

## SECTION I. STRATEGIC PLANNING ELEMENTS

### Analysis of the Local and Regional Economic Conditions

- An analysis of the regional economic conditions
- An analysis of the workforce in the region and the knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the employers in the region

### Regional Economic Conditions

Union County is among the most economically and culturally diverse counties in New Jersey. It houses a large array of industries, lead among them are healthcare, pharmaceuticals, transportation and logistics, educational services, and construction. These industries, which are anticipated to figure strongly with other clusters in the County's future as discussed below, currently engage close to a quarter million workers in jobs accounting for nearly 6% of all jobs across the State.

Located in the Northeastern corner of the State, the County is close to New York City, borders the City of Newark in Essex County and its busy airport and rail system, is directly accessible by major highways along the Northeast corridor, and operates in its City of Elizabeth a large container port on the Arthur Kill River.

**Growing Urban & Diverse Community.** Counting Union's neighboring counties of Essex, Middlesex, Morris, and Somerset, the region is highly urbanized and densely populated, with a high and constant influx of immigrants and a fast-growing community (Union's growth was at 0.5% in 2014-2015 and a cumulative 3.6% rate of increase since 2010) and is now projected to jump by 6.4% through 2024 and another 5.4% from 2024 through 2034.

Figure 1

#### Total Population by County/State: New Jersey 2014 – 2034<sup>1</sup>

Local Workforce Development Areas	Workforce Planning Region	2014	2024	2034	Change: 2014-2024		Change: 2024-2034	
					Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Union County	North	552,900	588,300	620,000	35,400	6.4%	31,700	5.4%
<b>New Jersey</b>	State	8,938,200	9,338,000	9,733,400	399,800	4.5%	395,400	4.2%

<sup>1</sup>Source- NJLWD 2014-2034 Population Estimates, New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development Office of Research and Information

### A. Demographic Considerations:

WIOA targets employment and training services for those jobseekers and workers most in need. Union County will ensure that priority of service is provided for those struggling. Union County percentage of Hispanic Population in 2014 was 30% compared to the state average of 19.3%. Projections continue to climb from 30% to 32.8% by 2024 and to 35% by 2034.

Statistics for the elderly population show figures in Union County running slightly lower than the state average and project an increase of 20,000 through 2024 and another 16,800 through 2034. Twenty-three percent of Union County residents belong to the Black/African American group, as shown by current census data and longer-term 2024 and 2034 projections.

Figure 2

**Total Population by County/State: Hispanic Population and Over 2014 – 2034**

Workforce Planning Region	2014	2024	2034	Change: 2014-2024		Change: 2024-2034		% of Hispanic Population		
				Number	Percent	Number	Percent	2014	2024	2034
Union County	166,000	192,800	217,200	26,800	16.1%	24,400	12.7%	30.0%	32.8%	35.0%
State	1,729,200	2,001,500	2,268,600	272,300	15.7%	267,100	13.3%	19.3%	21.4%	23.3%

Figure 3

**Total Population by County/State: 65 Years and Over 2014 – 2034**

Workforce Planning Region	2014	2024	2034	Change: 2014-2024		Change: 2024-2034		% of Elderly Population		
				Number	Percent	Number	Percent	2014	2024	2034
Union County	72,100	92,100	108,900	20,000	27.7%	16,800	18.2%	13.0%	15.7%	17.6%
State	1,313,500	1,681,700	1,944,400	368,200	28.0%	262,700	15.6%	14.7%	18.0%	20.0%

Figure 4

**Total Population by Black or African American Over 2014 – 2034**

Workforce Planning Region	2014	2024	2034	Change: 2014-2024		Change: 2024-2034		% of Black Population		
				Number	Percent	Number	Percent	2014	2024	2034
Union County	129,900	138,300	144,500	8,400	6.5%	6,200	4.5%	23.5%	23.5%	23.3%
State	1,320,800	1,413,700	1,496,200	92,900	7.0%	82,500	5.8%	14.8%	15.1%	15.4%

Figure 5

**Total Population by Asian Over 2014 – 2034**

Workforce Planning Region	2014	2024	2034	Change: 2014-2024		Change: 2024-2034		% of Asian Population		
				Number	Percent	Number	Percent	2014	2024	2034
Union County	29,900	37,500	44,900	7,600	25.4%	7,400	19.7%	5.4%	6.4%	7.2%
State	844,100	989,600	1,133,100	145,400	17.2%	143,500	14.5%	9.4%	10.6%	11.6%

Figures 2-5 Source- NJLWD 2014-2034 Population Estimates, New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development Office of Research and Information

## B. Workforce Challenges

Our focus as outlined in this strategic plan modification is to increase our collaborations with Educational Partners in designing co-enrollment strategies that introduce academic remediation, English proficiency training, along with occupational and soft-skill training.

