the previous year. Additionally, the survey reported that the number of drug-related juvenile arrests increased 20% from the previous year.

Teen Pregnancy

The current birth rate for Plainfield teens is 92 per 1,000, compared to the state rate of 66.6 per 1000. In 1993, according to the maternity ward report offered by Muhlenberg Hospital, based in Plainfield, over 11% of teen mothers' babies were born underweight. The bulk of these unplanned teen pregnancies involved African-American women. The current birth rate for African American teens in Plainfield is 83.8 per 1,000, as compared to only 38.6 per 1,000 for all remaining race groups in the city.

Youth Conflict – Juvenile Delinquency

The Union County Prosecutor's Office reported 1,494 juvenile cases in 1997. Among these cases, 2,954 charges, and 1,881 defendants were involved. The City of Elizabeth was the location of 330 cases, Plainfield accounted for 280 cases, 754 cases were from suburban communities, and 130 were out of county. The most common charges were disorderly persons, followed by possession of a controlled dangerous substance, possession with intent to distribute, and weapons possession.

African American adults comprised 55% of adjudicated cases while white residents comprised 29% of cases followed by 16% for Hispanics. Males were much more likely to be involved in a case (85% of cases) than females (15%). Juveniles between 15 and 16 years of age were responsible for 37% of cases, 17 year olds followed with 31%, 13 to 14 year olds accounted for 15%, and juveniles over 17 years of age were involved in 14% of cases adjudicated delinquent.

The 1997 Plainfield School Report Card indicates a *30% increase* in conduct problems from the previous year. In focus groups organized by the School-Based Youth Services Program of Plainfield, many teachers reported that *low self-control and aggression* among students are becoming more and more pervasive. Specific forms of anti-social behavior reported by teachers include defiance, disrespect, rebelliousness, hitting, lying, fighting, talking, impulsive behavior, and violating the rights of others. When nearly every other municipality Union County, including the City of Elizabeth, experienced decreasing violent crime between the years of 1996 to 1997, the City of Plainfield realized a *22% increase* in violence over that same time period, particularly juvenile violence (Union County Youth Services Commission Plan, 1998-1999).

The 1997 Plainfield Police Uniform Crime Report (UCR), which also includes an analysis of service calls, reports that the homicide rate for African American youth, aged 15-24, is 19.46 per 1,000 and, for Hispanic youth, 23.73 per 1,000 – the highest rate in Union County. This is particularly frightening when you consider that the 1997 Violent Crime Rate for the state overall was only 5 per 1,000. For homicide specifically, the overall state rate per 1,000 inhabitants is *less than one-tenth of one percent*. These rates are comparable to the state most distressed areas, including Newark and Camden. The 1997 UCR also reported an estimated 10 to 15 youth gangs in the City of Plainfield.

For over 15 years, the Union County Youth Services Commission (UCYSC) has been at the forefront in addressing the complex and unique issues that confront high-risk youth. The premise of the Youth Services Commission is to: (1) mobilize communities to respond to the needs of youth; (2) coordinate the activities of state, county, and community youth service agencies; and (3) provide a forum through which state and local agencies can more effectively exercise leadership in youth matters and identify and resolve interagency and systemic problems concerning youth. The Union County Youth Services Commission adheres to these goals and works toward meeting the needs of its targeted population, i.e., juveniles involved with or at risk of involvement with the juvenile justice system, clearly in mind. The Commission also works hard to promote collaboration, and provides incentives for youth service providers to enter into inter-agency partnerships that foster more cost-efficient and performance-based service delivery. The Commission has also provided valuable technical support to youth service providers, and serves as a direct links to additional county, state, and federal resources.

The following describes what risk factors UCYSC considers to be of greatest priority, and a brief rationale of each:

- (1) ***Family management*** - Increasing incidents of child abuse and neglect, and rising DYFS caseloads provide a clear indication that the level of familial dysfunction is inordinate.
- (2) ***Lack of commitment to school*** - Sheer quantitative data alone, i.e., grade performance, test scoring, and attendance rates, is compelling enough to identify the lack of school commitment as pervasive
- (3) ***Friends who engage in problem behavior*** - Negative peer behavior is indeed prevalent, and plays a great role in influencing the decisions and behavior of youth.
- (4) ***Alienation and rebelliousness*** – Significant gang involvement and activities associated with community detachment, e.g., vandalism, property damage, etc., are strong signs that

youth feel disassociated with their own neighborhoods. Such youth are far more prone to engage in destructive behavior.

Out-of-school youth face the greatest challenges in making a success of job opportunities. Dropout youth run the highest risk of long term poverty and underachievement and are sorely under-represented in community-wide youth employment efforts.

The following components were identified to meet the needs of youth in Union County:

- Tutoring, study skills training and instruction, leading to completion of secondary school, including dropout prevention strategies.
- Alternative secondary schools.
- Summer employment opportunities that are directly linked to academic and occupational learning.
- Paid and unpaid work experience, including internships and job shadowing.
- Occupational skill training.
- Leadership development opportunities that include community service and peer centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social behaviors during non-school hours.
- Supportive services.
- Adult mentoring for the period of participation.
- Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation.
- Comprehensive guidance and counseling that may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral.

In addition, the following requirements follow:

- Eligible youth must be provided with information on the full array of applicable or appropriate services that are available through the local board and/or one-stop partner, along with appropriate training and educational programs that have the capacity to serve the participants on a sequential basis.
- Each youth program provider must ensure that an eligible applicant who does not meet the enrollment requirements of a particular program or service is referred to an appropriate program.
- The local Board will ensure that the composition of members on the YIC includes youth, parents and other community members with experience relating to programs for youth.

The purpose of youth planning is to provide the opportunity for the eligible youth to achieve academic and employment success through effective and comprehensive activities which include a variety of options for improving educational and skill competencies, and provide meaningful access to employers. Youth entering the Workforce System will be assessed for their readiness for meaningful work, academic and skill levels, service needs, prior work experience, employability, aptitude and developmental needs. Ongoing mentoring, training, supportive social services for a minimum of one year, incentives for recognition and achievement, activities related to leadership, development, decision making, citizenship, and community service and summer youth employment activities will be linked directly to learning opportunities.

Each individual readiness assessment will include strategies that assist in:

- identifying employment goals,
- preparing for post-secondary educational opportunities,
- linkage between academic and occupational learning,
- preparing for unsubsidized employment opportunities, and
- providing effective connections to the local and regional job market.

The Secretary's Commission of Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) will be incorporated as follows:

Competencies

Workers can productively use:

- Resources – allocate time, money, materials, space and staff
- Interpersonal skills – work on teams, teach others, serve customers, lead, negotiate, and work well with others
- Information – acquire and evaluate data, organize and maintain files, interpret and communicate, and use computers to process information
- Systems – understand social, organizational, and technological systems, monitor and correct performance and design or improve systems
- Technology – select equipment and tools, apply technology to specific tasks, and maintain and troubleshoot technologies.

Foundation Skills

- Basic skills – reading, writing, arithmetic, speaking and listening
- Thinking skills – thinking creatively, making decisions, solving problems, seeing things in the mind's eye, knowing how to learn, and reasoning
- Personal qualities – individual responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management and integrity.

A youth development approach will:

- Focus on the assets a young person possesses.
- Communicate high expectations,
- Provide opportunities for leadership.
- Encourage a sense of personal identity.
- Broaden a person's experiences.
- Provide a safe environment.
- Provide connections to caring adults and mentors.

The YIC will determine the size and scope of summer jobs programs. In linking work to learning the following action steps may be taken:

- Understanding youth motivation.
- Building partnerships, marketing work and learning.
- Getting the right staff on board.
- Developing work sites.
- Creating learning-rich work.
- Transforming classrooms.
- Defining and measuring what young people learn.
- Investing in staff development and training.

Included in the four areas of development are leadership development activities. These are "peer-centered" activities offered during non-school hours. Through a comprehensive community service program, leadership skills, positive social behaviors and connections between work and learning are fostered.

The adult mentoring component will last at least 12 months during and after a young person's direct participation in the program. In a study of the side effects of mentoring ("Making A Difference: An Impact Study of Big Brothers/Big Sisters") Public/Private Ventures' found that participants in BB/BS mentoring programs were less likely to start using drugs and alcohol.

Project Youth Empowerment 2000

The Union County Youth Services Commission, in partnership with other public agencies, service providers, and the private sector, has instituted the *Youth Empowerment 2000* strategy, a multi-tiered approach that seeks to integrate proven and effective community- and school-based strategies. This more youth-centered service design is

far more responsive, efficient, and results-driven. YE2K goal statements are described as follows:

- GOAL 1** *Employ a comprehensive, community-wide approach to addressing those risk indicators and factors that lead to and cause juvenile delinquency.*
- GOAL 2** *Institute more effective support systems that better equip and prepare youth for continued personal growth and development.*
- GOAL 3** *Establish and sustain program activities that the improvement of student achievement and performance, and overall commitment to school.*

Individual service components of the YE2K design contain the following:

- Recreation
- Academic Development
- Life and Human Skills Development
- The Arts as a Development Tool
- Mental Health Services
- Peer and Adult Mentoring
- Family Development
- Alcohol and Substance Abuse Education
- Community Service and Volunteerism
- Counseling Services
- Access to Key Support Services (e.g. transportation)

The County seeks to incorporate the YE2K design into the WIA One-Stop system and, as emphasized by the new legislation, foster the idea that, in order for a youth to develop key academic and vocational skills, a holistic approach to development must be employed.

Welfare Recipients

The Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program was replaced with the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program in July 1997 as a result of new federal welfare reform laws. Recipients of assistance from the TANF program, along with single adults and childless couples who are not covered by the federal welfare programs but receive New Jersey General Assistance (GA) comprise the annual pool of approximately 17,000 Work First New Jersey (WFNJ) participants. Approximately 20% of the individuals in these categories are exempt from work requirements for reasons of age, disability, or health.

Union County's TANF population in July, 1997 numbered 5,717, and was found in all of the county's 21 municipalities. The greatest concentration of poverty and TANF households were located in the urban centers of Elizabeth, Union, and Plainfield.

A profile of the typical welfare recipient based on a national study of AFDC data, WFNJ data, and county data highlighted the following characteristics of the typical welfare recipient:

National Characteristics

- 35% of TANF clients were under the age of 29.
- 86% of TANF female recipients were single, separated, divorced, or widowed.
- 71% of recipients were in single adult households, 4% of the recipients were in two adult households.
- 23% of TANF households had received benefits for five years or more. There was a significant amount of instances where this duration had approached twenty years or more.
- 39% of the caseload had poor educational histories, or eleven years of formal education or less.
- 11% of TANF households spoke Spanish only.

State Characteristics

- 86% of WFNJ clients were between the ages of 20 and 39.
- 45% of single parents had completed high school.
- 11% had some post-high school education or training.
- More than 20% of single parents were employed in a part-time job while receiving assistance.

County Characteristics

- Over one-third of recipients were between the ages of 30 and 39.
- Over 90% of welfare recipients were single mothers, and in their twenties or thirties.
- Nearly three-quarters of the welfare families included a maximum of two children.
- Nearly 60% of recipients had a high school degree or some college education.
- 70% of recipients worked prior to applying for assistance.
- Over 40% worked during the two-year period while receiving benefits.

Approximately 1,300 TANF households in Union County met the criteria for "hard-to-employ" classification in 1997. The following data reflected a profile of the "hard to employ" client population served by the Union County TANF system:

- 39% of the caseload had poor educational histories, with fewer than twelve years of formal education.
- 23% of TANF households had received welfare for five years or more.
- 86% of TANF females were single, separated, divorced, or widowed.
- 35% of TANF clients were under the age of 29.
- 11% of TANF households spoke Spanish only.

The table below indicates the number of current Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and General Assistance (GA) nonexempt clients¹ (based on January 1998 data). The data used in this report was supplied by the Union County Department of Human Services, with assistance also provided by the New Jersey Department of Human Services - Division of Family Development (DFD), and with analysis prepared by the consultant.

Data derived the table indicates that there were a total of 7,229 (5,129 TANF clients and 2,100 General Assistance clients) prospective clients who would meet Work First New Jersey (WFNJ) criteria in 1998. TANF recipients, or 70% of the "WFNJ" caseload, had dependent children. The DFD report also indicated that 87 of these clients were currently employed, and an additional 352 were employed but receiving assistance. The majority of TANF clients, 1,410 individuals, were participating in training, 126 were participating in a Community Work Experience Program (CWEP) and 336 were involved in job search activities.

