

UNION COUNTY  
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

PROGRAM YEAR 2022

ANNUAL  
REPORT





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### INTRODUCTION

In the heart of Union County, the Workforce Development Board proudly presents its strategic vision for 2022-2026, meticulously crafted in alignment with the New Jersey Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). This pivotal document narrates our collective journey towards creating a resilient workforce ecosystem, tailored to meet the intricate tapestry of our community's employment needs and aspirations.

Within these pages, we recount our steadfast commitment to a series of transformative initiatives: from fostering employer engagement to harnessing the power of technology in service delivery, each resolution echoes our core values. We celebrate the accomplishments of our key resolutions—budgetary prudence, program enhancements, and service expansions—all aimed at fortifying the foundation of a workforce poised for the future.

As we turn each page, we acknowledge the milestones achieved and the strategic pathways we have carved. Be it in elevating access to services for the youth and those facing barriers, or in strengthening our partnerships across the fabric of education, economic development, and community organizations, our report is a testament to the vigor and vision of the Union County Workforce Development Board.

As you delve into the report, envisage a Union County where every individual's potential is recognized and nurtured, where businesses thrive on the strength of a skilled workforce, and where our shared goals for economic prosperity are realized through the collective efforts of a community united by purpose and passion.

### STRATEGIC PLAN VISION

The Union County Workforce Development Board developed a four-year strategic plan for 2022-2026 in alignment with the New Jersey Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Combined State Plan. This plan was created in response to requirements from the New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission under WIOA, which mandated each local workforce board to submit a comprehensive strategic plan every four years.

Our strategic plan focuses on implementing the goals and strategies outlined in the State Plan at the local level. It adheres to the vision, goals, and priorities established by the State for building an effective workforce development system. The plan was developed in partnership with local elected officials and underwent a 30-day public comment period before being approved by both the Union County Workforce Development Board and the Union County Board of County Commissioners.

Some key elements of our strategic plan include:

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- Strategies for engaging employers to identify workforce needs and increase work-based learning opportunities
- Initiatives for supporting career pathways and sector strategies aligned to priority industries
- Enhancing partnerships with education, economic development, and community organizations
- Integrating service delivery and braiding resources across programs
- Expanding access to training, education, and supportive services for youth and individuals with barriers

### CORE VALUES

In Program Year 2022, the Union County Workforce Development Board was committed to aligning its workforce development strategy with the core values outlined in New Jersey Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Combined State Plan. These values, as reflected in the Union County Workforce Development Board Strategic Plan 2022-2026, serve as the guiding principles for driving our workforce development activities. They are as follows:

- **Career Pathways and Industry-Credential Attainment:** We place a strong emphasis on supporting individuals in identifying and pursuing career pathways aligned with their interests and skills. By promoting industry-recognized credential attainment, we enhance their employability and readiness for success in the workforce.
- **Integrated Service Delivery through One-Stop Centers:** We strive to create seamless and comprehensive service delivery by expanding the integration of services within our One-Stop Centers. By bringing together various resources and support systems, we ensure that individuals have easy access to the tools and assistance they need to achieve their career goals.
- **Utilization of Technology:** We recognize the importance of technology in optimizing our operations and enhancing the customer experience. By leveraging technology in our processes, both internally and externally, we improve efficiency, accessibility, and the overall quality of our services.

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- **Increased Access to Services:** We are dedicated to expanding access to our services, ensuring that all individuals in our community have equal opportunities to benefit from workforce development programs. We strive to remove barriers and provide inclusive and equitable access for underrepresented populations, promoting greater economic mobility and social equality.
- **Strong Employer Engagement:** We actively engage with employers to understand their workforce needs and foster mutually beneficial partnerships. By collaborating closely with businesses, we can align our programs and services with industry demands, facilitating job placements and cultivating a skilled workforce that meets the needs of our local economy.
- **Comprehensive Evaluation and Systematic Oversight:** We go beyond national performance standards by implementing robust evaluation metrics and ensuring systematic oversight. By continuously monitoring and assessing the effectiveness of our programs, we can adapt and improve our strategies to better meet the evolving needs of our community.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF KEY RESOLUTIONS

### Resolution No. 2022-30

The Union County Workforce Development Board approved Resolution No. 2022-30, which outlined the Program Year 2022 budget for the Union County Workforce Development Area. The budget included funding allocated from the New Jersey Department of Labor and various federal and state grants, such as Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds for Adults, Youth, and Dislocated Workers; Work First New Jersey (WFNJ); Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); General Assistance (GA); Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); and Workforce Learning Link (WLL).

The resolution authorized the use of WIOA one-stop operations funding to provide career services, training services, employment activities, and partner programs at a comprehensive one-stop career center. Services included career guidance for adults and dislocated workers; WIOA Youth program elements for eligible youth; work-based training like on-the-job training, individual training accounts, internships, and registered apprenticeships. The resolution also ensured supportive services like community referrals, transportation assistance, childcare support, and

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housing assistance. WFNJ participants receiving TANF, GA, and SNAP benefits were case managed and enrolled at the one-stop.

Additionally, one-stop operations funding facilitated business services for employers, including customized services tailored to their workforce needs.

To meet regulatory and statutory requirements, the one-stop career center and affiliated sites adhered to WIOA non-discrimination and equal opportunity provisions and Uniform Guidance. They aimed to meet or exceed performance goals for all core and supplemental programs.