### Education

On the educational front, our workforce area faces a serious challenge: 62.1% of Union County residents 25 or over have less than an associate's degree and 14.6% have NO High School Degree.

Figure 6

<b>Educational Attainment</b>	<b>Union County</b>	
Less than 9th grade	29,787	8.1%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	23,821	6.5%
No High School Degree	53,608	14.6%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	108,644	29.7%
Some college, no degree	65,255	17.8%
Associate's degree	20,503	5.6%
Bachelor's degree	72,495	19.8%
Graduate or professional degree	45,696	12.5%
<b>Population 25 years and over</b>	<b>366,201</b>	

Figure 6 Source- NJLWD 2014-2034 Population Estimates, New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development Office of Research and Information

### Disability – Northern Region

Union County Workforce System will rely on promising practices to help develop planning, marketing and outreach strategies, partnerships with community groups, training, intake and assessment, and other service delivery methods, to enable job seekers with disabilities to effectively and successfully participate in workforce, training and career pathways programs.

Figure 7

<b>Population</b>	<b>Union County</b>	
Total Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population	540,813	
Total with a Disability	48,370	8.9%
Under 18 years	131,317	
With a disability	4,255	3.2%
18 to 64 years	342,288	
With a disability	22,645	6.6%
65 years and over	67,208	
With a disability	21,470	31.9%

Figure 7 Source- NJLWD 2014-2034 Population Estimates, New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development Office of Research and Information

### Veterans – Union County

Priority of Service policies give certain segments of the population priority over others in terms of employment, training, and placement services under all WIOA-funded programs. Clear preferences extend to military veterans and eligible spouses, including widows and widowers as defined in the statute and regulations.

Figure 8

<b>Population</b>	<b>Union County</b>
Civilian Veterans	13,893

Figure 8 Source- NJLWD 2014-2034 Population Estimates, NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development Office of Research and Information

Figure 9

<b>Veterans by Wartime Service</b>				
<b>763</b>	<b>1,950</b>	<b>4,683</b>	<b>1,359</b>	<b>2,013</b>
WWII	Korea	Vietnam	Gulf (1990s)	Gulf (2001-)

Civilian veterans who served during wartime only  
Figure 9 U.S. Census Bureau (2017)

## Limited English

Throughout this strategic plan, we place high priority on enhancing coordination between our Adult, Youth and Dislocated services and the Title II Family Literacy programming. Union County as noted above, is serving a 30% and growing Hispanic/Latino population (figure 2 above).

Figure 10

Language at Home, Children 5-17				
	Union County		New Jersey	
English only	59.30%	57,089	69.20%	1,009,659
Spanish	31.10%	29,943	19%	276,581
Indo-European	7.2%†	6,969	6%	88,045
Asian/Islander	1.1%†	1,050	3.90%	56,434
Other	1.3%†	1,247	1.9%†	27,716

Figure 11

Language at Home, Adults 18+				
	Union County		New Jersey	
English only	55.60%	240,380	68%	4,775,914
Spanish	28.80%	124,589	16.30%	1,144,883
Indo-European	11.20%	48,313	8.90%	622,658
Asian/Islander	2.9%†	12,644	5.20%	365,148
Other	1.5%†	6,591	1.70%	118,245

Figures 10 & 11 US Census 2017

The charts above, Language at Home, depict disproportionately high levels, 41% children and 44% adults, who speak other than English as their primary language. Thirty-one percent (31%) adults and twenty-nine percent (29%) children of Union County speak Spanish as their primary language at home.

