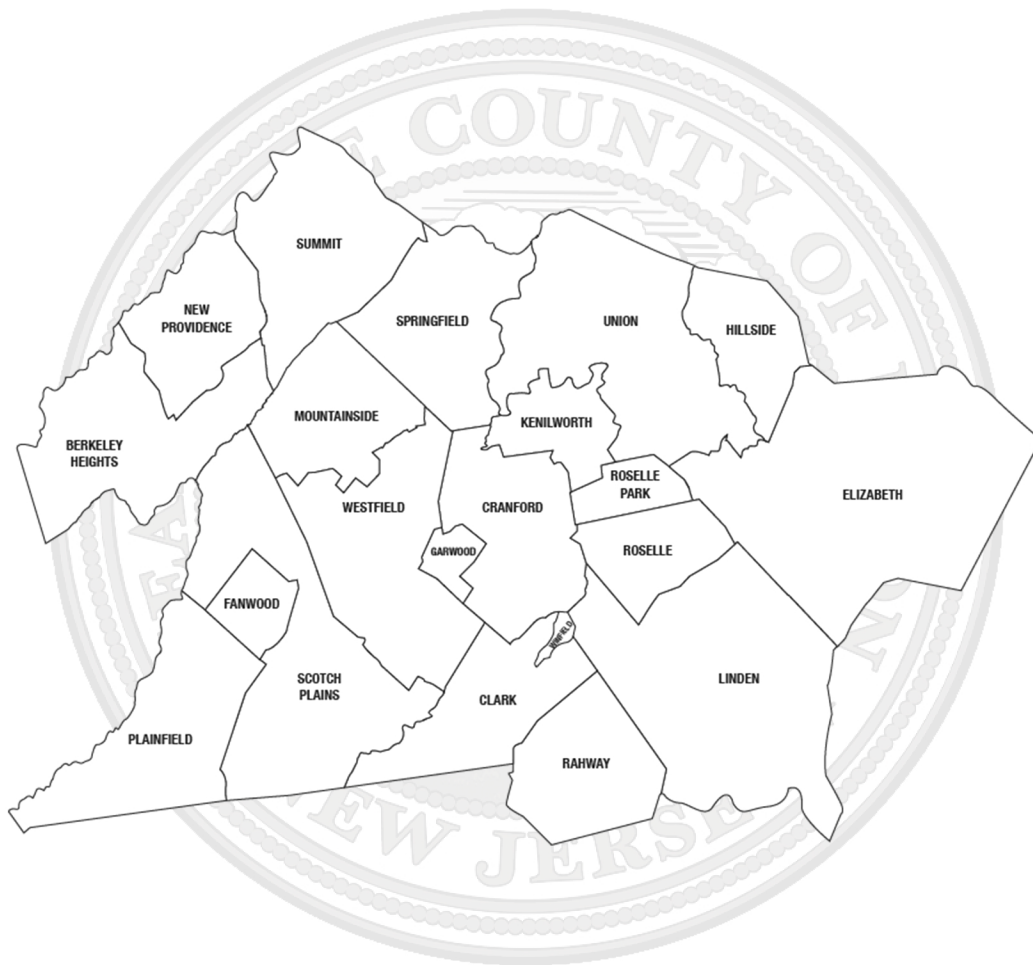


# UNION COUNTY GOVERNMENT

## 2024 Executive Budget



**Edward T. Oatman**  
*County Manager*

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# COUNTY OF UNION

## 2024 Executive Budget

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**County Manager Letter to  
Union County Board of County  
Commissioners**

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**OFFICE OF THE COUNTY MANAGER**

*Edward T. Oatman, County Manager*

February 21, 2024

**BOARD OF  
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

**KIMBERLY PALMIERI-MOUEDED**  
*Chairwoman*

**LOURDES LEON**  
*Vice-Chairwoman*

**JAMES E. BAKER, JR.**

**JOSEPH C. BODEK**

**MICHÈLE S. DELISFORT**

**SERGIO GRANADOS**

**BETTE JANE KOWALSKI**

**ALEXANDER MIRABELLA**

**REBECCA WILLIAMS**

**EDWARD T. OATMAN**  
*County Manager*

**AMY CRISP WAGNER**  
*Deputy County Manager*

**BRUCE H. BERGEN, ESQ.**  
*County Counsel*

**JAMES E. PELLETTIERE**  
*Clerk of the Board*

The Honorable Chairwoman Kimberly Palmieri-MouDED  
Members of the Union County Board of County Commissioners  
Union County Administration Building  
10 Elizabethtown Plaza  
Elizabeth, NJ 07207-2204

Dear County Commissioners:

In compliance with the Optional County Charter Law, enclosed in this document is the 2024 Executive Budget.