The resolution authorized the PY 2022 Union County Workforce Development Area Budget to effectively implement workforce programs in the county.

### **Resolution No. 2022-31**

The Union County Department of Human Services was competitively selected by the Union County Workforce Development Board to operate a comprehensive one-stop career center (American Job Center) in Union County, New Jersey, as required under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) § 121(d)(2). The center aimed to deliver WIOA and Work First New Jersey services to participants.

To ensure continuous operations of the one-stop career center, the Workforce Development Board granted a one-year extension of the agreement with the Department of Human Services from July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023. This allowed the operator to continue providing services to participants without interruption.

In preparation, the Board provided the Department with budget account numbers to allocate the salaries and benefits of one-stop career center staff across WIOA, Work First New Jersey, and Workforce Learning Link grants. This ensured appropriate funding and efficient management of resources to deliver career services and support to workforce program participants in the county.

### **Resolution No. 2022-32**

Resolution 2022-32 highlighted the achievements of the Workforce Learning Link program in Union County. The program provides short-term services up to six months to improve basic skills and facilitate employment, career advancement, entry into training, or attainment of a NJ State High School Diploma.

The Workforce Development Board collaborated with the Plainfield Public Library and Certiport to secure Workforce Learning Link funding for a joint initiative offering basic to intermediate digital literacy instruction and industry-recognized credentials. The program targeted unemployed, underemployed, and employed Union County residents.



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The Library proposed an evening program with Certiport for IC3 and Microsoft Office certifications to empower underemployed and incumbent workers with digital skills to improve employability.

In recognition, the Board passed Resolution 2022-32, awarding a \$60,000 Workforce Learning Link contract to the Library from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023, pending state funding and approvals including from the County Commissioners.

The resolution demonstrated the Board's commitment to building digital skills, employability, and career opportunities for Union County residents through collaboration between Workforce Learning Link, the Library, and Certiport.

### **Resolution No. 2022-33**

Resolution 2022-33 outlined the performance goals set by the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) core programs for Program Years 2022 and 2023.

For PY 2022, goals included employment rates, median earnings, credential attainment, and measurable skills gains for Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, and Wagner-Peyser programs. The Board aimed to achieve success in these areas to develop the local workforce.

PY 2023 goals increased employment rates, earnings, credential attainment, and skills gains across WIOA core programs. The Board committed to meeting these higher targets to continuously improve workforce outcomes.

Supplemental Performance Measures evaluated American Job Center Partner services. Measures included number of participants served, exited, and satisfied with training and counseling. Assessment also considered percentages of participants with barriers like disabilities, limited education, homelessness, and limited English proficiency.

Through the resolution, the Board demonstrated commitment to addressing local workforce needs and improving participant employability, skills, and well-being. Pursuing these goals aimed to strengthen economic vitality and opportunities in Union County.

### **Resolution 2022-35**

Resolution 2022-35 addressed adherence to 2 CFR 200 (Uniform Guidance) requiring organizations receiving federal funds to develop a Cost Allocation Plan for equitable distribution of expenditures across federal and non-federal programs.



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The New Jersey Department of Labor's annual review of local workforce areas' policies, procedures, and controls requires each Board to approve a Cost Allocation Plan defining direct and indirect cost distribution among grants.

The resolution demonstrated the Board's commitment to comply with federal regulations and state requirements for proper fiscal management and accountability in fund allocation. Approving the Plan promoted transparency, efficiency, and responsible stewardship of financial resources in Union County's workforce programs. Adhering to guidelines and mandates strengthened workforce program effectiveness and stakeholder trust in the County's sound financial practices.

### Resolution 2022-39

Resolution 2022-39 demonstrated the Workforce Development Board's commitment to provide priority of service to qualified veterans and spouses for job training and career services, as required by the Jobs for Veterans Act (PL 107-288). The law mandates priority access to individualized career services, training, and supportive services for covered persons including veterans and spouses.

Additionally, per Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 10-09, Union County American Job Center Partners must prioritize the use of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Adult funds for veteran and eligible spouse basic career services, individualized career services including training and supportive services, and follow-up services.

The resolution upheld the Board's dedication to supporting veteran and spouse transition to the civilian workforce and enhancing employment opportunities. It solidified the County's commitment to honoring veteran service by ensuring priority access to career resources and services. By complying with the Jobs for Veterans Act and Guidance Letter, the Board promoted veteran employment and empowerment in Union County workforce development.

### Resolution 2022-40

Resolution 2022-40 outlined the Workforce Development Board's (WDB) process for securing WorkFirst New Jersey Program service contracts through competitive contracting procedures under the Local Public Contracts Law.

On June 8, 2022, the WDB authorized competitive contracting. A Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued on September 20, 2022. Proposals received were opened on October 13, 2022. A WDB evaluation committee reviewed and assessed the proposals.

The committee, with guidance from the County Counsel, recommended contract awards to Workforce Advantage and Union College.

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Per N.J.S.A. 40A:11-4.1, the Board passed Resolution 2022-40 awarding a \$620,000 contract to Workforce Advantage and a \$500,000 contract to Union College for WorkFirst services, split between TANF and GA/SNAP accounts. Contracts were contingent on federal and state funding and County Commissioner concurrence.