“Working-age Language English Proficient (LEP) adults earn 25 to 40 percent less than their English proficient counterparts. While generally less educated than English proficient adults, most LEP adults have a high school diploma, and 15 percent hold a college degree. LEP workers concentrate in low-paying jobs and different industries than other workers.” Investing in English Skills: The Limited English Proficient Workforce in U.S. Metropolitan Areas, Jill H. Wilson, September 24, 2014

Figure 12

Place of Birth for Foreign-born Population					
17%	12%	4%	0%	66%	1%
Europe	Asia	Africa	Ociana	Latin America	North America

Figure 12 - U.S. Census Bureau (2017)

Figure 13

Population	Union County
Speak English less than "very well"	102,325

Figure 13 Source- NJLWD 2014-2034 Population Estimates, New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development Office of Research and Information

“Given the large number of LEP workers in the United States and the fact that virtually all of the growth in the U.S. labor force over the next four decades is projected to come from immigrants and their children, it is in our collective interest to tackle this challenge head on.” Investing in English Skills: The Limited English Proficient Workforce in U.S. Metropolitan Areas, Jill H. Wilson, September 24, 2014

### C. Labor Force Participation

Projections indicate that by 2024 Union County will realize a disproportionate increase of 32,100 individuals in labor force participation, an 11.5% gain and 6.5% higher than the state-wide average. The increase from 2024 to 2034 continues to rise by another 8.3% (25,900 more at work).

Figure 14

Projections of Civilian Labor Force by County: New Jersey, 2014 to 2034							
	2014	2024	2034	Change: 2014-2024		Change: 2024-2034	
				Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Union	279,100	311,200	337,100	32,100	11.5%	25,900	8.3%
<b>State</b>	<b>4,518,600</b>	<b>4,744,700</b>	<b>5,018,700</b>	<b>226,100</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>274,000</b>	<b>5.8%</b>

Figure 14 Source- NJLWD 2014-2034 Population Estimates, New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development Office of Research and Information

Figure 15

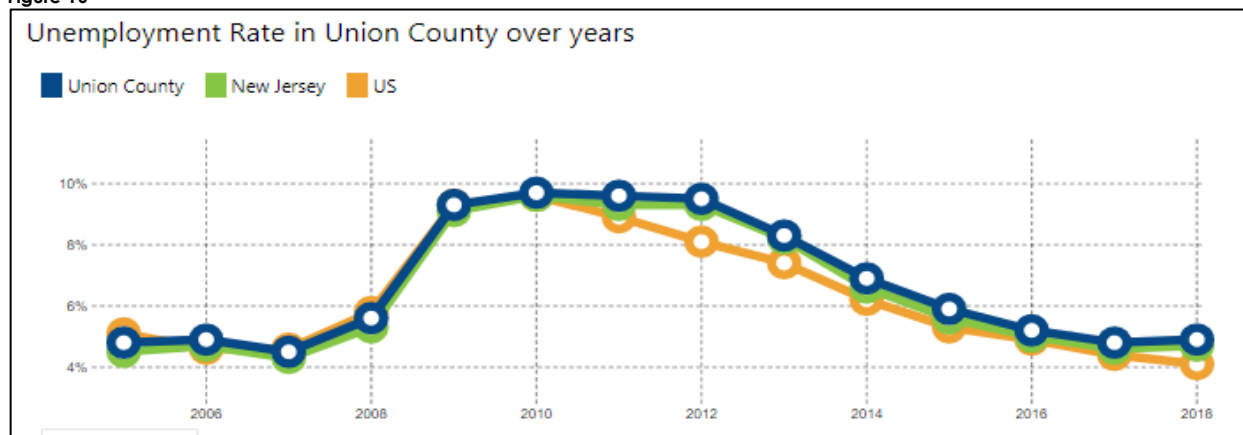
Unemployment Data			
	31-Mar-2017	31-Mar-2019	New Jersey 31-Mar 2019
Union County	4.7%	4.3%	4.1%
Hudson County	4.3%	3.6%	4.1%
Essex County	5.6%	4.9%	4.1%
Morris County	3.6%	3.3%	4.1%
Middlesex County	4.0%	3.5%	4.1%

Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS)

The March 31, 2019 unemployment rate for Union County dropped to 4.3% slightly higher than the State unemployment rate of 4.1%.

Figure 16 below shows the gradual downward cycle from a 2010 high 9.5% unemployment rate.

Figure 16



Civic Dashboards 2019, NYC,NY

### Occupations – Union County and the North Jersey Labor Market

The top five occupations in terms of net employment include: (1) retail salespersons; (2) laborers and freight, stock, and material movers; (3) cashiers; (4) office clerks, general; and (5) registered nurses. Salaries for registered nurses are significantly higher than any of the other top ten occupations, paying an average annual salary of over \$80,000. Office clerks, customer service representatives, and

secretaries and administrative assistants except legal and medical each have average wages above \$15.00 per hour, while the other six top occupations pay at or below \$15.00 per hour on average (based on a 2,000-hour work year).