This assessment further indicated that approximately 80% of all clients with dependent children would have a potential need for childcare transportation. This percentage is more significant, when you consider the results generated in "Welfare to Work and Child Care - A Survey of the Ten Big States" (*Progressive Policy Institute, 1997*), a study that found approximately 55% of all welfare clients arrange for child care with family members and friends nearby their homes, rather than using licensed care facilities.

Union County WFNJ Clients - Population Estimates as of 1998

	FY 98	FY 99	FY 00
TANF Nonexempt Recipients (1)	5,129	4,129	4,000
General Assistance Recipients (2)	2,100	3,500	3,500
Total Recipients Required to Participate	7,229	7,629	7,500
Recipients with Dependent Children (3)	5,129	4,129	4,000
% of Recipients who indicate a need for child care transportation (4)	80%	80%	80%
Recipients who indicate a need for child care transportation (5)	4,103	3,303	3,200

Footnotes

- (1) Current year number of TANF clients (January 1998) that are required to participate in the program, Union County DHS.
- (2) Current year number of GA clients (January 1998) that are shown to be employable, Union County DHS.
- (3) By definition the TANF population.
- (4 & 5) Based on information from the Union County DHS.

¹ Number of TANF and GA clients who are required to participate in the WFNJ program.

Focus groups coordinated by the County Workforce Investment Board (WIB), have served as a key qualitative mechanism in enumerating employment barriers that adversely affect the overall TANF population. Significant barriers that characterize TANF clients include:

- *Poor educational and work histories and marketable labor skills.*
- *Low wage earnings* that are deficient in offsetting living and family expenses.
- The adverse effects of *substance abuse*, including personal, family, and/or peer abuse.
- Inadequate and *high-cost transportation.*
- *Lack of accessible and affordable child care.*
- Substandard or, in many cases, complete *absence of adequate health insurance.*
- *The culture of poverty.* Long-term welfare recipients have fully ingrained themselves in the TANF system. Frequently, drastic adjustments in attitudes and values must be achieved to foster the idea of self-sufficiency.

Older Adults

In 1990, 14.9% of the population (73,715 individuals) in Union County were 65 or older. That was higher than the statewide average of 13.3%. More recent estimates place the number of people age 60 and older at over 100,000, or 20% of the County's total population. For the most part, the communities of Elizabeth, Union, Hillside, Roselle, Roselle Park, and Linden have the highest number of older adults.

All of the communities in Union County has a population of adults aged 65 or older that is greater than the statewide density of 139 persons per square mile. Communities that have percentages exceeding the county and the state averages include Clark, Linden, Mountainside, Springfield, Union, and Winfield Park.

Veterans

Ten percent (10%) of the County's population were veterans in 1990. Of the total number of veterans, 32% were 65 years of age or older. More recent wars, such as the Vietnam War and Desert Storm, have produced the younger cohort of veterans.

Domestic Violence Victims

Victims of domestic violence, particularly those in crisis circumstances, have great difficulty achieving economic self-sufficiency. Significant psycho-social variables, particularly poor self-image, coupled with poor work and educational skills, impede their ability to secure and retain employment. Recidivism rates also give further credence to the foregoing. In Union County, approximately 60% of battered women who depart from a shelter return to an abusive setting (NJ Coalition for Battered Women). *Overwhelmingly, the main reason cited for recidivism is economic dependency.*

A demographic profile (Profile provided by YWCA of Union County), common to battered women is difficult to achieve. Domestic violence crosses socioeconomic, ethnic, and age boundaries. Focus group discussions, and interviews with key service providers and law enforcement agencies, indicated that domestic violence trends in Union County mirrored national trends. For example, U.S. Department of Justice data indicated "*women in low-income households experienced a higher rate of nonlethal violence by an intimate than did women in households with larger incomes.*"² In Union County, the overwhelming majority of sheltered women, or approximately 80%, were TANF recipients and/or living at or below the poverty threshold. Federal data also indicated urban women were far more likely to be victimized. As suggested previously, nearly one-half of the 1997 domestic violence incidents occurred in the two primary urban centers of Elizabeth and Plainfield.

- In 1997, the aggregate number of reported domestic violence offenses in Union County was 5,309 (Uniform Crime Report of NJ, 1997), which is the eighth highest number of offenses in

²*Violence by Intimates: Analysis of Data on Crimes by Current or Former Spouses, Boyfriends, and Girlfriends. Bureau of Justice Statistics Factbook.* U.S. Department of Justice. March, 1998.

the State. Nearly 47% of these offenses were reported in the County's two largest urban centers of Elizabeth and Plainfield.

- Of the 1997 incidents, 55% were violent in nature, particularly in the category of assault.
- Nearly 40% of the 1997 domestic violence offenses were in the categories of harassment, terrorist threats, and stalking. This figure is compelling in describing the psychological and emotional damage caused by "batterers."
- In 1997, over 1,400 calls were made to the Union County Domestic Violence Hotline. Over 500 of these calls were women in crisis seeking emergency assistance (NJ Coalition for Battered Women).
- Domestic Violence is the number one cause of emergency room visits by women. Battering of pregnant mothers is now the number one cause of birth defects. (Union County Prosecutor's Office, Annual Report, 1996).

As it relates to Union County specifically, service providers also indicated that the number of language-minority victims is increasing significantly, particularly those who speak Spanish and/or Portuguese as their primary language.

Most battered women served in Union County have one or more children. Most often, the development and growth of these children is severely arrested. As a result of observing or directly experiencing the abuse within their homes, these children are often found to have significant psychological deficiencies. Subsequently, their academic performance progressively deteriorates, and anti-social behaviors become commonplace. Children in homes with domestic violence have a greater chance of becoming juvenile delinquents and have a greater chance of becoming an adult victim of domestic violence or an abuser. Additionally, the battered woman views the "failures" of her child(ren) as her own "failures" as a mother.

The importance of cultural and religious value systems cannot be overstated as it relates to domestic violence. Despite the abuse and the physical and emotional damage to the victim and, often, their own children, the preservation of the family unit must be viewed as the unwavering goal for many battered women, particularly those of Hispanic and Portuguese backgrounds. This "view" stems from deeply entrenched cultural beliefs and religious teachings that deem family separation, particularly divorce, as reprehensible and even sinful.

Nativity and Language

In 1990, 82% of Union County residents were native citizens, and close to 69% were born in New Jersey. Between 1980 and 1990, there was a 40% growth in the number of foreign-born residents entering the US and settling in Union County. Foreign-born residents accounted for 18% of the total county residents in 1990. Of persons 5 years of age and over, 27% spoke a language other than English. Thirteen percent (13%) of the population spoke Spanish, and 2% spoke an Asian or Pacific Island language according to the 1990 Census.

Disabled

"Mobility Limitations" is used in 1990 Census questionnaires, referred to a physical or mental health condition of non-institutionalized persons aged sixteen and over which lasts for six months or more. The condition limits their mobility, making it difficult for the individuals to go outside of the home alone to activities such as shopping or medical appointments. In 1990, 4.1% of the population in New Jersey identified themselves as having a mobility limitation. For Union County, the total number of persons with mobility limitations was 16,694 in 1990, which accounted for 4.2% of the total population. Therefore, Union County's percentage of persons with mobility limitations is slightly higher than the statewide average. The communities with the highest and lowest percentages, respectively, were Winfield Township, at 7.2%, and Fanwood with 2.1%.

Close to six percent of disabled residents had a work disability in 1990. The disabled population represented 2% of the labor force. Disabilities also prevented 3% of persons between 16 and 64 years of age from working. Persons 65 years and over were more likely to have a mobility or self care limitation than younger adults. Nineteen percent (19%) of older adults experienced these limitations when the 1990 Census was conducted.

The County Consumer Needs Assessment

In the **Union County Human Services: A Consumer Based Needs Assessment**, prepared for the HSAC and the Union County Department of Human Services by Blatner Associates, survey results found that females are a largely poor population living in urban areas, about half of whom have children. Females represented 52% of the Union County population, but 60% of those living below the poverty line. Of the survey respondents, 74% had annual incomes of less than \$12,000, 45% had annual incomes less than \$6,600, and 19% were TANF recipients.

The assessment also concluded that the City of Elizabeth is the community in greatest distress and in greatest need. Relevant data indicated Elizabeth represented 22% of Union County's aggregate population, yet 36% of the County's impoverished segment. Twenty-one percent (21%) were TANF recipients, the highest percentage of all cities, 10% of the respondents had five or more children, more than twice the rate of any other city. Out-of-pocket payment for medical care, paid by 14% of the respondents, was the highest percentage of all cities.

According to the 1996 New Jersey Municipal Distress Index, of the 567 municipalities in New Jersey, the cities of Elizabeth and Plainfield, the two major urban communities were ranked 13th and 17th, respectively, in "distress levels," in accordance with certain social and economic data indicators. Deemed special needs educational districts and as urban aid communities, their patterns of educational and social decline pose great challenges to revitalization efforts. Additional urban ills that have pervaded such communities include homelessness, crime, substandard housing, juvenile gangs, and severe impoverishment.

The Union County JOBS PLUS Project

Funded by USDOL's Welfare-to-Work Competitive Grant Program, JOBS PLUS is a holistic service design that seeks to move 500 "hard-to-employ" TANF recipients into permanent, unsubsidized employment, over a period of thirty(30) months. The strength of JOBS PLUS is the integration of government, business, education, and the private, non-profit sector into a sustainable collaborative structure. Services include, job readiness strategies, education, workplace literacy training, customized skills training, on-the-job training, job coaching, substance abuse counseling and treatment, family counseling, and post-employment case management.

JOBS PLUS is a comprehensive welfare-to-work plan developed in collaboration with corporate partners including Wakefern Foods Corporation, the National Retail Institute, CVS Pharmacies, among others. The program integrates the social service and workforce development activities of the Union County Workforce Investment Board, Division of Social Services, Division of Employment and Training, Union County Human Services Advisory Council, and other partners. The service structure is summarized as follows:

(1) Pre-Employment Phase

- Job Readiness/Job Search Skills
- Job Coaching
- On-The-Job Training
- Job Retention Strategies
- Basic Academic Skills, Including ESL and GED Preparation
- Customized Skills Training
- Connection to Key Support Services (including child care, transportation, and substance abuse counseling, or referral for treatment)
- Life Skills Development (including psycho-social development)

(2) Post-Employment Phase

- Job Placement
- Ongoing Post-Employment Case Management
- Access to occupational skills training and educational opportunities, including financial assistance

In less than two years, nearly 300 eligible TANF recipients have benefited from JOBS PLUS. Thus far, the County has successfully placed 111 former welfare recipients into unsubsidized, permanent employment, and/or an On-the-Job Training site(which requires commitment to hire at end of OJT phase).

EDUCATION CHARACTERISTICS

The 24 public school districts in Union County include 90 elementary schools, 26 middle schools, 14 four-year high schools, two (2) five-year high schools, one (1) six-year high school, five (5) elementary schools for the handicapped, three (3) secondary schools for the handicapped, and one (1) Union County Vocational Technical School. Census data reveals 115,297 residents of Union County, age 3 and over are enrolled in school (1990). Of this amount, 9,228 attend a preprimary school, 72,545 are enrolled in an elementary or high school, and 33,524 are enrolled in college. The average cost of education per elementary student (K-8) for the 1997-1998 school year was between \$7,034-\$13,730. In 1996, 3,835 students graduated high school. Of that number, 3,075, or 80% planned to attend college.

The 58 non-public schools in Union County include 43 elementary schools, 10 secondary schools, and five (5) combined schools. There are two public colleges, Kean University of New Jersey, a four-year university located in Union, and Union County College, a two-year community college with campuses in Cranford, Elizabeth, and Plainfield. Regional institutions of higher education include the Academy of Saint Elizabeth, Bloomfield College, Caldwell College, Drew University, Fairleigh Dickinson University at Madison, New Jersey Institute of Technology, Rutgers University, Seton Hall University, and the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. Based in Elizabeth, the *Union County College Career Institute (UCCCI)* is the leading educational assessor and provider for the TANF population in the county. UCC also provides career planning and counseling services.