The resolution demonstrated the Board's commitment to transparent, competitive processes for service provider selection to efficiently use WorkFirst resources. Successful contracts with Workforce Advantage and Union College signified the Board's dedication to quality services empowering participant self-sufficiency and labor market success. The resolution exemplified responsible fiscal management and ongoing efforts to develop an effective workforce system in Union County.

### **Resolution 2022-41**

Resolution 2022-41 represented the Workforce Development Board successfully securing a contract with Union County Vocational Technical Schools to provide WIOA Out-of-School Youth Services for the Simon Youth Academy, aligning with the Board's approved Local Strategic Plan.

To facilitate contracting under the Local Public Contracts Law, the Board authorized competitive contracting via Resolution 2022-26 on June 8, 2022. This allowed efficient procurement of proposals for WIOA Out-of-School Youth Services.

After issuing a Request for Proposals on October 12, 2022, the Board evaluated the received proposal through a staff evaluation committee. With guidance from County Counsel, the committee endorsed Union County Vocational Technical Schools as the Simon Youth Academy Operator in its November 4, 2022 report.

The resolution signified the Board's commitment to effective, reliable Out-of-School Youth Services. By awarding a contract not to exceed \$333,000 to Union County Vocational Technical Schools from November 1, 2022 to December 31, 2023, the Board demonstrated its dedication to successful implementation of the Simon Youth Academy.

Securing this contract solidified the Board's efforts to improve educational and employment opportunities for out-of-school youth through targeted support and resources. It underscored the Board's strategic planning and contracting mission to develop an inclusive workforce ecosystem benefitting Union County.

### **Resolution 2022-42**

Resolution 2022-42 marks a significant achievement for the Union County Workforce Development Board (UCWDB) as it adopts several essential policies and procedures in accordance with the authority granted by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014.

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These policies and procedures are designed to enhance the quality of services and support provided to individuals and youth participating in workforce development programs.

The adoption of the Customer Satisfaction Survey policy reflects the UCWDB's commitment to gathering valuable feedback from program participants to assess the effectiveness and impact of the services offered. This survey ensures that the UCWDB continuously improves its programs based on the needs and experiences of its customers, ultimately leading to a more responsive and tailored approach to workforce development.

The Priority of Service policy further demonstrates the UCWDB's dedication to serving veterans and their eligible spouses. By prioritizing this group in the provision of individualized career services, training services, and supportive services, the UCWDB acknowledges the sacrifices made by veterans and aims to support their successful transition into the civilian workforce.

The Requires Additional Assistance policy underlines the UCWDB's commitment to providing targeted support to individuals facing barriers to employment. By identifying and assisting those with additional needs, such as individuals with disabilities, ex-offenders, or those with limited English proficiency, the UCWDB strives to create an inclusive and supportive environment that empowers all individuals to achieve their career goals.

The adoption of the Selective Service Registration policy ensures compliance with federal requirements for the Selective Service System. This policy aims to promote civic responsibility and adherence to national service obligations among eligible male program participants.

The Work-Based Learning policy highlights the UCWDB's emphasis on experiential learning opportunities that bridge the gap between education and employment. By facilitating work-based learning experiences, such as apprenticeships and internships, the UCWDB equips participants with valuable skills and real-world exposure, enhancing their employability and job readiness.

The Youth Work-Experience Expense Tracking policy showcases the UCWDB's meticulous approach to monitoring and managing expenses related to youth work-experience programs. By implementing a structured tracking system, the UCWDB ensures transparent and accountable utilization of funds, optimizing the impact of these programs on youth development and employability.

Lastly, the Youth Follow-Up policy underscores the UCWDB's commitment to ongoing support and tracking of youth program participants. By following up with youth after program completion, the UCWDB assesses their outcomes, addresses any additional needs, and fosters lasting connections that facilitate their successful transition into the workforce.

In closing, Resolution 2022-42 exemplifies the UCWDB's dedication to continuous improvement and providing exceptional services to its diverse participant base. Through the adoption of these

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vital policies and procedures, the UCWDB sets a strong foundation for fostering an inclusive, efficient, and effective workforce development system that empowers individuals and youth to achieve their fullest potential in Union County.

### Resolution 2023-01

Resolution 2023-01 represented the Workforce Development Board's (WDB) achievement in enhancing capabilities to implement the Local Strategic Plan. By engaging an external legal firm, the WDB demonstrated commitment to comprehensive, compliant workforce initiatives in 2023.

Key achievements included the WDB's selection of Weber Dowd Law, LLC as Conflict Counsel via thorough evaluation by the WDB Staff Committee and with County Counsel support.

Contracted legal services will assist the WDB in procuring an American Job Center Operator and implementing WIOA career services for adults, dislocated workers, and youth. Weber Dowd Law's guidance and expertise will enable the WDB to navigate complex regulations for smooth workforce program execution.

Appointing Weber Dowd Law as Conflict Counsel also reinforced the WDB's commitment to ethical, transparent governance. As an impartial advisor, Conflict Counsel will ensure adherence to ethical standards and best practices while managing potential conflicts of interest in executing the Local Plan.

By securing Weber Dowd Law's services from January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023, the WDB enabled a long-term partnership with a reputable firm to support the WDB's mission and goals.