Figure 17

**Employment By Occupation**  
**Civilian Employment Population**  
**16 Years and Over**

		Northern Region	
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	68,108	\$ 27,200
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, Material Movers	46,310	\$ 27,520
41-2011	Cashiers	46,220	\$ 21,560
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	41,400	\$ 34,010
29-1141	Registered Nurses	38,440	\$ 82,260
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	36,600	\$ 40,040
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Houskeeping	35,420	\$ 30,240
43-5081	Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	34,540	\$ 26,580
43-6014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical	30,040	\$ 40,810
35-3021	Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	29,250	\$ 21,200

Figure 17- NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development  
Occupational Employment Statistics

The top five groups include: (1) office and administrative support occupations; (2) sales and related occupations; (3) transportation and material moving occupations; (4) education, training, and library occupations; and (5) food preparation and serving-related occupations. Each of the top ten occupation groups, except for food preparation and serving related occupations, pay average wages above \$15.00 per hour.

Figure 18

**Employment By Occupational Group**  
**Northern Region 2015**

		Northern Region	
43-000	Office and Administrative Support	351,680	\$ 39,820
41-000	Sales and Related Occupations	215,000	\$ 46,200
53-000	Transportation and Material Moving	164,540	\$ 35,330
25-000	Education, Training and Library	156,880	\$ 58,420
35-000	Food Preparation and Serving-Related	138,130	\$ 25,250
13-000	Business and Financial Operations	128,960	\$ 82,540
11-000	Management	119,810	\$ 148,120
29-000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	109,820	\$ 90,760
51-000	Production	102,270	\$ 37,480
15-000	Computer and Mathematical	76,040	\$ 95,410

Figure 18- NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development  
Occupational Employment Statistics

Collecting and analyzing demand-side employment data occupations and occupational groups, e.g., relating to top industries, should be examined in tandem with collecting and analyzing supply-side employment data. Only then will the full data-driven picture come into focus, allowing for workforce development initiatives to have their greatest possible impact.

Two key takeaways from figures 19 and 20 below, “communication skills” and “registered-nurse” certifications are most sought after by employers in the Union County, North Jersey Labor Market. Other in-demand skills include competency

with Microsoft Office, writing, customer service, and teamwork. in-demand certifications include CPA, project management, first aid/CPR, and Class A CDL. Overall, in-demand soft skills are focused on interpersonal skills and in-demand certifications center around the healthcare sector.

Figure 19

Baseline Skills Greatest Demand	in	Number of Jobs
Communication Skills		148,827
Writing		85,000
Microsoft Excel		66,890
Customer Service		68,937
Team Work/Collaboration		59,916
Organizational Skills		58,738
Problem Solving		57,477
Planning		56,621
Project Management		51,307
Microsoft Office		47,545
Detail-Oriented		52,830
Rsearch		41,424
Building Effective Relationships		36,105
Computer Skills		33,944
Microsoft PowerPoint		30,761

Figure 20

Certificates/Licenses in Greatest Demand	Number in Demand
Registered Nurse	14,497
Certified Public Accountant	6,808
Project Management	6,657
First Aid / CPR / AED	5,753
CDL Class A	4,239
Basic Cardiac Life Support	2,870
Certified Information Systems Security	2,736
Commercial Drivers License	2,190
Home Health Aide	1,937
Certified Information Systems Auditor	1,782
Security Clearance	1,736
Certified Nursing Assistant	1,676
Series 7	1,546
Nurse Practitioner	1,502
Cisco Certified Network Associate	1,192

Figures 19 & 20 | Source: Burning Glass Technologies Inc., Labor Insight

## Union County Commuting Patterns

The Union County population is impacted by other states, specifically the metropolitan area of New York City. The Union County region has 9.5% or 23,949 of its working population employed in NYC. Fifty-four percent (54%) of workers live and work in Union County.

Figure 20

Union County Residents Worker Flow		
Place of Work	Union County Residents	%
New Jersey	225,554	89.9%
New York	23,949	9.5%
Pennsylvania	460	0.2%
Connecticut	157	0.1%
Delaware	63	0.0%
Maryland	34	0.0%
All Other	645	0.3%
Total Resident Workers	250,862	
Live and Work in Union County	121,812	54.0%

Prepared by: Office of Research & Information, Bureau of Labor Market Information, March 2015

Two hundred and twenty-five thousand workers live in Union County and work in New Jersey, 89.9% Less than one percent, .6%, commute to other states in the area.