The table below summarizes the education attainment levels of County residents age 25 and older. White residents, whom also account for the majority of Union County's population, are more likely to attain higher levels of education than African American or Hispanic residents. Hispanic residents have the lowest levels of educational attainment, with only 56% of persons completing high school.

**Union County Educational Attainment Levels
Persons 25 Years and Over**

Level of Education	White Residents	Black Residents	Hispanic Residents	All Residents
Less than 9 th Grade	11%	9%	25%	11%
9 th to 12 th Grade, No Diploma	13%	21%	20%	14%
High School Graduate (Incl. GED)	31%	33%	28%	31%
Some College, No Degree	14%	18%	14%	15%
Associate Degree	4%	5%	3%	5%
Bachelor's Degree	17%	9%	7%	16%
Graduate or Professional Degree	10%	5%	4%	9%
<i>High school graduate or higher</i>	<i>76%</i>	<i>70%</i>	<i>56%</i>	<i>76%</i>
<i>Less than high school education</i>	<i>24%</i>	<i>30%</i>	<i>45%</i>	<i>25%</i>

US Census Bureau, 1990

The Union County grant submission of the *"Opportunity Area for Out-of-School Youth"* to the US Department of Labor included a summary of educational needs for youth. The services component needs consisted of education and training through the expansion of a comprehensive alternative school, work-based learning opportunities with a job coach/mentoring support, dropout prevention, social services, support services, and post-employment services and tracking.

Education Alternatives for Youth

The Union County Vocational and Technical Schools (UCVTS) provides leadership pertinent to the vocational and technical education of youth, including out-of-school and adjudicated youth. Their campus in Scotch Plains provides extensive offerings of education and trade-specific skills training. Further, UCVTS has been at the forefront in the shaping of the County's School-to-Work initiatives, and as a result, has access to an extensive cadre of employers.

The Youth Pride Program of the Union County Adult Vocational –Technical High School is a diploma granting program running year-round on a four-semester basis. The program serves over 500 at-risk students each year with approximately one-third of those students (average age 18) being adjudicated. All are high school dropouts who have returned to school to acquire vocational training skills and academic courses leading to a high school diploma.

Basic Skills Instruction; Vocational Training; GED Preparation; Job Readiness and Placement

The goals of these programs are to provide basic skills instruction, vocational training, GED preparation, as well as job readiness and placement for 15 to 17 year old moderate and high risk juveniles returning to the community after release from secure custody, and who are no longer in school. This is an alternative education and aftercare program in a structured, 5 hour per day alternative setting to public school for youth at risk of re-offending and incarceration.

School-to-Work Initiatives

Under the auspices of the Union County Workforce Investment Board, the County has undertaken aggressive steps towards implementing comprehensive School-to-Work services. The *"Marketing School-to-Work to Business and Education in Union County"* plan is a succinct assessment and implementation strategy pertinent to realizing work-based educational reform systemically. An additional advantage is the existing business-education partnerships the County has established in several strategic contexts. This plan seeks to strengthen the following activities:

- Career Center for computerized career exploration.
- Career/Occupation-specific reference library, including audio/visual materials.
- Entrepreneurial services, including seed funding, technical assistance, and business plan support.
- Career Assessment, particularly for tenth grade students.
- Career Shadowing and Mentoring Programs.
- Field trips to business/industry sites.
- Paid and unpaid internships.
- Support for students pursuing higher education.

Dropout-Prevention Efforts

The Elizabeth and Plainfield school systems both operate well-established and effective dropout prevention programs. Examples of specific programs and services are highlighted below:

School Based Youth Services Program – Plainfield Board of Education

The School-Based Youth Services Program (SBYS) serves as the Plainfield school district's administrator of programs and activities that address the social, recreational, and support service needs of its students. SBYS manages a wide array of programs, including the Plainfield Communities in Schools Program, funded by the U.S. Department of Education. Extensive services include counseling and referral services for students and families, peer mentoring, recreation, tutoring, health and parenting education, and emergency assistance.

Adult and Peer Mentoring

The Juvenile Mentoring Program, administered by the Safe Haven Program of Plainfield, in concert with the Save a Life Today (SALT) Project and the Plainfield Board of Education, attempts to match adult and peer mentors with high-risk youth. Under close supervision, trained peer mentors facilitate a planned curriculum that educates others on the dangers associated with alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs (ATODS), life skills and personal development, and motivates high-risk students to remain and perform in school.

Sunset Program

Developed by Elizabeth High School, the Sunset Program offers a unique alternative to traditional schooling for those students who are on the verge of dropping out. Instituted five days weekly between the hours of 4 p.m. and 9:30 p.m., in small class sizes, Sunset students are provided more individual attention and support. Social workers work closely with students to monitor progress. All students must meet the same requirements for graduation as mainstream students.

The Cardinal Academy – Plainfield

Instituted in Plainfield, the Cardinal Academy, funded under the *New Jersey Promoting Student Success Initiative*, offers students alternatives to school dropout. The primary goal of the Cardinal Academy is to provide individualized and intensive educational assistance, coupled with essential support services, for youth at-risk of dropout or expulsion. Academy participants have a history of chronic absenteeism, tardiness, poor academic performance, and non-violent behavioral and disciplinary problems. Along with receiving standard academic instruction consistent with state core curriculum standards, program activities also include mandatory life-skills education, counseling, community service, and family participation. The goal is gradual reintegration into the mainstream system.

Project Save A Life Today

Plainfield has also been identified by the Union County Prosecutor's Office (UCPO) as a pilot demonstration area for the Project Save A Life Today (SALT) strategy. Project SALT emulates a groundbreaking strategy instituted by *Operation Cease Fire*, a Boston-based initiative that has gained national notoriety. The premise of this strategy is to organize citizens and law enforcement together to create a neighborhood-driven approach to combating crime. The UCPO is planning to extend the SALT strategy to a target area in Elizabeth as well. A major element of the SALT strategy is to provide constructive options and services for troubled youth. UCPO has designed a program that aims to provide youth who are adjudicated delinquent, or at high-risk of same, with essential services and interventions.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

Child Care

In accordance with the requirements of the New Jersey Department of Human Services, the County of Union has completed a comprehensive assessment of its child care system. The Union County Child Care Plan 2000 - 2005 assessment includes a description of the existing child care delivery model, projections of future needs and the development of a collective vision among child care stakeholders for what the system will look like in the year 2005. The plan will guide the realization of this vision and decision making about the direction of resources and allocation of child care funds in Union County.

Led by the Union County Child Care 2005 Planning Committee, the planning process has been a collaboration of county government with child care agencies and professionals including significant input from child care consumers, providers, and employers. While the plan is countywide, special emphasis has been placed on the Abbott Districts of Elizabeth and Plainfield. This assessment has presented an important opportunity to develop a responsive, integrated, well-coordinated child care plan for the future. The resulting strategic action plan will become the model for innovations in child care services in Union County. As such, it will also be central to the success of our Welfare-to-Work and WorkFirst New Jersey efforts.

The Child Care 2005 assessment has involved extensive community participation. In early January 2000, the Planning Committee conducted five focus groups to gather community input. Participants included child care consumers (primarily TANF and low-income residents); child care providers; and local employers with an interest in child care issues. A total of 114 respondents answered questions designed to elicit their opinions about the existing child care system and what they believe should be done to improve it.

Summary Analysis of Data and Information

The data used to develop the Child Care Plan was collected from many different sources. Collectively, members of the Child Care Planning Committee brought to this undertaking over 150 years of professional child care experience. They represented State, County and local child care service agencies throughout Union County. In their decision making data from the following sources was relied on: US Census, state and county demographic sources, a Family Child Care Survey conducted by the Community Coordinated Child Care agency (4C's) in 1999, five Child Care 2005 focus groups, results from the Strategic Planning Summit, and input from the Community Forum.

Collectively, the research has revealed a consensus around five critical issues in the Union County child care community. Each of the critical issues became the basis for a strategic planning recommendation. In order of priority, Union County's critical child care issues are:

- *Funding*
Additional funding for child care is our first priority. There is very strong agreement among child care stakeholders that current reimbursement rates are not adequate to provide for quality child care. Delays in the voucher system create financial hardships and there is an anticipated shortfall of 3,294 child care slots by 2005. Furthermore, financial incentives for quality specialized services and flexible child care are absent.
- *Information System*
The information system recommendation focuses on conducting child care research and enhancing our existing database of child care information. In spite of the wealth of data available, there is no centralized, complete, current and consistent base of information about child care in Union County. The Child Care Planning Committee believes that opportunities for funding are lost due to inadequate information and resources.
- *Capacity and Accessibility*
The plan's second priority is to increase the capacity of the child care system and improve the accessibility of child care to consumers. Critical issues include an insufficient number of child care slots for infants, toddlers, preschool and school age children. Furthermore, the proximity of child care to home and work is inconvenient and transportation barriers interfere with access to child care and employment.
- *Specialized Services*
Demographic projections clearly reveal that the availability of bilingual child care services will not be sufficient to meet the demand over the next five years. Special needs children are under served by the existing system and there is a lack of temporary care, emergency care and evening care.
- *Services Coordination*
There is very strong consensus among focus group and Strategic Summit participants that a lack of adequate professional development and compensation are primary barriers to quality child care. There is also significant fragmentation in the child care system. The absence of effective communication and coordination interferes with opportunities for providers to expand and enhance the quality of their services.

Summary of Existing Child Care

Community Coordinated Child Care of Union County (4C's) is the County's Unified Child Care Agency. It is a non-profit resource and referral agency that coordinates and supports the early childhood child care community. Under contract with the New Jersey Division of Youth and Family Services, 4C's operates the following subsidy programs for eligible families:

- Work First New Jersey (WFNJ) child care counseling.
- Approved home inspections, provider payment distribution and transitional child care.
- New Jersey Cares for Kids (NJCK), including determination of eligibility, approved home inspections and provider payment distribution.

Child care arrangements in Union County fall into three main categories, Child Care Centers licensed by the State to care for six or more children, Registered Family Child Care providers that care for five or fewer children with state funding support, and Approved Home providers eligible to provide subsidized care for children from one family.

There are presently approximately 14,576 children receiving paid child care in Union County. Of those, 5,490 are TANF children. Approved Homes care for the majority of infants and toddlers. Centers care for the majority of school age children. As children get older, parents move them from home-based to center-based child care. Following is a breakdown of child care arrangements by age for families receiving subsidized child care under WFNJ and NJCK:

	Approved Homes	Registered Family Providers	Child Care Centers
Infant/Toddler	228	156	211
Preschool	146	99	556
School Age	380	170	687

There are 217 registered family providers and 262 licensed centers providing regulated child care in Union County. Only two (2) centers are State registered to operate a sick child care facility. This creates a hardship for working families when children are sick. Non-traditional child care is provided primarily by registered family providers. They serve parents who work evenings, weekends and other non-traditional hours.

Summary of Projected Need

The Union County Child Care 2005 Planning Committee chose the Urban Institute's Child Care Demand Formula to estimate its future child care needs. The projections were based on statistics provided by the Union County Community Coordinated Child Care agency (4C's) on demand and child care capacity, as well as data on the Union County TANF population. The County's projected demand for child care in 2005 is estimated at 17,870 slots. Based on the current system, this demand will result in a shortfall of 3,294 slots. We estimate that the shortfall will be comprised of 747 infant/toddler slots, 472 preschool slots and 2,075 school age slots.

When parents are unable to care for infants in their own home, due to employment and other life issues, they prefer that infants be placed in a home setting. Therefore, the demand for quality and affordable infant care is greatest among Approved Homes and Registered Family home providers. It should be noted that infant/toddler child care has been identified as a primary barrier to employment by TANF clients.

Demand calculations for preschool slots across the County considered children ages three to five. Projections by Abbott districts indicate a shortfall of 3,346 three and four year olds to be served in Elizabeth and 910 three and four year olds to be served in Plainfield. The actual number of needed slots will most likely be refined as projections improve over the next five years. However, our plan highlights a need for expanded care for preschool children from families living on low and moderate incomes, in a center-based setting, in direct coordination with the Abbott and ECPA districts.

Union County is the home of six Early Childhood Program Aid districts, Elizabeth Hillside, Linden, Plainfield, Rahway and Roselle. Early Childhood Program Aid (ECPA) is state aid distributed to all school districts with high concentrations of low income students for the purpose of providing full-day Kindergarten, half-day pre-school classes and other early childhood programs. Two of these school districts, Elizabeth and Plainfield have been designated as Abbott districts.