### Resolution 2023-02

Resolution 2023-02 marks a significant milestone for the Union County Workforce Development Board (UCWDB) as it approves the Strategic Plan 2022-2026 for the Implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2022. This resolution reflects the UCWDB's commitment to strengthening the workforce development system in Union County and aligning its efforts with the vision and goals set forth by Governor Phil Murphy to create a stronger and fairer economy for all residents.

The UCWDB's strategic plan outlines a comprehensive roadmap for the years 2022-2026, encompassing goals, objectives, priorities, and strategies aimed at effectively implementing WIOA programs in Union County. The plan's development involved extensive collaboration and engagement with various stakeholders, including employers, job seekers, community-based organizations, program participants, and workforce development partners. This inclusive

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approach ensures that the strategic plan is reflective of the diverse needs and aspirations of the Union County community.

With the approval of the Strategic Plan 2022-2026, the UCWDB sets in motion a comprehensive and integrated approach to workforce development, adhering to the guidelines and priorities set by the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development and the New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission. The board is committed to ensuring that the strategic plan is implemented effectively and efficiently, and to this end, it directs its staff to commence the plan's implementation and provide regular progress reports to the board.

To ensure the successful execution of the strategic plan, the UCWDB directs the American Job Center Operator, the American Job Center Network Partners, and career service providers for adult, dislocated worker, and youth populations to align their activities and initiatives with the strategic plan's tenets. This coordinated approach enhances the impact of WIOA programs and facilitates the achievement of the outlined goals and objectives.

Recognizing the importance of ongoing collaboration and stakeholder engagement, the UCWDB acknowledges the value of continued communication with stakeholders throughout the implementation process. This commitment to inclusivity and feedback from the community reinforces the board's dedication to creating a robust and inclusive workforce development ecosystem in Union County.

In conclusion, Resolution 2023-02 showcases the Union County Workforce Development Board's dedication to building a stronger and more equitable Union County through the approval and adoption of the Strategic Plan 2022-2026 for the Implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2022. With stakeholder input and collaboration at its core, this strategic plan lays the groundwork for impactful and sustainable workforce development initiatives that align with the broader vision of the state and county leadership. The UCWDB's commitment to implementing the plan, aligning stakeholders, and maintaining ongoing communication ensures a dynamic and forward-looking approach to workforce development in Union County for years to come.

The Union County Workforce Development Board developed a comprehensive four-year strategic plan aligned with the State's vision, goals, and strategies. The plan was created through an open and transparent process involving local stakeholders and partners. It addresses regional coordination, labor market analysis, strategic priorities, One-Stop operations, board structure and functions, performance measures, and training needs.

Key achievements include aligning the board's strategic priorities with the State's goals of expanding access to services, facilitating career pathways and work-based learning, and engaging priority populations. The plan strengthens integration across One-Stop partners through cross-training, coordination, and leveraging technology. It expands access through virtual services and

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adaptive technologies. The board implemented processes for competitive procurement, oversight, and monitoring to ensure accountability.

Performance goals were established, and outcomes are tracked through data systems. The board supports transparency through published reports and documentation. Partnerships were cultivated to engage employers, education providers, and supportive services. The plan positions the board to effectively serve jobseekers, workers, and businesses through the pandemic recovery.

### Resolution 2023-03

Resolution 2023-03 marks a pivotal moment for the Union County Workforce Development Board (UCWDB) as it approves a crucial Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the UCWDB and the Union County Board of County Commissioners. This MOU outlines the roles and responsibilities of both parties in accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and related policies and regulations established by the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development and the New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission.

The approval of the MOU reflects the UCWDB's commitment to fostering effective collaboration and coordination with the Union County Board of County Commissioners in the provision of workforce development services in Union County, New Jersey. By formalizing this understanding, the UCWDB seeks to streamline and enhance workforce development strategies that meet the evolving needs of employers and jobseekers in the county.

The MOU solidifies the UCWDB's dedication to working in partnership with the Union County Board of County Commissioners to develop and implement innovative workforce development strategies that drive economic growth and opportunity in Union County. By aligning their efforts, both entities can better address the region's workforce challenges and leverage resources to create a stronger and more prosperous local economy.

With the approval of the MOU, the UCWDB authorizes the appropriate officials to execute the document and take all necessary actions to ensure its implementation and compliance with its terms and conditions. This demonstrates the board's commitment to effectively execute the collaborative framework laid out in the MOU.

Furthermore, Resolution 2023-03 underscores the UCWDB's full support for the Union County Board of County Commissioners' "Build a Stronger Union County" initiative. This commitment highlights the board's dedication to playing an integral role in advancing workforce development and contributing to the overall economic growth and well-being of Union County.

In conclusion, Resolution 2023-03 signifies a milestone in the Union County Workforce Development Board's pursuit of impactful workforce development strategies. By approving the

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Memorandum of Understanding and committing to collaboration with the Union County Board of County Commissioners, the UCWDB sets the stage for a more cohesive and efficient approach to workforce development in the region. This alignment fosters greater opportunities for jobseekers and employers alike, positioning Union County for continued growth and prosperity.

### Resolution 2023-04

Resolution 2023-04 demonstrated the Workforce Development Board's (WDB) commitment to expanding workforce opportunities through the "Building a Stronger Union County" initiative by authorizing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for libraries to provide basic career services as Affiliate American Job Centers.