In order to sustain our commitment to providing quality services and programs for our residents, we find ourselves facing the same pressures caused by inflation and supply chain challenges after maintaining four consecutive years (2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023) at a zero percent increase in taxes. As a result, it is necessary to make the difficult decision to submit a 2024 Budget with a 1.75% tax increase.

This decision was not made lightly and we want to assure the community that every effort has been made to minimize the impact on our residents. The increase is attributed to the persistent and escalating effects of inflation, increased costs throughout our operating budget and the tight labor market for the delivery of goods and services required to maintain our infrastructure.

We understand the importance of fiscal responsibility and have consistently demonstrated prudent budgeting practices, cost savings measures, and effective financial management. Each year, Moody's Rating Agency has consistently pointed to the County's conservative budgeting practices, cost savings measures and its strong financial management team, and Union County continues to maintain its credit rating of Aaa, which is the highest rating a county government can achieve. Despite this adjustment, our dedication to preserving that Aaa bond rating remains a priority. Union County, in addition to its commitment to financial responsibility, has embraced shared services as a means to absorb funding challenges. Numerous shared services have been implemented to optimize resource utilization and maintain efficiency in the face of budgetary constraints.

**ADMINISTRATION BUILDING**

*Elizabethtown Plaza*

*Elizabeth, NJ 07207*

*(908)527-4200*

*www.ucnj.org*

***We're Connected to You!***



**OFFICE OF THE COUNTY MANAGER**

*Edward T. Oatman, County Manager*

**BOARD OF  
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

**KIMBERLY PALMIERI-MOUEDE**  
*Chairwoman*

**LOURDES LEON**  
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*County Manager*

**AMY CRISP WAGNER**  
*Deputy County Manager*

**BRUCE H. BERGEN, ESQ.**  
*County Counsel*

**JAMES E. PELLETTIERE**  
*Clerk of the Board*

This budget also funds the Chairwoman's "*Growing Together in Union County*," initiatives for 2024, with a few key focuses on enhancing connectivity, inclusivity, supporting seniors, mental health, women's initiatives, and fostering family connections.

Today's budget culminates through months of planning, community outreach, and hard work. We appreciate your understanding and continued support as we navigate these financial challenges to maintain the high quality of life that Union County residents deserve.

I want to thank our Board of County Commissioners for their support, the Department of Finance and Department Heads for their hard work in crafting the budget. We will continue the progress we have made, providing a high quality of life for all residents in Union County.