Demand calculations indicate a significant shortfall in child care for school age children, both before and after school and summer camp. Parents on TANF or with low and moderate incomes have a limited support network and fewer dollars to obtain reliable care, while simultaneously, these parents have very real concerns regarding the need for a constructive environment for their children when they are not in school. Consumers prefer school-based care with appropriate transportation available.

Due to the anticipated shortfall, and the need for increased reimbursements and incentives for quality care, the Union County Child Care Planning Committee cannot overstate the need for additional child care funding. *The Committee does not support the redirection of funding to accomplish this Plan. Additional dollars, beyond those designated by the State for early childhood education, are prerequisite to successful implementation.*

Housing

There were 187,033 housing units in Union County in 1990. Ninety-six percent (96%) of units were occupied. Over half of the units (62%) were occupied by the owners, and renters live in the remaining 38%. The median value of owner-occupied housing units in Union County was 180,500 in 1990. The gross rent medial was \$596.

The bulk of Union County's housing structures were built over 50 years ago. Approximately 48% were built prior to 1950, 40% were built between 1950 and 1969, and the remaining 12% were built between 1970 and March, 1990. The average home most likely has 3 bedrooms. A quarter of the units have two bedrooms, and one and four bedroom each represent 16% of the units.

In 1998, the average home assessment in Union County was \$139,322. Municipalities with the highest home assessments were Summit (\$378,249), New Providence (\$274,713), and Cranford (\$174,677). The lowest home assessments were found in the municipalities of Winfield (\$1,556), Elizabeth (\$32,818), and Union (\$45,338). Summit, New Providence, Winfield and Elizabeth also have respectively high and low taxes in the County. The table below summarizes the regional home assessed value and tax averages.

Area	Avg. Home Assessment	1998 Avg. Taxes	1997 Avg. Taxes
East. County Avg.+	\$102,821	\$4,152	\$4,060
West. County Avg.	\$164,661	\$5,639	\$5,436

**Please Note: Union County Average Home Assessment is for 1998.*

+Eastern County Averages do not include Winfield because of its unique tax situation. The Rahway River was used as the dividing line. For Cranford and Rahway, which are divided by the river, Cranford is included in the western average and Rahway in the eastern average.

Source: Union County Abstract of Ratables, 1990-1998.

Project HOUSING SUCCESS

Utilizing HUD's "Continuum of Care" model in housing assistance and development, Union County instituted Project HOUSING SUCCESS, a 'seamless' system that can 'move' homeless individuals and families from intake to self-sufficiency, with maximum care and support. The overarching premise of HOUSING SUCCESS is to continue developing and expanding the countywide Continuum of Care (CoC) system – a system that is increasingly responsive and comprehensive. HOUSING SUCCESS relies upon the coordination among participating service providers to maximize service opportunities for our target population. Our strategy embraces collaboration, inter-agency coordination, and a greater emphasis on performance-based services.

In 1998, a \$2.5 million grant from HUD enabled the process of establishing 46 new units of emergency and transitional housing.

The Connection Between Housing and Workforce Development

The County's Overall Economic Development Plan also acknowledges the connection between permanent and affordable housing and economic and workforce development. Through its HOME entitlement and related federal and state funding sources, the County will continue to expand the production of affordable housing units and increase opportunities for low- to moderate-income families to purchase homes.

Youth

In-home Therapeutic Intervention

This program provides weekly intensive individual counseling for youth and their families. It includes a counselor to communicate with all parties involved with the youth, including school probation, court, etc. Weekly progress reports and monthly treatment summaries are provided for each participant. This program serves mostly minority youth ages 14-17 and their families.

Intensive Aftercare Program

Union County YSC Intensive Aftercare Program currently provides intensive supervision, community advocacy, individual and group counseling, life skills development and a supported work program.

Adjudicated Youth

The *Adolescent Substance Abuse Treatment Program* provides residential substance treatment for adjudicated youth who are deemed in need of treatment as ordered by the court and who have been unable to remain substance free during outpatient treatment. The minimum duration of this program is 2-3 months and includes individual and group therapy.

The Union County Youth Service Bureau provides a *Community Service Program* which offers a constructive dispositional resource for adjudicated juveniles who are assigned a specific number of hours during which they must perform community service. These assignments are made by the court, the probation department, or the municipal Juvenile Conference Committees.

Program objectives are:

- To provide a sentencing alternative for the above target population
- To make juveniles aware of the impact of their actions on the community
- To assign 5 hours of community service to each juvenile
- To monitor juveniles for six months after program completion

Treatment For Juvenile Sex Offenders

The Juvenile Sex Offenders Outpatient Program provides assessment, individual and group therapy, and family counseling treatment services to adolescents between the ages of 13 and 17 who are charged with crimes of a sexual nature, and who are mandated, as a requirement of probation to enter the Juvenile Sex Offenders Program. These youth are residents of Union County and must be able to be safely treated in the community.

The program provides comprehensive diagnostic, treatment, and aftercare services, as well as diagnostic assessments regarding treatment recommendations and placement options. For those individuals who are found to be able to be treated safely within the community, the program affords intensive outpatient therapeutic interventions utilizing offender specific treatment protocols to address the adolescent's deviant behaviors. Aftercare services are available to those adolescents who are returned to the community after having been treated in a more restrictive facility.

Juvenile/Family Crisis Intervention Unit

The Union County Juvenile Family Crisis Intervention Unit provides 24-hour crisis intervention services to the local municipalities. The primary mission of this unit is to divert at-risk youth and their families from the family court system by providing community based alternatives and strategies.

Anger Management Program

This is a 40 week program in Anger Management and conflict resolution counseling, which is contracted out through the Union County Youth Services Commission.

TRANSPORTATION

The smooth and rapid movement of people and goods is vital to a strong economy and employment base. Union County has an aging yet impressive transportation infrastructure on land, sea, and air. Major highways in the county include the Garden State Parkway, New Jersey Turnpike, Interstate 78, Interstate 278, US Routes 1 & 9, and US Route 22. The County's land transportation system also features major passenger and freight rail lines, and hundreds of trucking firms within overnight distance of 25% of the nation's population.

A summary of existing fixed route services indicates that the amount of service is widespread, and available seven days a week throughout the county. Correlating the availability of fixed route services to how shifts of employment are delineated, it can be estimated that approximately 80% of available jobs occur during hours that fixed route and/or Paratransit services are available.

There were close to 250,000 workers 16 years old and older in 1990. Seventy-two percent commuted to work via their private vehicle. Carpools were used by 13% of workers, and 8% accessed public transportation. Workers who walked or worked from home represented 6% of commuters. A copy of the 1998 Union County Community Transportation Plan, provides an exhaustive analysis of transportation availability and composition of transportation services. It can be furnished upon request. The following summary is derived from this plan:

Demand Responsive Services

In order to meet the needs of persons with special needs, Union County has a no-fee demand responsive service provided by Union County Paratransit. Services are available Monday through Saturday, from 7 AM to 10 PM, to elderly citizens, persons with disabilities, and other who meet economic qualifications. For purposes such as medical care, employment, recreation and education, Union County Paratransit provides transportation services to eligible clients with advance notification of one week.

Agency Based Transportation Services

To further complement the transportation service system in Union County, there are community-based agencies and organizations in the county that provide transportation services to eligible clientele: Cranford Parks and Recreation; Flynn Christian Fellowship Houses of NJ Inc.; and Golden Age Towers are some examples.

Cranford Parks and Recreation is part of that municipal governments organization structure and provides transportation services and child day care to its 6,500 clients. Eligible clients include the general public, elderly and young citizens, military veterans and persons with physical disabilities. Serving the township of Cranford, areas of interest include Garwood Mall, the library, post office, doctor offices, community center, Pathmark and various stores. Services are available from 8:15 AM to 3:30 PM Monday through Friday with trips for health/medical services, recreational activities, and shopping/personal. For fiscal year 1997, Cranford Parks and Recreation logged 2,976 passenger trips and over 22,000 miles. This agency owns one 19-passenger van and operates one regular route.

Summary of the Gaps in Union County's Existing Transit Need

There is a fair amount of transit service within Union County, but if routes are not available where and when One-Stop job seekers need to access them, the services are inadequate. In Union County, routes operate primarily along the major highways and thoroughfares of the region. This limits the extent to which residential concentrations have access to these routes, as many areas of the communities are a considerable walking distance to the major routes on which this service is operated. The amount of service available to New York and destinations outside of the County is considerable.

Not surprisingly, the areas which show the highest need for public transportation services are those areas with the highest concentration of population, highest rates of unemployment, persons aged 65 or older, persons with mobility limitations, and persons with a lack of access to private automobiles. That is clearly in the areas around Elizabeth, Union Township, Roselle, Roselle Park, Linden, Hillside, in the eastern portion of the county, and Plainfield which is located in the western portion of the county.

The State has led a concerted effort to link transportation with businesses and individuals. Steps will be taken to identify and disseminate information regarding needs and resources. Through the efforts of the State Employment and Training Commission and partnering agencies (including the Department of Transportation), it is expected that steps will be taken to align transportation services with the needs of the workforce. At the local level, the One-Stop System will provide its customers with information on NJ Transit's employer based programs, its Transit services and schedules.

Transit Dependent Populations and Potential Work First NJ Participants

In the consumer survey(s) reported, Welfare-to-Work transportation ranked fifth in which respondents said they required more help, second in the category as "area giving the most trouble," and third in the category as "most important service."

- 9% of respondents ranked transportation as one of their top five "Services Still Needed".
- 8% of respondents ranked needing transportation to medical/other important services.
- 6% of respondents ranked needing transportation to get to a job.
- 45% of respondents identified "getting places-transportation" as an area in which they needed help.
- 25% of the respondents reported that they could not rely on extended family or the community for assistance with transportation.
- 20% of respondents said that buses do not provide a sufficient amount of service between and within the towns in Union County.

Unmet Needs of Other Transit Dependent Populations

An analysis of unmet needs of other transit dependent populations was made by comparing the amount of service provided to the transit dependent population to the total number of transit dependent persons, through the use of information contained in previous studies and reports, and input from local steering committee members. In addition, the 1996 Union County Human Services Needs Assessment, compiled by the Union County HSAC was reviewed for input for this report.

Based on the data in the above sections, there are a total of 90,409 (seniors & disabled) persons in transit dependent populations that are currently served by demand responsive service. For these populations a total of approximately 260,000 passenger trips were provided during 1996.

PROJECT JOBS ACCESS

Consistent with the recommendations of the Union County Community Transportation Plan, Union County has increased the existing capacity of the County Paratransit Program through funds provided by the U.S. Department of Transportation, through the federal Jobs Access/Reverse Commute Program. While the expansion of fixed route services is prioritized, the County Plan also indicates that demand-responsive services often fulfills transportation needs more effectively, particularly for Work First New Jersey (WFNJ) clientele. Additionally, the expansion of this system is far more cost-effective and less onerous than an adjustment, creation, and/or expansion of a fixed route service.

The chief objective of this Initiative is to provide a viable and more responsive transportation alternative for the County's hardest-to-employ Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) clients, who seek accessibility to employment, child care, and other support services. More specifically, Job Access funds enable the County to extend Paratransit services for increased evening and weekend service for clients placed in second and third shift jobs.

Two transportation "corridors" have been identified as the initial target service areas for these proposed services. The aforesaid Community Transportation Plan identified these corridors - Morris Avenue Corridor (Route 82) and Elizabeth to Plainfield - as severely deficient as it relates to accessibility and public transportation services. The concentration of TANF recipients within the aforesaid corridors is also significant.

Additionally, the County has initiated discussions with certain key employers, who are already involved with JOBS PLUS, as it pertains to utilizing the Paratransit system as a feeder service to employer-based transportation services. As a specific example, United Parcel Service (UPS) is currently undergoing important organizational changes that will result in a significant number of employment opportunities in their Central and Northern New Jersey facilities, including their facilities located in Bound Brook, Newark, Parsippany, Secaucus, and Edison. Full- and part-time positions include tractor-trailer driving, van delivery, and warehouse personnel, i.e., package handling, sorting, etc.