Selected libraries will support county workforce goals by providing job seekers technology and resources for job search and career development. Services will include assistance with job search, resumes, interview preparation, career counseling, and accessing training and education like vocational programs and skills workshops. Libraries will collaborate with stakeholders on coordinated outreach to underserved groups for an inclusive system.

Libraries will collect and report participant data per WIOA requirements. They will offer basic career services during operating hours, including evenings and weekends, to accommodate job seeker needs. Libraries will make a good faith effort to join the American Job Center Network and adhere to the Memorandum of Understanding and Infrastructure Funding Agreement.

The WDB emphasized collaboration with the County Commissioners, libraries, and stakeholders to implement the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan. The WDB Office, with County Counsel assistance, is authorized to issue the RFP under Competitive Contracting.

The resolution ensures Affiliate American Job Center libraries adhere to accessibility guidelines under 29 CFR Part 38 for disability access.

Overall, the resolution reflects the proactive approach to leverage libraries for workforce objectives by establishing Affiliate American Job Centers to increase workforce service accessibility and support economic growth in Union County.

### Resolution 2023-05

Resolution 2023-05 outlines the achievements of the Union County Workforce Development Board in securing additional funding for the Workforce Learning Link program. On March 20, 2023, the UCWDB received notice from the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development of an additional grant funding allocation amounting to \$126,000.



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In response to this funding opportunity, the UCWDB took proactive measures by approving the amendment of the Program Year 2022 Union County Workforce Area Budget. The purpose of this amendment was to incorporate the newly acquired funding from the state's labor department, which would bolster the resources available for the Workforce Learning Link program.

By securing this supplementary funding and subsequently amending the budget, the Union County Workforce Development Board demonstrated its commitment to enhancing workforce development initiatives in the Union County area. This achievement signifies the board's successful efforts in advocating for and acquiring crucial financial support, allowing them to further expand and strengthen the Workforce Learning Link program's reach and impact on the community.

With the approved budget amendment, the UCWDB ensures that the Program Year 2022 Union County Workforce Area Budget aligns with the additional funding from the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development. As a final step, the amended budget will be submitted to the Union County Board of County Commissioners for concurrence, reflecting the collaborative efforts and communication between the workforce development board and the county government.

Overall, Resolution 2023-05 marks a significant accomplishment for the Union County Workforce Development Board, as it secures essential financial support to bolster workforce development services and opportunities in the Union County area. This additional funding reinforces the board's dedication to meeting the needs of job seekers and employers, furthering the mission of creating a stronger, more resilient workforce in Union County.

### **Resolution 2023-06**

Resolution 2023-06 demonstrated the Workforce Development Board's commitment to workforce opportunities for at-risk youth by utilizing Competitive Contracting to secure an Affiliate American Job Center Site Operator for the Simon Youth Academy under WIOA.

The resolution aligned with the "Building a Stronger Union County" initiatives and supported the Board's workforce development goals. The selected operator will advance community workforce objectives.

The resolution emphasized accessibility per WIOA regulations, requiring physical and programmatic disability access at Affiliate Sites.

Competitive Contracting for the Operator enabled a fair, competitive selection process per N.J.S.A. 40A:11-4.1 eligibility guidelines.

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The resolution reflected dedication to assisting out-of-school youth ages 16-20. The Operator will provide access to WIOA's 14 program elements, including academic programs, career services, job search help, and training opportunities.

The Operator will partner with stakeholders to deliver coordinated services and outreach to underserved groups. This maximizes workforce development impact in Union County.

The Operator will collect and report participant data as required by WIOA for transparency and accountability.

Overall, the resolution demonstrated commitment to inclusive, accessible, and effective workforce services for at-risk youth aligned with the Board's 2022-2026 Strategic Plan. Competitive Contracting will identify a capable Simon Youth Academy Operator to support Union County workforce prosperity.

### Resolution 2023-07

Resolution 2023-07 demonstrates the Union County Workforce Development Board's commitment to enhancing workforce development services for adults and dislocated workers in Union County, New Jersey. The resolution highlights the board's decision to utilize Competitive Contracting procedures to secure proposals for an Affiliate American Job Center Site Provider to deliver Career Services to Adults and Dislocated Workers under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

By adopting this resolution, the Union County Workforce Development Board aims to support the "Building a Stronger Union County" initiatives of the Union County Board of County Commissioners. The selected Affiliate American Job Center Site Provider will play a pivotal role in advancing the workforce development goals of the community and enhancing jobseekers' access to essential programs, services, and activities.

The resolution emphasizes the importance of accessibility, ensuring that all Affiliate American Job Center Sites adhere to physical and programmatic accessibility standards outlined in 29 Code of Federal Regulations Part 38, in line with the regulations of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

The resolution reflects the board's dedication to providing comprehensive career services to individuals seeking employment. The selected provider will offer job search assistance, access to technology and resources, basic career services, and training and education programs, empowering jobseekers with the skills and support needed to succeed in the job market.

The successful applicant(s) for the Affiliate American Job Center Site Provider role will be expected to collaborate with other community organizations and workforce development stakeholders to

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ensure coordinated services and outreach to underserved populations, furthering the impact of workforce development initiatives in Union County.

Moreover, the resolution highlights the importance of data collection and reporting on the services provided under WIOA. The selected provider will comply with federal reporting requirements, promoting transparency and accountability in the delivery of workforce development services.