Sincerely,

*Edward T. Oatman*

Edward T. Oatman  
Union County Manager

**ADMINISTRATION BUILDING**

*Elizabethtown Plaza*

*Elizabeth, NJ 07207 (908)527-4200*  
***We're Connected to You!***

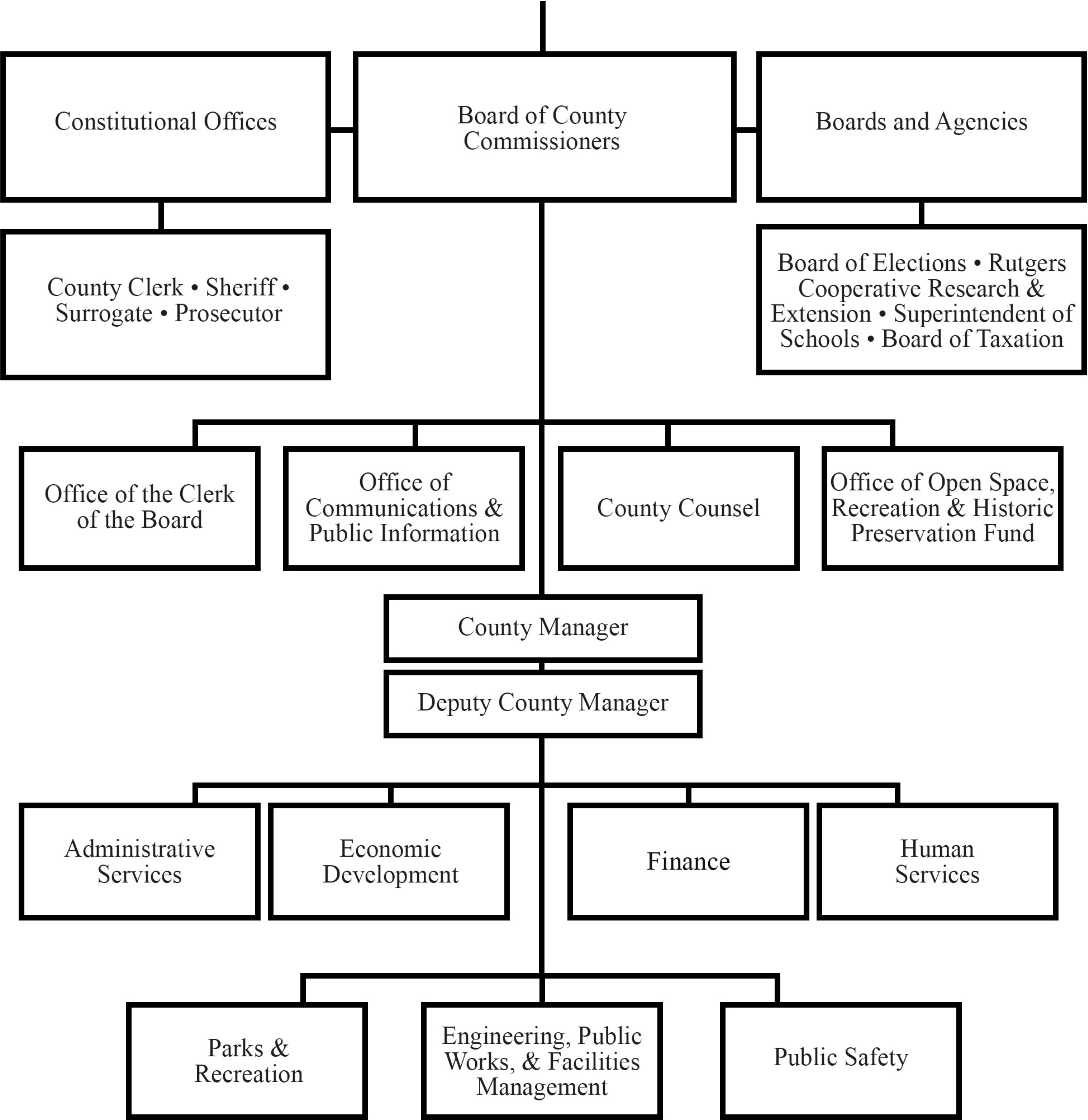
[www.ucnj.org](http://www.ucnj.org)

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# **County of Union Organizational Chart**

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Residents of the County of Union