UPS views UCDHS, and JOBS PLUS as the mechanism and as a provider of a constant and viable pool of prospective employees. As a result, UPS is working directly with UCDHS to recruit and identify TANF recipients for potential employment. Considering the fact that applicable UPS facilities are out-of-County, UPS is exploring the establishment of its own transportation services that would link with the County Paratransit system in order to transport selected candidates to appropriate facilities.

Discussions have also been held with CVS Pharmacies and Wakefern Foods, two key partners in JOBS PLUS as well. UCDHS is working aggressively to construct arrangements similar to the proposed UPS agreement.

SECTION 6: RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

It is agreed that the following program services and activities will be mutually funded by the One-Stop partnering agencies from the revenue sources identified below:

SERVICES	REVENUE SOURCES/ PARTNERING AGENCY	SERVICE DESCRIPTION	SHARED COSTS
CORE SERVICES	Wagner-Peyser/ Employment Service	Job Search, Orientation	In-Kind (100%) Staff
	VETP/Veterans	Intake, Counseling, Job Search, Training	In-Kind (20%)
	Food Stamp, TANF/ Welfare-to-Work Division of Soc. Service	Intake, Counseling, Income Assistance, Child Care	(100%) \$
	Wagner-Peyser/ Unemployment Insurance	Intake, Counseling, Income Assistance	In-Kind (20%)
INTENSIVE SERVICES	WIA/WIA	Assessment, Counseling, Training, Intake, Transportation	(100%) \$
	Wagner-Peyser/ Employment Service	Intake, Job Search, Counseling	(100%) \$
	Post Secondary Voc. Ed/ Ed/Union County Voc/Tech	Training, Assessment, Counseling	In-Kind (20%)
	Adult Education/Union County College	Training, Assessment, Counseling	In-Kind (100%)
	State Voc. Rehab/D.V.R.	Intake, Counseling, Job Search, Training	In-Kind (20%)
	V.E.T.P./Veterans	Intake, Counseling, Training Job Search	In-Kind (20%)
TRAINING SERVICES	WIA/WIA	Assessment, Counseling, Training, Intake, Transportation	(100%) \$
	Food Stamp/TANF Welfare-to-Work Division of Soc. Service	Intake, Counseling, Income Assistance, Child Care	(100%) \$
	Post Secondary Voc. Ed. Union County Voc/Tech	Training, Assessment, Counseling	In-Kind (20%)
	Adult Education/Union County College	Training, Assessment, Counseling	In-Kind (100%)
	State Voc. Rehab/DVR	Intake, Counseling, Job Search, Training	In-Kind (20%)
	Housing & Urban Development HUD/HACE/PHA	Counseling, Supportive Service	(60%) \$
	State DOL/WDP	Training, Counseling	100%) \$
	V.E.T.P./Veterans	Intake, Counseling, Training, Job Search	In-Kind (20%)

Refer to **Appendix D** for complete listings of programs recommended and conditionally recommended for the Division of Employment and Training's Program Year (PY) '99 contracts. The programs recommended include a diverse representation of employment readiness and training for adults in ESL, pre-employment skills, computer related specialties, clerical/office skills, medical and dental, driving, trades and environmental related training

programs. It is anticipated these programs will seek approval as training providers, and levels of service will be determined by the interests and needs of job seekers.

Services to Youth provided prior to the WIA transition are listed in **Appendix E**. The majority of these programs have been provided during the summer months as part of the traditional Summer Youth Employment & Training Program (STETP).

After reviewing the inventory of youth resources, the YIC raised concerns over the lack of programs that lead to viable careers for unskilled youth or youth without a previous work history. The YIC was also concerned about the lack of support services for this population, which includes transportation, programs targeted towards special needs populations, and ongoing social services.

SECTION 7: ONE-STOP SYSTEM DESCRIPTION

THE UNION COUNTY ONE-STOP SYSTEM MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW

The Union County WIB and Chief Elected Official(s) are accountable and responsible for the Union County One-Stop System. The One-Stop System calls for the integration of social and workforce development services, and promotion of customer satisfaction (job seekers, employers, and Operator employees). To accomplish this, a change of mindset from an income-maintenance system to an employment system is demanded. The key components for a quality One-Stop System are the location and the service to be provided to each client.

The Union County Division of Employment and Training has been selected as the sole Operator of the Union County Workforce Investment Board's One-Stop Operating System (OSOS). As the One-Stop Operator, the Division is responsible for the day-to-day management of the One-Stop Center and System. The experienced staff will provide high quality service to both job seekers and employers. The Division intends to provide a uniquely superior designed operation and will attempt to replicate some of the "best practices" of other one-stop centers throughout the country.

Facility Locations

The Division of Employment and Training will operate two Customer Centers for the provision of services in locations conveniently accessible to the customers. One site is located in Plainfield and the other in Elizabeth. A satellite office is also located at the Union County College in Elizabeth. Each office, while operating in separate parts of the County, is able to collectively provide quality services under one direction of management. In some instances, One Stop staff will be out stationed to provide better access for its customers.

The Plainfield facility, located at 120 West Seventh Street, accommodates customers in the western region of Union County. To accommodate customers residing in the eastern portion of the County, services are also offered at 125 Broad Street in Elizabeth. The satellite center at Union County College is a modified version of the two larger sites. It houses a small configuration of what is available at the main sites (i.e: intake, job search/job readiness, labor market information etc.) for both employers and job seekers who are being or have been given training services through the One-Stop Operating System (OSOS).

Each facility also provides or is near municipal parking, and is ADA compliant. Several large rooms suitable for classroom type activities (i.e.: orientation, intake, job search/readiness, positive recruitment, interviewing, computer labs, etc.), individual workspace, and offices are located at each site.

In addition, the Division has collaborated with the Retail Skills Center (RSC), located at the Jersey Garden Mall. One of the Division's Case Managers is presently co-located at the Center to provide services to job seekers coming through the Center for training and counseling relative to retail sales and trades, and for employment placement services in the retail trades industry. The Division, in collaboration with the Skills Center also services those employers in the retail skills industry who are not housed at the mall. The Plainfield Office will be able to provide services through a proposed Retail Skills Center targeted for the Western part of the County.

It is anticipated that through the training and capacity building provided by the transition funds, Union County will further enhance the reality of a cohesive service delivery system. The One-Stop Centers will reflect the core partners and other agencies deemed necessary. Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) will include one-stop protocols, responsibilities, and financial support. They will be developed between the WIB (*Section 10: Attachment 2*) and partner agencies.

Technology

The basis of the workforce development service delivery system is the One-Stop technology/virtual network of agencies. The Workforce Investment Board's One-Stop network initiative has been merged with the Department of

Human Services' One Ease-E-Link project to conserve limited financial resources and establish a network that connects a variety of services to better serve our customers. The One-Stop network initiative will be completed shortly and will consist of at least 59 partner agencies. The two One-Stop Centers envisioned in Union County will be comprised of core partners with technological connections to the virtual network of agencies. The multiple locations will be inter-agency linked, through One Ease-E Link, and computer software systems such as Factors, OSOS, Helpline Works, Netscape Communicator and access to the NJ Department of Labor NJPIN system and the O'NET system. The systems, which will be updated regularly to ensure the most up-to-date information is made available, will be available for use by job seekers and employers.

THE ONE-STOP OPERATOR SELECTION PROCESS

One of the initial tasks of the One-Stop/MOU Committee was to recommend a One-Stop Operator to the WIB Executive Committee. By July 1, 2000, the State requires the County to have identified the One-Stop Operator and a physical site made operational. At the Committee's first meeting on December 2nd, 1999, the issue of selecting the Operator was suggested, but the selection was deemed premature by the membership at that time.

Although the Committee had general knowledge in regard to the Operator's responsibilities, it needed to enhance its knowledge base for the One-Stop Operator designation process. The core partners were invited to a Committee meeting on January 7th, 1999 to begin this process. The interests, concerns, needs and desires of the partners in the selection of the One-Stop Operator were welcomed and encouraged at the meeting. From that meeting, a questionnaire was developed and distributed to all entities who expressed an interest in being considered for the role of Operator.

The responses to the questionnaire were due by January 14, 2000, but were accepted through the 21st of the month, then forwarded to committee members. Five entities expressed an interest in being the One-Stop Operator: Community Access Unlimited, Union County Vocational and Technical Schools, Employment Service, ABC Inc., and the Union County Department of Human Services Division of Employment and Training.

Because a number of good responses were received from established agencies, and due to time constraints, there was no need to reopen the process. A suggestion was made to designate a sole Operator or a consortium for only a year, and then revisit the selection process at a later date was dismissed, as the Committee felt that a qualified Operator could be selected from the five agencies that expressed an interest.

A letter of intent was sent to the five entities that expressed an interest in being selected as the One-Stop Operator to: 1) re-affirm their desire to be the Operator and, 2) to request that they submit a comprehensive proposal detailing their agencies capacity, qualifications, etc. Responses to the letter of intent were due by Friday, February 4, 2000 followed by the submission of the proposals which were due by Tuesday, February 22, 2000. The following format was suggested for the full proposals:

- Identify your agency. What has been your agency's primary role? Employment? Training? Education? Social Services? Business? Other?
- What affiliation does your agency have with the Workforce Investment Board (WIB)?
- Describe the process that you intend to use in creating a collaborative One-Stop System, including all mandatory One-Stop Partners under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA)?
- What tools will you employ to measure performance and evaluation in the One-Stop System?
- What is your history of collaboration in a One-Stop System?
- How do you see your agency's role as One-Stop Operator?
- In what part of the County will your One-Stop Center be located?
- What type(s) of training have you or your staff had regarding the implementation of WIA? The development of Memoranda of Understandings (MOUs)? The establishment of any One-Stop prototype?

- What capacity does your agency have to house One-Stop Partners? Is your facility ADA accessible?
- What is your current fiscal accountability system?
- What is your system to monitor or track your agency's performance?
- How do you intend to fund the One-Stop?

Volunteers that were not interested in being the Operator, and did not possess a conflict of interest, were asked to help establish assessment criteria to objectively evaluate the One-Stop Operator. A tool for the selection of the One-Stop Operator was developed and distributed to guide the agencies in developing their proposals (Refer to **Appendix F** for the full evaluation tool). In addition to receiving literature and discussing the roles and responsibilities of the Operator, Committee members involved in the selection process received a list of the core services required, and a summary of the requirements for Operators.

The WIA has encouraged collaboration and partnerships among the various agencies in order to provide a holistic approach to workforce development. This approach includes additional support services as needed by the client to achieve self-sufficiency. The ultimate success of the One-Stop System will be determined by the degree of collaboration among the Operator and its partners.

The proposals would be evaluated based on the design of the most efficient customer oriented model that produced the desired outcomes. The selection process of the One-Stop Operator included a presentation to the Committee on March 1, 2000. The Committee would be prepared to endorse a proposal at the conclusion of presentations at this meeting and recommend an Operator to the WIB for approval.

Agency Capacity

The Union County Division of Employment and Training (E&T) has over 20 years of experience operating the County's employment and training programs, and already provides many of the services that are mandated by WIA. The Division has operated programs in Union County from the Manpower Demonstration projects and the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) programs as well as those funded under the most recent Job Training Partnership Act. Every segment of the mandated populations under WIA are currently served by the Division.

Present experience includes planning, designing and implementing various programs and services that prepare youth, unemployed, underemployed and dislocated adult workers for entry into the labor force. The Division also implements Work First New Jersey- Division of Family Development, Welfare-to-Work (formula and competitive) and WorkFirst New Jersey- Supplemental programs. Services provided within programs include assessment, job search, job readiness, job placement, job training, occupational training, vocational training, work experience (primarily with summer youth), alternative work experience, community work experience, on-the-job training, basic remedial program, and English as a Second Language.

ONE-STOP PARTNERS

History of Collaboration

The Division of Employment and Training has a rich history of collaboration with many of the mandated partners that will have a presence in the One-Stop System. They include Employment Service, Unemployment Insurance (UI), Division of Social Services, Division on Aging, local government agencies, County College and Vocational-Technical Schools, community based organizations and employers.

The Division has always had a Labor exchange agreement both informally and formally with the local Employment Service Office. Applicants that were interested in employment were referred to Job Service for assistance. Positive recruitment days and job fairs have been hosted by both entities. Both offices have also case managed clients that were interested in retraining through the Workforce Development Program (WDP).