Furthermore, the selected provider will coordinate all activities through the authorized American Job Center Operator and collaborate with the American Job Center Network Partners and Providers, fostering a networked approach to workforce development in Union County.

### **Resolution 2023-08**

Resolution 2023-08 highlighted the Workforce Development Board's efforts to improve access to services for Work First New Jersey program participants, including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), General Assistance (GA), and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), by utilizing Competitive Contracting to secure Affiliate American Job Center Site Providers.

The resolution emphasized physical and programmatic accessibility compliance per federal regulations to ensure inclusive, equitable services.

The Board demonstrated dedication to supporting participant self-sufficiency and career advancement. Site Providers will play a critical role in offering access to programs, services, and activities tailored to participant needs.

Competitive Contracting aimed to identify qualified Providers to effectively deliver TANF, GA, and SNAP services and contribute to program success.

The resolution ensured proper contracting administration per N.J.S.A. 40A:11-4.3(b). The Board will work to select suitable Providers to meet participant needs.

Consistent with its 2022-2026 Strategic Plan, the Board demonstrated a forward-looking approach by leveraging competitive contracting processes to secure Providers and build a supportive network empowering resident economic stability and growth.

### **Resolution 2023-10**

Resolution 2023-09 highlights the Union County Workforce Development Board's commitment to improving jobseeker access to essential programs and services through the establishment of Affiliate American Job Center Sites. Competitive Contracting procedures, as outlined in the Local

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Public Contracts Law, will be employed to solicit proposals from providers of Workforce Learning Link Services.

The resolution emphasizes compliance with 20 Code of Federal Regulations 678.310 and 29 Code of Federal Regulations Part 38 to ensure that all Affiliate American Job Center Sites are physically and programmatically accessible to individuals with disabilities, promoting an inclusive environment.

The primary goal of this resolution is to secure services for residents enrolled in Workforce Learning Link Services. Competitive Contracting will identify qualified providers capable of offering a range of services and activities to support jobseekers in their career endeavors.

The resolution also specifies the need for proper administration of the Competitive Contracting process in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40A:11-4.3(b), ensuring fairness and transparency in the selection of Affiliate American Job Center Site Providers for Workforce Learning Link Services.

The Union County Workforce Development Board aligns its actions with the Strategic Plan 2022-2026, emphasizing the establishment of Affiliate American Job Center Sites to improve jobseeker access to essential services and promote collaboration among community organizations and workforce development stakeholders.

Through this resolution, the Union County Workforce Development Board underscores its dedication to empowering jobseekers with the tools and resources needed to achieve their career goals. The creation of an inclusive network of support services aims to strengthen the Union County workforce.

### **Resolution 2023-10**

Resolution 2023-10 signifies the Union County Workforce Development Board's achievement in certifying the Union County American Job Center's compliance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014. An Evaluation Committee was established to assess the center using the Quality Benchmarking Tool from the New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission, evaluating leadership, strategic planning, customer focus, information analysis, human resource management, process management, and business results.

To meet WIOA requirements, the Union County Workforce Development Board implemented an American Job Center Job Seeker Certification Standard Self-Assessment Tool, ensuring job seeker satisfaction and service quality. The tool covered standards for job seeker satisfaction, managing job seeker services, delivering high-quality services, managing integrated service delivery, and ensuring physical accessibility.

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Through rigorous evaluation and compliance with established criteria, the Union County American Job Center has demonstrated its commitment to performance excellence and service delivery. The center has provided a supportive environment for job seekers, exceeding local performance goals in areas such as customer satisfaction, financial performance, and human resource outcomes.

Additionally, the center has met all required standards and regulations, including disability and accessibility standards, equal opportunity principles, laws, regulations, and complaint procedures. This certification recognizes the center's effectiveness in supporting the community's workforce development needs and its dedication to continuous service improvement.

### **Resolution 2023-11**

Resolution 2023-11 reflects the Union County Workforce Development Board's commitment to fulfilling the Union County Board of County Commissioners' goal of "Building a Stronger Union County" through collaborative and innovative initiatives. The board is responsible for creating a comprehensive workforce and economic development plan in compliance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requirements, Governor Phil Murphy's vision for a "stronger and fairer New Jersey," and the principles outlined in the New Jersey Combined State Plan for WIOA (2022).

The Union County Workforce Development Board has received policy and regulatory guidance from the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development and the New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission. This guidance pertains to the selection of the One Stop Operator (American Job Center Operator) and Comprehensive One Stop Career Center Service Provider(s) for Adult, Dislocated Workers, and Youth Services under WIOA. The selection process will be conducted through procurement, resulting in a two-year contract, with the possibility of two additional one-year extensions for successful applicants.

The selected service providers will assume the roles and responsibilities defined by the State of New Jersey under WIOA, playing essential roles in supporting the county's workforce and economic development goals outlined in the "Union County Workforce Development Board Strategic Plan 2022-2026 for Implementing the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2022."

To facilitate this process, the Union County Workforce Development Board will release a Request for Proposals (RFP) aligned with its strategic plan, inviting proposals from qualified providers capable of delivering comprehensive workforce development services. Competitive Contracting, an alternative to traditional competitive bidding processes, will be used to select the service providers in compliance with relevant laws and regulations.