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# Financial Overview

**2024 EXECUTIVE BUDGET  
REVENUE SCHEDULE**

|  | 2023 Anticipated<br>Revenue | 2023 Realized<br>Revenue | 2024 Executive<br>Budget |
|--|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Surplus Anticipated</b>   | <b>37,750,000.00</b>        | <b>37,750,000.00</b>     | <b>39,000,000.00</b>     |
| <b>SUBTOTAL</b>  | <b>37,750,000.00</b>        | <b>37,750,000.00</b>     | <b>39,000,000.00</b>     |
| <b>Miscellaneous Revenues - Section A: Local Revenues</b>                |                             |                          |                          |
| County Clerk   | 1,750,000.00                | 1,720,316.94             | 1,700,000.00             |
| Register of Deeds - Realty Transfer Fees                                 | 6,500,000.00                | 6,496,905.58             | 6,400,000.00             |
| Sheriff  | 1,000,000.00                | 1,057,256.73             | 1,000,000.00             |
| Surrogate  | 175,000.00                  | 208,185.45               | 190,000.00               |
| County Board of Pay Patients   | 14,000,000.00               | 16,878,493.47            | 12,500,000.00            |
| Interest on Investments and Deposits                                     | 350,000.00                  | 14,944,275.59            | 750,000.00               |
| Parks and Recreation Facilities Revenue                                  | 6,970,000.00                | 8,642,017.30             | 7,500,000.00             |
| Permits Road Department  | 120,000.00                  | 218,626.20               | 150,000.00               |
| Rent - 921 Elizabeth Ave.  | 457,000.00                  | 499,279.56               | -                        |
| <b>SUBTOTAL Section A: Local Revenues</b>                                | <b>31,322,000.00</b>        | <b>50,665,356.82</b>     | <b>30,190,000.00</b>     |
| <b>Miscellaneous Revenues - Section B: State Aid</b>                     |                             |                          |                          |
| County College Bonds   | 2,431,663.63                | 2,431,663.63             | 2,605,151.48             |
| <b>SUBTOTAL Section B: State Aid</b>                                     | <b>2,431,663.63</b>         | <b>2,431,663.63</b>      | <b>2,605,151.48</b>      |
| <b>Miscellaneous Revenues - Section C: State Assumption of Costs</b>     |                             |                          |                          |
| Supplemental Social Security Income                                      | 1,594,001.00                | 2,040,719.00             | 2,850,000.00             |
| <b>SUBTOTAL Section C: State Assumption of Costs</b>                     | <b>1,594,001.00</b>         | <b>2,040,719.00</b>      | <b>2,850,000.00</b>      |
| <b>Miscellaneous Revenues - Section D: Public &amp; Private Revenues</b> | <b>23,299,493.43</b>        | <b>91,962,691.31</b>     | <b>14,731,084.08</b>     |
| <b>SUBTOTAL Section D: Public &amp; Private Revenues</b>                 | <b>23,299,493.43</b>        | <b>91,962,691.31</b>     | <b>14,731,084.08</b>     |
| <b>Miscellaneous Revenues - Section E: Prior Written Consent</b>         |                             |                          |                          |
| County Clerk Increased Fees  | 1,800,000.00                | 1,428,204.00             | 1,400,000.00             |
| Sheriff Increased Fees   | 500,000.00                  | 699,383.56               | 625,000.00               |
| Surrogate Increased Fees   | 285,000.00                  | 326,641.80               | 310,000.00               |
| Ambulance Services   | 1,000,000.00                | 2,373,579.94             | 1,750,000.00             |
| Debt Service - Open Space  | 5,341,259.54                | 5,341,259.54             | 4,225,843.33             |
| Dispatch Services  | 750,000.00                  | 1,047,261.92             | 750,000.00               |
| Educational Building Aid   | 400,000.00                  | 86,166.00                | -                        |
| Franchise Fee - Jersey Gardens   | 50,000.00                   | 327,606.00               | 150,000.00               |
| Fringe Benefits  | 2,150,000.00                | 3,438,747.82             | 2,850,000.00             |
| Indirect Costs   | 450,000.00                  | 1,176,270.00             | 600,000.00               |
| NJ Division of Economic Assistance - Earned Grant                        | 40,000,000.00               | 47,533,437.00            | 42,000,000.00            |
| Open Space - Parks Maintenance   | 2,500,000.00                | 2,500,000.00             | 2,500,000.00             |
| PILOT's  | 450,000.00                  | 1,285,891.57             | 750,000.00               |
| Rental Income UC College/Trinitas Hospital Kellog Building               | 180,000.00                  | 166,666.70               | 160,000.00               |
| Sale of Asset - County Infrastructure Program                            | 1,500,000.00                | 1,500,000.00             | 1,500,000.00             |
| Title IV D - Facility Reimbursement                                      | 1,050,000.00                | 1,762,872.22             | 1,500,000.00             |
| Quarry Revenue   | 200,000.00                  | 90,237.70                | 90,000.00                |
| Union College - Insurance  | 6,095,848.00                | 5,720,958.60             | 7,951,968.00             |
| Union County Utilities Authority   | 500,000.00                  | 500,000.00               | 500,000.00               |
| <b>SUBTOTAL Section E: Prior Written Consent</b>                         | <b>65,202,107.54</b>        | <b>77,305,184.37</b>     | <b>69,612,811.33</b>     |
| <b>Amount to Be Raised by Taxes</b>                                      | <b>367,295,299.43</b>       | <b>367,295,299.43</b>    | <b>373,722,967.17</b>    |
| <b>TOTAL LOCAL REVENUES</b>  | <b>161,599,265.60</b>       | <b>262,155,615.13</b>    | <b>158,989,046.89</b>    |
| <b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>  | <b>528,894,565.03</b>       | <b>629,450,914.56</b>    | <b>532,712,014.06</b>    |