Currently both entities continue to co-manage applicants that are interested in training. Employment Service conducts the orientation and then makes referrals to Employment and Training for the actual delivery of services to all state approved providers of training. Memorandums of Understandings exist between the local ES, UI and JTPA for the operation of the Workforce Development Program (WDP), Welfare-to-Work with TANF and General Assistance clients, and information and referral process for veterans with Veteran Services.

The Division and Employment Service also works jointly with the Division of E&T to assist General Assistance clients in their job search efforts. Team meetings are held to discuss various strategies to reach both the employer community and the job seekers.

Employment and Training is also a partner in the State Response Team's effort to inform and advise dislocated workers about services and programs available to them. The Division has participated as a partner on various labor-management committees in planning transitional services for workers from companies where massive downsizing occurred. In addition, the Division and Employment Service have had co-location agreements that provide services to all of our clients.

The Division's relationship with Unemployment Insurance includes the coordination of benefits for individuals seeking to obtain assistance they may be eligible for while attending school. Staff from both agencies confer regularly regarding individuals in the UI system and participate in the local Appeals Process hearings.

The relationship between the Division of Employment and Training and the Division of Social Services has always been a close one, as both are an integral part of the County's Human Services Department. Staff from both offices meet regularly, to plan, discuss and implement the delivery of services to the County's welfare population. Both offices work jointly in recruiting and referring applicants to the Jobs Plus Program ("Hard-to-Serve" TANF) and General Assistance Project. These two Division are presently sharing staff under the operation of the JOBS PLUS program.

The Division works jointly with the County's Division on Aging to address the needs of the senior adult population. Staff from the County Division on Aging are co-located in E&T's satellite offices where they have the ability to directly work with the population. The Division on Aging has also participated in the selection process (RFP) to determine what programs and services through Employment and Training would best meet the needs of the older worker population.

The Division also has a long history of collaboration with local governments. The Division funds many year round and summer youth programs with local governments, local Boards of Education, and community based organizations. Additionally, the Division reaches out to various local governments for assistance when conducting major recruitment efforts.

A very successful relationship with both the County College and Vocational-Technical School has been in place for many years. Both entities participate on the WIB where they share in the planning process and delivery of services to the public. The County College is also subcontracted to provide assessment for the Division's welfare clients. They provide Job Search assistance and occupational skills training for a large majority of these clients.

The County Vocational-Technical School has also been a major provider of Employment and Training funded training programs for youth and adult populations within the County. Employment and Training and the Vocational-Technical School jointly operated a Dislocated Worker Assistance Center, where laid-off individuals can access many different types of Job Search activities and services. Currently, the Division provides transportation services to students that participate in the Youth Pride Program at the Vocational-Technical School. The Youth Pride Program was developed through the collaboration of the Division, the Vocational-Technical School, the County Prosecutors Office, and several community-based organizations. Through the stellar performance of the Vocational-Technical School, dropout youth are able to obtain high school diplomas by attending school in the evening.

The Employment and Training Division has always worked with the local community based and social service agencies in Union County. Referrals and information sharing have been key components of these well-established working relationships over the years. To serve the needs of the handicapped and disabled population of the County, the Division works closely with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). Clients have been referred to each entity, both formally and informally. Employment and Training has also worked with the County's major supplier and trainer of qualified childcare workers and providers through Community Coordinated Childcare of Union County.

Through its On-the-Job Training program, Employment and Training has worked closely with employers to provide applicants with the needed skills to secure and maintain employment, as well as provide employers with a well-trained, competent pool of employees.

The Division of Employment and Training is in partnership with the City of Elizabeth's Hope VI Housing program to assist individuals living in local housing projects to get retrained or employed, so they can achieve economic self-sufficiency. Employment and Training has worked with other local Housing Authorities to assist individuals by providing an array programs and services.

Financial Systems and One-Stop Operating Resources

The Division brings an operating budget of \$11.0 million in State and Federal funds to the table. The One-Stop system will use the system that is already in place to handle payment claims from vendors, but will enhance it to address the interest and needs of all the partners such as resource allocation and sharing. The Division currently manages the local Workforce Development Program and intends to operate a similar system to manage Individual Training Accounts (ITAs). In this system contracts are done directly through the computer network. The Division, as Operator will solicit additional funds through grant applications from various State, Federal and Private sources. The Operator will meet with the Partners regularly to discuss the sharing of resources both direct and in-kind.

Roles and Resources

The One-Stop Operator will provide staff to each of the local sites. The following chart identifies One-Stop Partners, the recommended percent of time they have a presence at One-Stop sites, and amount of shared resources.

ONE STOP PARTNERS	% of TIME ALLOCATED TO ONE STOP <i>(Recommended)</i>	DOLLARS TO BE SHARED <i>(To Be Determined)</i>
WIA	100 %	\$ \$
EMPLOYMENT SERVICE	100 %	\$ \$
WELFARE-TO-WORK	100 %	\$ \$
UNION COUNTY VOC. TECH SCHOOL	20 %	IN KIND
UNION COUNTY COLLEGE	100 %	IN KIND
DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION	20 %	IN KIND
HUD/HACE/PHA	60 %	\$ \$
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE	20 %	IN KIND
WDP	100 %	\$ \$
VETERANS	20 %	IN KIND

Required One-Stop Partners include:

- Union County Division of Education and Training (Workforce Development)
- United Way of Union County
- Catholic Community Services
- NJ Department of Labor, Employment Service
- NJ Dept. of Labor, Unemployment Insurance
- Board of Education
- NJ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Division on Aging (Title V of the Older Americans Act)
- Union County College
- Union County Vocational and Technical Schools
- Union County Division of Social Services
- Union County Division on Planning
- Union County Dept. of Economic Development
- NJ Dept. of Military and Veterans' Affairs

Additional Partners in Union County's One-Stop System are:

- Youth Services Commission
- Community access Unlimited
- PROCEED, Inc.
- Community Health Law Project
- Community Coordinated Child Care
- Union County HIV Consortium
- Urban League of Union County
- Division of Youth and Family Services
- Occupational Center of Union County
- Elizabeth Development Company
- Union County Economic Development Corporation
- Union County Regional Office for the Commission of the Blind

New Jersey is in the process of developing procedures for developing performance measures, approving training providers, and maintaining the overall system. As per preliminary state guidelines, the WIB will be responsible for the initial review of vendors and programs offered in the county. The vendors will complete an application for the WIB to review for completeness, demand occupation status, and fulfillment of state-established criteria. The County will continue to utilize a standard RFP process to identify training providers. The program description of the RFP will be evaluated based on economic and program demand, availability of funds, the quality of training proposed, cost of program in relation to program parameters, appropriateness of site location, and projected performance/placement levels.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

Staff Development and Program Integration

Under the State of New Jersey's Five Year Strategic Plan, it is stated that "The Vision of the One-Stop Career System is to provide comprehensive services in a seamless, integrated and efficient manner to both employers and job seekers". The system provided by the Union County Division of Employment and Training is designed to provide that seamless and integrated service. The collaboration of partners as stated previously, states how the Division has and will continue to provide services with and through those agencies. It is anticipated that continuous improvement of the One-Stop System will be achieved through extensive capacity building, collaborating and team building among clients, employers, and training programs.

The key to success is the capacity building that is built into the One-Stop Operating System (OSOS). As the lead Operator, the Division intends to undertake an intensive cross training program that will be offered on a regular basis. Cross training and education of the Division's and partner's staff is important in order to effectively and efficiently provide services quickly to every customer walking through the door. Staff will be trained in the provision of guidance in customer self-service, and services such as Core Services, Registration and Orientation, Career Assessment, Placement Assistance, Career Counseling, Support Services, Follow-up, Intensive Services, Case Management, Specialized Assessment, Referral to Training, and Career Planning.

Capacity Building

Administrative and line staff from the Division of Employment and Training have attended several trainings, seminars and conferences relative to the implementation of WIA. This includes representation at the SETC's pilot project through the Heldrich Center for One-Stops, US DOL WIA conferences in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington DC, NJ DOL One-Stop Technical Assistance Program, and ETI One-Stop Session. Training scheduled prior to the July 1st implementation date include *"Creating a Customer First Culture"* which addresses how to treat customers with respect, adapt to the diversity of customers, and transform one's mindset to provide customer focused and driven services.

A clear integration strategy of services will be facilitated through a time sharing/co-location of partners within the One-Stop Career Centers. The time sharing/co-location of partners will be dictated and agreed upon in the MOU agreements. This process is not only critical to the streamlining of services, but is additionally essential for the provision of accurate counseling and guidance within the One-Stop sites.

Services will be provided at the two One-Stop sites between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., and morning half-day services offered on Saturdays, twice per month. The extended daily hours and Saturday mornings capture those small employers who may not have the time to leave their place of business during the weekdays, and job seekers who require the flexibility.

The Division of Employment and Training will have a Resource Media Room (RMR) at each physical one-stop location. The RMR would serve two purposes; to provide an area where job seekers and employers can access various categories of informational services, and to have Labor Market Information directly linked to the Union County Labor Market. Informational services would include: a) electronic self-service (NJPIN), b) on-site non mediated services, with the customers assisting themselves and c) mediated services, i.e. the customer is provided services through a Resource Media Room staff person. The Labor Market Information would come directly from the Union County Department of Economic Development. This Department would also be encouraged to provide bi-monthly seminars/workshops to the small employer. The seminars/workshops will be held on weekends to allow for increased attendance and cover areas of concern that have been determined through employer surveys provided in the One-Stop Operating Center. This procedure will strengthen the marketing of the Union County OSOS system with Labor Market Area employers.

HOW THE ONE-STOP SYSTEM WILL RESPOND TO ANTICIPATED NEEDS OF CUSTOMERS

The Division of Employment and Training will utilize all of the existing County resources such as: demographics, economic development and community resources to identify the needs of job-seekers and employers. As the One-Stop Operator, the Division would also utilize customer service surveys from customers to ascertain the perception of local job applicants in developing the strategy and activities that will address these perceptions.

The Division of Employment and Training will use some of its previous marketing experience to reach out to both employers and job seekers. Planned workshops for employers and job seekers will be offered on a variety of topics through the Union County Department of Economic Development. Public information and sharing sessions will be used to keep the public informed and aware of what is happening in the One-Stop System. This will be accomplished through the use of brochures, flyers, quarterly and annual reports and public forums.

A customer flow chart for adult job seekers in the One-Stop is attached as *Appendix G*.

Core and Non-Core Services

The following descriptions indicate how the Union County OSOS intends to implement the core and non-core services within the system to ultimately reduce unemployment in Union County.

Core Services

1. Entered Employment Rate: Those individuals entering unsubsidized employment.
Implementation of Services:
 - Staff follow-up of virtual customer self-service relative to obtaining employment
 - Use of UI data base to determine employment
 - Accurate career counseling of customer with a service strategy that pinpoints skills needed to access employment
 - Staff follow-up of data from education programs and employment and training providers
 - Staff follow-up will be implemented at all levels of OSOS services. That is, job seekers coming into the Center will be followed-up relative to employment obtained in the Core Service Component, the Intensive Service Component and in the Training Service Component.
2. Annual Service Gain: The sum of wages earned in a full four quarter following enrolling in, or receipt of OSOS service followed by employment.
 - UI wage data may be used to determine the gain
 - Accurate assessment of customer skills and abilities by One-Stop staff will provide the proper job placement or enrollment in a training program that will lead to enhanced self-sufficiency.
3. Employment Retention: The average duration in the labor market upon entering unsubsidized employment.
 - Law mandates that retention is defined as one year. Staff assigned to retention will provide follow-up on a regular basis to adequately identify any problems the customer is having in the workforce. In addition, the customer will be encouraged to return to the OSOS to seek out emergency assistance, if required, i.e. childcare, mental health, transportation, etc. The One-Stop Center will be promoted a resource to enhance self-sufficiency.
4. Post-Employment Ratio of Self-Sufficiency: The ratio of average annual (earnings) based on a national level.
 - UI wage data will be used as an indicator to determine this information.
 - The OSOS will be used to encourage customers to return and identify the advantages that might exist for new opportunities in the labor market.
 - The Resource Media Room will be made available to all customers whether employed or not.
5. Basic Skills Attainment: Those individuals 16 and older who complete a basic skills program that leads to a high school diploma, or a GED, or a certificate of mastery of one or more levels.
 - As a measure of attainment in this area, the Division will utilize pre and post assessment measures. Standard measurements such as the TABE or BOLT assessment instruments will be utilized. Such assessments will be used to provide further detailed career counseling with an end towards occupational skills training which leads to unsubsidized employment.
6. Occupational Skill Attainment: This core provides for the number of customers completing an occupational skill training with documentation, such as a credential, a certification, a license, a degree, or a completed apprenticeship which will lead towards employment.
 - As in the previous core, this is considered critical to the accomplishment of service through the one stop system by measuring the success of the customer being effectively placed in a proper career goal. This core will be measured as a positive performance for the OSOS when unsubsidized employment is attained based on the service they have been given.
7. Transition Success Rate: This core measures those customer completing a basic skill program, or an occupational skill program which would lead to either further educational training and/or employment.