By authorizing the issuance of the RFP, the Union County Workforce Development Board takes a significant step toward realizing its strategic vision and contributing to the growth and

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development of Union County, aligning with state and local objectives. This resolution underscores the board's commitment to building a stronger community by promoting economic growth, supporting job seekers, and addressing the needs of workers and businesses in the region.

### Resolution 2023-15

Resolution 2023-15 highlights the successful use of the Competitive Contracting process by the Union County Workforce Development Board to secure a service provider for Affiliate American Job Center Site services under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The resolution outlines the steps taken to initiate the competitive contracting process and announces the contract award to Union College in Union County, New Jersey.

In April 2023, the Union County Workforce Development Board authorized the use of competitive contracting to request proposals for Career Services to Adults and Dislocated Workers at an Affiliate American Job Center Site. Following the issuance of a Request for Proposals and a comprehensive evaluation by an Evaluation Committee, Union College of Union County was recommended as the provider.

Based on the Committee's evaluation and guidance from the Office of County Counsel, the Union County Workforce Development Board formally awards a contract to Union College in Union County, New Jersey. The contract, with a total value not exceeding \$500,000, will be in effect from June 1, 2023, to June 1, 2024, subject to securing projected federal and state funding and obtaining necessary approvals, including approval from the Union County Board of County Commissioners.

This resolution underscores the board's commitment to transparent and competitive procurement processes, ensuring that service providers are selected objectively and fairly. The awarding of the contract to Union College represents a significant step in the board's mission to deliver high-quality career services to adults and dislocated workers, in alignment with the region's workforce development objectives under the WIOA. The collaboration with Union College is expected to enhance support for job seekers and contribute to the economic development and prosperity of Union County, New Jersey.

### Resolution 2023-19

Resolution 2023-19 highlights the authority and flexibility of the Executive Committee of the Union County Workforce Development Board, as granted by the Board's By-Laws, to take action on specific matters. In this case, the Executive Committee addresses the contract period for the provision of Work First New Jersey Programs awarded to Workforce Advantage and Union College of Union County, New Jersey.

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In November 2022, the Union County Workforce Development Board approved contracts for the Work First New Jersey Programs, setting the contract period from July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023. Acknowledging the need for adaptability in response to changing circumstances, the Executive Committee decides to extend the contract period. The resolution officially extends the Work First New Jersey contract period to a revised timeframe of July 1, 2022, to September 30, 2023.

This resolution demonstrates the Executive Committee's proactive approach to ensure the uninterrupted provision of services to the Work First New Jersey Programs. By granting the contract extension, the committee underscores its commitment to meeting the community's needs and adapting to the dynamic nature of workforce development initiatives. The extended contract period allows for continued engagement and support to program participants, aligning with the objectives of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and contributing to the improvement of Union County, New Jersey.

### UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

In Union County, New Jersey, the unemployment rate from July 2022 to June 2023 exhibited a fluctuating pattern, reflecting the dynamic nature of the local economy. Initially, in July 2022, the rate was at 3.70%, indicating a relatively stable job market. This stability was further seen as the rate decreased to 2.90% by September 2022.

However, as 2023 approached, there was a gradual increase in unemployment. By January 2023, the rate had risen to 4.20%, and continued to increase, peaking at 5.40% in August 2023 before slightly decreasing to 5.00% in September 2023.

Here is the monthly breakdown of the unemployment rates:

- July 2022: 3.70%
- August 2022: 3.30%
- September 2022: 2.90%
- October 2022: 3.10%
- November 2022: 3.20%
- December 2022: 3.30%
- January 2023: 4.20%
- February 2023: 4.30%
- March 2023: 4.10%
- April 2023: 3.30%
- May 2023: 4.20%
- June 2023: 4.80%
- July 2023: 5.10%



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This trend could be due to various factors like seasonal employment changes, shifts in local industries, or broader economic challenges, highlighting the complex factors that influence job markets over time.

### **PRIMARY INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE**

Training and Employment Guidance Letter WIOA No. 10-16, Change 1- Operating Guidance for The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (August 23, 2017):

“Under section I 16(b)(2)(A) of WIOA, there are six primary indicators of performance:

#### **1. EMPLOYMENT RATE - 2ND QUARTER AFTER EXIT:**

The percentage of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program (for title I Youth, the indicator is the percentage of participants in education or training activities, or in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit);

#### **2. EMPLOYMENT RATE - 4TH QUARTER AFTER EXIT:**

The percentage of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program (for title I Youth, the indicator is the percentage of participants in education or training activities, or in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit);

#### **3. MEDIAN EARNINGS - 2ND QUARTER AFTER EXIT:**

The median earnings of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;

#### **4. CREDENTIAL ATTAINMENT:**

The percentage of those participants enrolled in an education or training program (excluding those in on-the-job training (OJT) and customized training) who attain a recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within one year after exit from the program. A participant who has attained a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent is included in the percentage of participants who have attained a secondary school diploma

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or its recognized equivalent only if the participant also is employed or is enrolled in an education or training program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential within one year after exit from the program;

### **5. MEASURABLE SKILL GAINS:**

The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains, defined as documented academic, technical, occupational, or other forms of progress, towards such a credential or employment.

