

Section X. EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The Union County Workforce Development Board and American Job Center (AJC) works with many postsecondary education institutions including Union County College, Kean University, and many proprietary private training schools.

The strengths of the postsecondary programs, particularly related to the needs of individuals with barriers, include the availability of Adult Education services which provide high school equivalency preparation and examination as well as career and technical education courses.

The Union County Workforce System engages employers to define the needs of their businesses and industries and how these relate to the available training programs in the county. It has been a challenge for the Career Coaches in the AJC to assist individuals that are very low skilled (those with an educational assessment at or below the 5th grade level). The education and skill training needs for this population are addressed by short-term contextualized learning programs that lead to entry-level employment opportunities.

The WDB is currently working with Union County College to implement a Workplace Literacy program that addresses these needs. The College will assist individuals that need their High School Equivalency or remediation needed to enter post-secondary or vocational training programs.

- **GED/ESL** is delivered through a partnership between the Workforce Innovation Business Centers and Union County College. This service makes it possible for job seekers to benefit from GED prep, ESL, and college-readiness courses, as well as occupational training programs and degree programs.

The Center refers all students to the College's Division of Continuing Education and Workforce Development (CEWD) for guidance in occupational training programs, leading to nationally and industry-recognized certifications within career pathways geared toward family-sustaining wages.

- **Basic career services** include access to computers and guidance for job search, invitations to career information sessions related to career pathways in-demand sectors, and recruitment events, career exploration and skills assessment and résumé building. Staff members assess an individual's needs and eligibility for services and connect them with the appropriate job search, assessment and/or skill-building activities, training programs, job fairs and other recruitment events based on their interests and skills.
- **Career Pathways.** Career Pathways have become the foundation for all occupational training programs offered at the College. Customers and students are provided with career exploration guidance and access to skills and aptitude assessment tools and interest inventories. The Workforce Innovation Business Center staff and Career Coach will work with the trainee to develop an education

and employability plan that aligns with a career pathway starting from today and continuing with a long term plan.

- **Assessment & Career Coaching.** Union County residents seeking employment assistance will receive individualized job counseling services. Those looking for immediate employment will be guided on résumé development and connected with recruitment events and job search tools. Those who qualify for more intensive services will be referred to career coaches who will assist them in accessing the extensive array of leveraged educational and occupational training programs provided through the College. The Workforce Innovation Business Center's connection and integration with Union County College make it possible to job seekers to benefit from GED prep, ESL, and college-readiness courses, as well as occupational training programs and degree programs.
- **IT – Advanced Manufacturing.** The Union County WDB with the American Job Center will be working on developing partnerships with employers in areas such as IT and Advanced Manufacturing, as well as the possibility of work-based training models that allow for entry points across all steps of the career pathways.

S-27 Enhance educational coordination to better address individuals in obtaining new skills and employment. We will continue to stretch our funding and leverage the funding of our Educational Partners. (Aligned with Goal 1- Career Pathways / Credential and aligned with Goal 2- American Job Center Integration)

Progress Update

Front-line workers received training in areas relevant to stretching funding and leveraging funding of our partners. Training included use of co-enrollment, stackable credential planning, and attainment. Additionally, the American Job Center developed a workforce-wide resource directory describing all sources of funding and eligibility related to each funding source.

Career-Pathway training was provided last year helping career coaches more effectively guide job seekers into career paths involving a multitude of sequenced and simultaneous activities that over time will provide not only employment but the attainment of stackable credentials.