- The One-Stop operating system measures its success through the services given to the customer which allows the customer to attend school without having to worry about the social services needed. A full assessment of services needed by the customer will be made prior to the enrollment of the customer into an activity. One-Stop staff dedicated to customer follow-up will practice preventive resources designed to detect any abhorrent behavior in terms of counseling and guidance and will be initiated to keep the customer focused on their previously determined goals.
- 8. Job Opening Fill Rate: The number of Job seekers placed job opening that were taken through job orders from employers seeking assistance in the one stop operating system.
 - One-Stop staff will provide services to employers by matching job seekers with those workforce positions for which employers have given job orders. Matching job seekers with the correct job skills that an employer is seeking is a skill most job counselors possess. However to enhance the credibility of this employer service, in-house capacity building will be planned on a continual basis to make sure the needs of both the employer and the job seeker are met.
- 9. Customer Satisfaction: An indication of how well the services are provided to the employer and the job seeker.
 - Some documents indicate there is a third customer to be measured here, and that customer is the staff, (at all levels) of the One-Stop Career Center. Customer satisfaction surveys have been developed to provide an indication on how well and to what degree services have been provided to all customers coming through the system. These surveys have been qualified in order that they may be measured.

Non Core Services

- 10. Employment Rate: Those customers who received a service through the One-Stop and obtained unsubsidized employment or was currently employed while receiving a service through the one and need the service to retain their employment.
 - Implementation of Services:*
 - The success rate for this service within the one-stop will depend upon retention/follow-up services that staff will provide. Additionally, the one-stop staff will have the responsibility of making sure that support services are made available.
- 11. Starting Wage at Entered Employment: The average hourly wage at the time of entering employment.
 - This is another follow-up activity utilized to obtain information on starting wages. In order to meet this goal, full access to the information and services provided by the system will be made available to the job seeker. This provision will give them an opportunity to make an intelligent decision relative to various industry entry level wages as to his/her ability and skill levels.
- 12. Reduction/Closure of TANF Grant: Welfare recipient's reduction or closure of grant due to accessing unsubsidized employment.
 - A key partner of the One-Stop will be the Division of Social Services. Presently there are three major welfare grants serving TANF clients. The One-Stop will continue to give comprehensive and all inclusive services to Welfare clients as they are given job search, employment training and/or placement services. Multi-disciplinary teams will continue to provide services to these clients in a one-stop environment.

Other Services

- 13. Reduction of Benefit duration
- 14. Participation Equity Rate
- 15. Diversity of Occupations
- 16. Information/Service Access compared to Community
- 17. Information/Service Accessed/Received by Job Seeker

Implementation of Services:

- All the non-core services listed will be provided through the One-Stop Operating System by insuring that the system provides access to information about all current and future employment within the local Labor Market area. A "Customers Bill of Rights" as encouraged through the New Jersey Strategic Plan will be initiated for the customer to make him aware of any and all services through the Union County One-Stop Operating System. Full access to WNJPIN will be made available to both the job seeker and the employer. In addition, employers will be given current and future Labor Market information. A full cadre of services will be made available to the employer concerning Federal and State employment laws, and as stated above seminar/workshops will be set-up through the Union County Department of Economic Development to assist employers on an ongoing basis.

Core Performance Indicators:

Employer customers: consistency, accuracy/timeliness, availability, courteousness, accessibility, credibility, communication, cost effectiveness, and single Point of Contact (POC).

Job seeker customers: variety and choices, timeliness/accuracy, accessibility, competence, communication, responsiveness, ease of use, resources, courtesy, empathy (diversity).

Empowerment of Customers

The One-Stop Operating System is predicated strictly on customer choice. It is a customer driven system. The US DOL considers it a "customer-focused system": The system proposed here by the Union County Division of Employment and Training will enable the customers to effectively obtain any information and services they may need all at one site ('one-stop'). The customers will be able to access information/services at one "local" stop within their area of operation or neighborhood. Job seekers will be able to access:

- Preliminary assessment of their skill levels, their abilities, in addition to any support services (transportation, childcare, etc.) that they may need.
- The availability of any employment-related services, and/or information on local education and training service providers.
- Job search, career counseling and placement services will be available.
- Updated labor market information, both broad based and regional that will indicate job vacancies, or jobs that are currently in demand.

Employers will be able to access a single Point of Contact (POC) to receive and provide information about their current and future needs, including information in respect to new hires, employee concerns, or business needs.

Through customer empowerment there will be a system in place to allow customer choice of training through an "Individual Training Accounts" (ITA) process. The Division has over the years utilized a contract based training service system. Now that system is being streamlined into a locally (Union County) administered ITA system. Through a vouchering process, the job seeker will have the ability to purchase their training under a customer choice system. The Division will work with the State of New Jersey's proposed system of identifying and certifying creditable service providers to whom our customers may purchase the training they desire. To make sure that there is proper outcome of provider training and education programs, the Union County One Stop Operating System will provide entry and exit services of all programs attended by trainees. These surveys have already been developed in draft form and will be quantified through the answers, which will allow for a measure of performance of each training provider. In addition, the New Jersey Five Year Strategic Plan has specific information related to surveys of customers and training providers which the Division will fully implement as determined through state mandate.

SECTION 8: WIA PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

As described by the New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission: The State, Workforce Investment Board, and local Chief Elected Official will be jointly accountable for the performance of the workforce system. Outcomes will be measured statewide and locally by a standard set of performance indicators and the customer satisfaction level of employers and individuals seeking and receiving services.

BASELINE PERFORMANCE STANDARD DEVELOPMENT

Outcome standards are those prescribed by WIA, training standards are derived from the education community, and One-Stop process standards will be derived from the One-Stop protocols. WIA requires four core performance indicators: entry into unsubsidized employment; retention after six months; earnings after six months; and attainment of a recognized credential (such as a license or certification). Customer satisfaction indicators for employers and participants will also be developed and collected to know whether or not these customers are satisfied

States can impose on localities other performance measures in addition to the ones mandated in the law. The local WIB will have to negotiate with the State to set acceptable levels of performance. Training providers will negotiate with the State to set acceptable levels of performance. Training providers will be held accountable for their services and the State will establish guidelines on sanctions and incentive awards. The mandated performance indicators will be used to evaluate the three major populations: adults, dislocated workers, and youth. An assessment of customer satisfaction with the One-Stop system (employers and clients) will be an additional measure of performance. Performance standards are relatively complex and the State has not established goals or guidelines.

Initially, performance information on training providers will be based on historical data. Performance standards will be developed over time, representing common accepted standards for all One-Stop partners, and performance levels will be developed taking into account the specific economic, demographic and other characteristics of the populations to be served. Information from administrative databases for the Employment Services (including the Workforce Development Partnership Program Management Information System), JTPA, Vocational Rehabilitation, the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Unemployment Insurance (UI), the Division of Family Development (DFD), School-to-Careers, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and UI Wage Records will be combined with survey results for customer satisfaction (both employers and training participants) to determine appropriate baseline standards for the One-Stop system.

KEY INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

CORE Services

1. Entered Employment Rate:

The percent of people who got a job during or the quarter after receiving workforce development services excluding people who are in training or education services who did not get a job and people who maintain their current job.

2. Annual Earnings Gains:

The 12 month earnings of people who got a job as a result of receiving workforce development services, minus any earnings they may have had during the 12 months before receiving workforce development services.

3. Employment Retention:

The percent of people who got a job and remained employed up to one year as a result of receiving workforce development services.

4. Post Employment Ratio of Self-Sufficiency:

The 12 month earnings of a person who got a job after receiving workforce development services compared to the average annual cost-of-living for a family of 3 who live in the same area.

5. Basic Skills Attainment:

The percent of people 16 and older who complete basic skills training that leads to or includes graduating from High School or getting a GED as a result of their participation in workforce development services.

6. Occupational Skill Attainment:

The percent of people 16 and older who get a College degree, complete an occupational or advanced job skill training program or enter an apprenticeship program as a result of their participation in workforce development services.

7. Transition Success Rate:

The percent of people who complete basic or occupational skill training and go on to employment or an advanced level of education/training or both as a result of their participation in workforce development services.

8. Job Opening Fill Rate:

The percent of workforce development system job openings filled by workforce development system applicants.

9. Customer Satisfaction:

The degree to which customers are satisfied with the services provided by the workforce development system.

OTHER MEASURES OF SUCCESSNON-CORE

10. Employment Rate:

The percent of people who received any workforce development service during the quarter who got or kept a job.

11. Starting Wage at Entered Employment:

The average starting hourly wage of people who were seeking first, new or better jobs and got a job during or after receiving workforce development services.

12. Reduction or Closure of TANF Grant:

The percent of people whose welfare payments are reduced or cases closed as a result of getting a job through assistance from the workforce development system.

13. Reduction of Benefit Duration:

The average length of time people who receive additional workforce development services remain on unemployment insurance benefits compared to everyone who receives unemployment insurance benefits

14. Participation Equity Rate:

Percent of people in target groups such as unemployed workers, people on welfare, Blacks, Hispanics, older workers, UI recipients, people with disabilities, etc., who receive workforce development services in a given area.

15. Diversity of Occupations:

To what degree do job openings listed and occupations of job seekers in the local workforce development system reflect the entire range of jobs and occupations in the local job market.

16. Information Service Access Compared to Community:

The number and type of workforce development services available through a local One-Stop Center compared to all workforce development services available in the community.

17. Information/Services Accessed/Received by Job Seeker and Customers:

The number of people looking for a job or training who access information or services by each of the following methods: 1) from computers; 2) at a One-Stop center without any help from staff; or 3) one-on-one or in a group setting with the help of staff.

18. Cycle Time to First Service:

The number of days it takes for a person to receive service from the day a person first identifies a need for service to workforce development staff.

DEVELOPMENTALNON-CORE

19. Information/Service Access Compared to Fixed Federal List:

The number of programs and services available at a One-Stop Center compared to a list of the major federal workforce development programs and services.

20. Employers Using WDS:

The percent of employers using workforce development services at least once and the percent using workforce development services more than once.

21. Administrative Data Shared Among Agencies:

The percent of individual agencies and programs in a State's workforce development system that can access each other's program data by computer.

22. ROI – Return on Investment::

The total annual increase in earnings and decrease in welfare for all people who received a workforce development service divided by the total cost of the program.

23. Time to Positive Outcome by Service Cluster:

The amount of time it takes people to get a job, achieve self-sufficiency, obtain basic or advanced skills, or go on to a higher level of skills training/ education from the time they completed or left workforce development services.

24. System Penetration Rate:

The percent of people who need a specific workforce development service who actually receive it.

One-Stop Commitment to Customer Driven Services

It is agreed that the One-Stop Delivery System will strive to achieve the following standard of quality service for its customers, employees, and partners.

A. All customers will receive:

1. Prompt and courteous service from the staff.
2. The service(s) designed to assist customers in achieving their educational and/or job placement goals.

B. All employees can expect:

1. To work in a safe and professional environment.
2. Receive the best tools to achieve the desired outcome for their customers.
3. To be fairly compensated for their services.

C. All partners will:

1. Deliver high quality services through the Career Center.
2. Place a minimum of 70% of their customers in jobs with family sustaining wages.
3. Customers will be placed in jobs for a minimum of 180 days. [Sec. 136 (b)(2)(A)]

Adults

Adults/Dislocated Workers who receive core, intensive and training services beyond information/self-help services are "registered" customers. This includes staff-assisted job search and placement assistance, career counseling, staff-assisted job referrals, and job development services.

Preliminary standards proposed encompass Entered Employment Rate, Employment Retention Rate, Adult Earnings Change in 6 Months, Dislocated Worker Earnings Replacement Rate, and Adult and Dislocated Worker Employment and Credential Rate.