### **6. EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING EMPLOYERS:**

WIOA sec. 116(b)(2)(A)(i)(VI) requires the Departments to establish a primary indicator of performance for effectiveness in serving employers. The Departments are piloting three approaches designed to gauge three critical workforce needs of the business community.

- Approach 1-Retention with the same employer-addresses the programs' efforts to provide employers with skilled workers;
- Approach 2-Repeat Business Customers- addresses the programs' efforts to provide quality engagement and services to employers and sectors and establish productive relationships with employers and sectors over extended periods of time; and
- Approach 3-Employer Penetration Rate- addresses the programs' efforts to provide quality engagement and services to all employers and sectors within a State and local economy."

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### **NEGOTIATED PERFORMANCE GOALS**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act requires states to negotiate performance targets for core programs like Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth services. As the Union County Workforce Development Board, we work closely with the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development to establish fair and equitable goals for outcomes like employment rate, median earnings, credential attainment rate, and skill gains for our local area based on economic conditions, participant characteristics, and service delivery strategies. We utilize past performance data, local area benchmarks, and projections to inform negotiated targets that align with state and regional goals. The negotiated goals drive strategic planning and accountability to optimize services and outcomes for Union County job seekers and employers. We view the negotiation process as critical for continuous improvement and maximizing the impact of our WIOA investments. Chart A outlines the Program Year 2022 and Program Year 2023 negotiated performance goals for adults, dislocated workers, youth, and Wagner-Peyser.

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CHART A: PROGRAM YEAR 2022 & PROGRAM YEAR 2023 PERFORMANCE GOALS

ADULT	PY 2022 Targets	PY 2023 Targets
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	59.90%	60.90%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	54.70%	55.70%
Credential Attainment 4th Quarter After Exit	75%	76%
Measurable Skills Gain	61.30%	62.30%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$ 5,400	\$ 5,500
DISLOCATED WORKER	PY 2022 Targets	PY 2023 Targets
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	58.10%	59.10%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	58%	59%
Credential Attainment 4th Quarter After Exit	71%	72%
Measurable Skills Gain	53.10%	54.10%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$ 6,800	\$ 6,900
YOUTH	PY 2022 Targets	PY 2023 Targets
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	61.40%	62.40%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	68.20%	69.20%
Credential Attainment 4th Quarter After Exit	62.70%	63.70%
Measurable Skills Gain	67%	68%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$ 3,062	\$ 3,162

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### CHART B: PROGRAM YEAR 2022 ACTUAL PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

#### NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF LABOR UNION COUNTY WIOA PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES PY 22

ADULT	(A) PY 2022 Targets	(B) PY 2022 Actual	(C) Achieved Target	(D) Exited AJC
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	59.90%	73.21%	41	56
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	54.70%	66.67%	30	45
Credential Attainment 4th Quarter After Exit	75.00%	59.38%	19	32
Measurable Skills Gain	61.30%	62.30%	51	53
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$ 5,400.00	\$ 8,876.83	41	41
DISLOCATED WORKER	(A) PY 2022 Targets	(B) PY 2022 Actual	(C) Achieved Target	(D) Exited AJC
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	58.10%	66.67%	92	138
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	58.00%	73.33%	121	165
Credential Attainment 4th Quarter After Exit	71.00%	69.67%	85	122
Measurable Skills Gain	53.10%	94.74%	72	76
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$ 6,800.00	\$ 8,689.83	92	92
YOUTH	(A) PY 2022 Targets	(B) PY 2022 Actual	(C) Achieved Target	(D) Exited AJC
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	61.40%	59.02%	36	61
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	68.20%	70.59%	24	34
Credential Attainment 4th Quarter After Exit	62.70%	67.86%	19	28
Measurable Skills Gain	67.00%	81.25%	39	48
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$ 3,062.00	\$ 3,240.39	29	29

(A) Performance goals established by the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

(B) Actual performance achieved in Program Year 2022 by AJC Column (C) divided by Column (D)

(C) Number of participants that achieved the targeted performance goals.

(D) Total number of participants exited from the program by the Union County American Job Center.

(E) Percent of goals achieved is a measure of the actual percent achieved relative to the target goals Column (B) divided by Column (A).

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### **CLOSING**

In summary, the strategic endeavors of the Union County Workforce Development Board from 2022-2026 align with the mandates of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and reflect a commitment to the ongoing development of a resilient workforce ecosystem. The initiatives undertaken have been rooted in a strategic vision that addresses both the immediate and long-term workforce needs of Union County.

Throughout this period, the Board has consistently adhered to the principles of fiscal responsibility, continuous improvement, and stakeholder engagement. The initiatives have been guided by a clear set of core values and have focused on achieving key performance indicators that are in line with state and federal objectives.

Looking ahead, the Board will maintain its focus on strategic planning, evaluation, and implementation of workforce development programs. The emphasis will be on ensuring that these programs are responsive to economic conditions, employer needs, and job seeker aspirations. This will involve ongoing monitoring of labor market trends and the adjustment of strategies to meet changing demands.

The Union County Workforce Development Board remains dedicated to the effective execution of WIOA in Union County. It will continue to prioritize transparency, accountability, and collaborative partnerships to support workforce development and economic growth.

In closing, the Board recognizes the collective efforts of all partners and stakeholders in this journey and remains committed to achieving the objectives set forth in the WIOA strategic plan, thereby contributing to the prosperity of Union County's labor market.