Adult and Dislocated Worker Entered Employment Rate

Of adults not employed at registration:

Number of Adults/Dislocated Workers who enter employment in Qtr. after exit divided by the number of Adults/Dislocated Workers who exit during the reporting period

Adult and Dislocated Worker Employment Retention Rate

Number of Adults/Dislocated Workers employed in 1st Qtr. after exit and in 3rd Qtr. after exit divided by the number of Adults/Dislocated Workers who were employed in 1st Qtr. after exit

Adult Earnings Change in 6 Months

Of those employed in 1st Quarter after exit:

[Total post-program earnings (earnings in Qtr. 2 + Qtr. 3 after exit)] minus [Pre-program earnings (total earnings in Qtr. 2 + 3 prior to registration)] divided by the number of Adults who exit during the Quarter

Dislocated Worker Earnings Replacement Rate

Of those employed in 1st Quarter after exit:

Total post-program earnings (earnings in Qtr. 2 + Qtr. 3 after exit) divided by the pre-dislocation earnings (earnings in Qtrs. 2 + 3 prior to dislocation)*

*If dislocation date is after registration, Qtrs. 2 + 3 prior to registration will be used

Adult and Dislocated Worker Employment and Credential Rate

Of Adults/Dislocated Workers enrolled in training:

Number of Adults/Dislocated Workers who were employed in 1st Qtr. after exit and received credential by the end of 3rd Qtr. after exit divided by the number of Adults/Dislocated Workers who exit during the Qtr.

Youth

All youth who receive WIA services are considered "registered". Under WIA there are seven required core performance measures for youth. Four of these measures apply to older youth (ages 19-21): entered employment, retention in employment, earnings change, and credential attainment rate. The other three measures apply to younger youth (ages 14-18): skill attainment rate, diploma and equivalent attainment rate, and retention rate (refers to retention in employment, post secondary education, military, qualified apprenticeship, or advanced training). The core performance measures for youth have been defined to reflect the comprehensive services, linkages between summer activities to academic and occupational learning, flexibility of program design, and continuum of services that are called for under the WIA.

Follow-up services will be offered to all youth for a period of 12 months beyond their participation in program. The youth will stay connected through ongoing activities in such areas as: career planning, supportive services, and comprehensive guidance and counseling.

The YIC will set-up a selection process for providers of services which will determine the effectiveness of each program, offer a program structure and self-direction. Performance measurements will be established. They will follow the "PEPNet" model of self assessment and peer review of programs.

The YIC will develop a set of expectation standards for the results of programs and benchmark measurements. The Core Performance Measures for older youth ages 19-21 include:

- Older Youth Entered Employment Rate
- Older Youth Employment Retention Rate at Six Months
- Older Youth Average Earnings Change in Six Months
- Older Youth Employment and Credential Rate

Younger Youth ages 14-18 Core Performance Measures:

- Skill Attainment Rate
 - Basic skills
 - Work readiness skills
 - Occupational skills
- Diploma or Equivalency Attainment Rate
- Retention Rate

WIA Performance Requirements

The core performance measures for youth have been defined to reflect the comprehensive services, linkages between summer activities to academic and occupational learning, flexibility of program design, and continuum of services that are called for under the WIA. The following guidelines have been offered as a preliminary model, and have not been finalized at this submission.

Older Youth (age 19-21) Core Performance Measures

Older Youth Entered Employment Rate

Of those who are not employed at registration and do not move on to post-secondary education or advanced training: Number of older youth who have entered employment by the end of the first quarter after exit divided by the number of older youth who exit during the quarter;

Older Youth Employment Retention Rate at Six Months

Of those who are employed at registration or in the first quarter after exit and who do not move on to post-secondary education or advanced training: Number of older youth who are employed in third quarter after exit divided by the number of older youth who exit during the quarter;

Older Youth Average Earnings Change in Six Months

Of those who are employed at registration or in the first quarter after exit and who do not move on to post-secondary education or advanced training: Total post-program earnings (earnings in quarter 2 + quarter 3 after exit) minus pre-program earnings (earnings in quarter 2 + quarter 3 prior to registration) divided by the number of older youth who exit during the quarter;

Older Youth Employment and Credential Rate

Number of older youth who are in employment or post-secondary education or advanced training by the end of the first quarter after exit and received a credential by the end of the third quarter after exit divided by the number of older youth who exited during the quarter.

Younger Youth (age 14-18) Core Performance Measures

Skill Attainment Rate

Total number of basic skills goals attained by younger youth plus number of work readiness skills goals attained by younger youth plus number of occupational skills goals attained by younger youth divided by the total number of basic skills goals plus the number of work readiness skills plus the number of occupational skills goals;

Diploma or Equivalency Attainment Rate

Of those who register without a diploma or equivalent: Number of younger youth who attained secondary school diploma or equivalent during the quarter divided by the number of younger youth who did not attain a diploma or equivalent and who exited during the quarter (except those still in secondary school) plus younger youth who have attained a diploma or equivalent during the quarter;

Retention Rate

Number of younger youth found in one of the following in the third quarter following exit: post secondary education, advanced training, employment, military service, or qualified apprenticeships divided by the number of younger youth who exited during the quarter (except those still in secondary school).

How to Determine Appropriate Youth Measures for Youth

Since there are two sets of measures within the youth funding stream, the following rule applies for those served by the youth funding stream: a youth must be included in the set of measures that applies based on their age at registration (i.e. if a youth is between the ages of 14 and 18 at registration, they will be included in the younger youth measures and a youth between the ages of 19-21 at registration will be included in the older youth measures) regardless of how old the participant is at exit.

Linkages to Partner Services

To encourage integration of services across programs (WIA Title I funded and non-WIA Title I funded) and recognize shared contributions toward outcomes, the following strategy for tracking and reporting on the core measures across programs will be used. WIA Title I funded youth programs can count participants who receive

services provided by non-WIA Title I funded school-to-work (i.e., schools) and one-stop partner programs in the WIA core measures as long as the individual has been registered for WIA Title I youth services (all individuals receiving youth services will be registered) and:

- a) is concurrently receiving WIA Title I funded youth services while receiving partner services;
- b) is scheduled to receive WIA Title I funded youth services at a future date while receiving partner services or upon exit of the partner services; or
- c) moves to partner services, and can be tracked while receiving and upon exit of partner services.

Tracking youth across WIA Title I and non-WIA Title I programs can be more effectively implemented in communities with strong school-to-work partnerships linking schools to workforce investment services.

When to Count Outcomes

All of the core measures for youth are assessed at the time a youth exits except the younger youth skill attainment rate. For that measure, positive outcomes are recorded as they occur. The youth has one year from the anniversary of the date the goal was set to achieve the goal.

For the exit based measures, outcomes are determined when the individual leaves the program (i.e. exit). The Department developed a definition of "exiter" to determine when to count an individual in a specified reporting period.

Exiter is defined as: a customer who has an inactivation or termination date within the quarter (hard exit date) or who does not receive any WIA-funded or non-WIA funded partner service for 90 days and is not scheduled for future services except follow-up services (soft exit date). Participants may have a gap in service greater than 90 days and be excluded from the core measures due to health/medical conditions and delays before training begins. Once a participant has not received any WIA service for 90 days except follow-up services and there are no future services scheduled (or there is no planned gap in service), then that participant has exited WIA for the purposes of measurement in the exit based measures.

Setting Appropriate Goal(s)

Within the skill attainment rate, three types of skills are being assessed within this one measure: basic skills, work readiness skills, and/or occupational skills. All younger youth who are determined basic skills deficient (defined as an individual who has English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level on a generally accepted standardized test or a comparable score on a criterion-referenced test) must have a basic skills goal that will be held accountable to in the skill attainment rate. In addition to that basic skills goal, the participant may also have a work readiness goal and/or an occupational skills goal. If the participant is not basic skills deficient and therefore does not have a basic skills goal, the individual must have a work readiness and/or an occupational skills goal if they are an in-school youth. If the participant is an out of school youth (not in need of basic skills), it is a local option whether or not a work readiness skills goal and/or an occupational skills goal is necessary. In the example of a younger youth who only participates in the summer activity, exits, and returns to secondary school following the summer activity, if that participant is not deemed to be basic skills deficient, then a work readiness skills goal would be most appropriate for that youth. This work readiness skills goal could be tied to their summer youth experience in order to make it feasible to attain such a goal. If the participant is basic skills deficient, they must have a basic skills goal and it would be more appropriate to continue serving such a participant beyond their summer experience.

Timing of Skill Attainment Measure

For those youth who will have skill attainment goals (see discussion above), at least one goal must be set upon initial assessment of the participant. Once a goal is set, the participant has up to one year to achieve each goal set. Attainment of a goal is counted as it is achieved (i.e. goal attainment counted in the quarter in which the goal was achieved). If the goal is not achieved by the one year anniversary of the dates the goal was set, the failure is counted in the quarter of the anniversary date. New goals may be set as initial goals are achieved; however, each participant is allowed only three goal attainments each year. Participants may have any combination of the three types of skill goals (three skill goals in the same category, two skill goals in one category and one skill goal in another, or one skill goal in each category, etc.).

Follow-Up

Exit surveys will be conducted on employers that have been in the system and out, on youth that have been in the system and are leaving, on adults that have been in the system and leaving, and dislocated workers that have been in the system and leaving for information on core, intensive and training services. Rather than collecting information through a follow-up survey on wages, placement, retention and earnings increases, the Unemployment Insurance wage records and the Wage Record Interchange System will, at some time, be used to evaluate outcomes for the measures. This stage of the process will present information based on aggregate data so that confidentiality is maintained. As these evaluations are conducted, program administrators will be able to determine relative effectiveness of programs for selected populations.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Methods of obtaining customer satisfaction information will consist of various surveys given to all customers: job seekers, employers and vendors. As much as possible, customer satisfaction will focus on quantifiable indicator measures for service sets such as: information, labor exchange, training, supportive services, human resources and professional development, work environment, management and leadership, and continuous improvement efforts. Examples of Indicator measures include the amount of time spent in a waiting room, number of appointments until services were provided, responsiveness, consistency, availability, communication, information, and coordination. This will provide a sound basis for continuous improvement.

Additional measures, permitted under WIA to supplement the core measures, are referred to as Governor's Measures. The Governor's Measures refer to each of the service categories (core, intensive, and training services) and will be developed during the first full year of WIA, and implemented based on a broad consensus of One-Stop partners. Negotiated WIA standards for WIA funded programs will be included in an April update.

Union County has drafted a One-Stop Customer Satisfaction Survey to collect data after the initial customer contact, during the exit interview, and during a routine follow-up. Employer's satisfaction is also measured after the initial contact. The survey asks customers to rate their level of satisfaction on a scale of 1-10 with 1 representing "very dissatisfied" and 10 "very satisfied". The following breaks down what will be rated:

- Satisfaction with services.
- Services meeting expectations.
- Satisfaction with staff in relation to the courtesy, attitude and information they provided.
- Overall satisfaction of training, competency of trainers, placement.
- Training in relation to job search, and ability to perform in the job.
- Other services.

STANDARDS REVIEW

Performance levels will be negotiated annually between the Governor and the local partnership of the Workforce Investment Board and the chief local elected official. It is important to note that a local area's performance standards extend beyond programs funded by the Workforce Investment Act and now include all programs and services in the One-Stop system. Workforce Investment Boards are responsible for overseeing performance.

Since New Jersey is committed to continuous improvement, the standards will be reviewed at least yearly and new targets will be established because it is a promising method of assuring good services to our citizens. In instances where less than satisfactory performance has been attained, corrective action plans will be required and a more intensive local and state monitoring schedule will be established as part of the corrective action.

SECTION 9: CONCLUSION

The information presented in this Plan provides the framework for Union County's workforce system. It brought together a variety of existing County documents, studies and plans to develop a holistic picture of Union County's service delivery system. The Union County WIB and CEO will utilize allocated resources to meet the identified needs of both the employer and job seeker through its One Stop System. This document will continue to evolve so as to remain current and relevant as changes in demographics, trends, needs, and available resources occur.

As a comprehensive document, Union County's Local Unified Workforce Plan will be shared with County departments, service providers, and businesses. It is expected to serve as a blueprint for overall economic development as well as a resource to integrate and leverage funding and guide services in Union County.

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