**2024 EXECUTIVE BUDGET  
APPROPRIATION SCHEDULE**

|   | Type | 2023 Adopted<br>Budget | 2023 Modified<br>Budget | 2024 Executive<br>Budget |
|---|------|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>GENERAL GOVERNMENT</b>                     |      |                        |                         |                          |
| County Manager's Office                       | SW   | 431,629.00             | 431,629.00              | 501,898.00               |
|   | OE   | 135,500.00             | 135,500.00              | 735,500.00               |
| Special Studies & Initiatives                 | OE   | 757,000.00             | 757,000.00              | 765,000.00               |
| Board of County Commissioners                 | SW   | 553,245.00             | 553,245.00              | 565,787.00               |
|   | OE   | 120,000.00             | 120,000.00              | 120,000.00               |
| County Infrastructure & Improvement Program   | OE   | 1,500,000.00           | 1,500,000.00            | 1,500,000.00             |
| Annual Audit                                  | OE   | 240,000.00             | 240,000.00              | 240,000.00               |
| Other Accounting and Auditing Fees            | OE   | 125,000.00             | 125,000.00              | 125,000.00               |
| Clerk of the Board                            | SW   | 1,204,749.00           | 1,204,749.00            | 1,076,626.00             |
|   | OE   | 240,500.00             | 240,500.00              | 221,500.00               |
| Advisory Boards, Committees & Commissions     | OE   | -                      | -                       | -                        |
| Status of Women Advisory Board                | OE   | 5,000.00               | 5,000.00                | 2,500.00                 |
| County Clerk                                  | SW   | 2,559,677.00           | 2,559,677.00            | 2,626,637.00             |
|   | OE   | 189,700.00             | 189,700.00              | 193,700.00               |
| Board of Elections                            | SW   | 2,067,171.00           | 2,067,171.00            | 2,146,938.00             |
|   | OE   | 640,795.00             | 640,795.00              | 665,000.00               |
| Elections (County Clerk)                      | SW   | 284,411.00             | 239,411.00              | 274,911.00               |
|   | OE   | 1,158,100.00           | 1,203,100.00            | 1,613,200.00             |
| <b>Department of Finance:</b>                 |      |                        |                         |                          |
| Office of Director                            | SW   | 261,818.00             | 261,818.00              | 267,957.00               |
|   | OE   | 167,500.00             | 167,500.00              | 167,500.00               |
| Public Obligations Registration Act P.L. 1983 | OE   | 100,000.00             | 100,000.00              | 100,000.00               |
| Division of Reimbursement                     | SW   | 489,829.00             | 489,829.00              | 574,419.00               |
|   | OE   | 3,500.00               | 3,500.00                | 3,500.00                 |
| Division of Treasurer                         | SW   | 387,178.00             | 387,178.00              | 431,498.00               |
|   | OE   | 81,000.00              | 81,000.00               | 81,000.00                |
| Division of Comptroller                       | SW   | 916,659.00             | 916,659.00              | 983,951.00               |
|   | OE   | 18,500.00              | 18,500.00               | 28,000.00                |
| Aid to Union County Improvement Authority     | SW   | 150,000.00             | 150,000.00              | 150,000.00               |
| Division of Internal Audit                    | SW   | 358,449.00             | 358,449.00              | 429,325.00               |
|   | OE   | 2,500.00               | 2,500.00                | 7,600.00                 |
| County Counsel                                | SW   | 1,402,127.00           | 1,402,127.00            | 1,338,664.00             |
|   | OE   | 97,300.00              | 97,300.00               | 83,100.00                |
| County Adjuster                               | SW   | 418,193.00             | 418,193.00              | 429,538.00               |
|   | OE   | 1,000.00               | 1,000.00                | 1,000.00                 |
| <b>Department of Administrative Services:</b> |      |                        |                         |                          |
| Office of Director                            | SW   | 350,349.00             | 337,511.13              | 302,066.00               |
|   | OE   | 25,500.00              | 25,500.00               | 15,700.00                |
| Division of Motor Vehicles                    | SW   | 1,907,385.00           | 1,757,385.00            | 1,872,046.00             |
|   | OE   | 4,460,000.00           | 4,610,000.00            | 5,180,000.00             |

**2024 EXECUTIVE BUDGET  
APPROPRIATION SCHEDULE**

|  | Type | 2023 Adopted<br>Budget | 2023 Modified<br>Budget | 2024 Executive<br>Budget |
|--|------|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Division of Personnel Mngt & Labor Relations                 | SW   | 1,226,447.00           | 1,226,447.00            | 1,225,904.00             |
|  | OE   | 1,280,700.00           | 1,280,700.00            | 1,154,450.00             |
| Division of Purchasing                                       | SW   | 483,964.00             | 483,964.00              | 500,803.00               |
|  | OE   | 249,130.00             | 249,130.00              | 249,130.00               |
| Board of Taxation  | SW   | 298,340.00             | 298,340.00              | 304,307.00               |
|  | OE   | -                      | -                       | -                        |
| County Surrogate   | SW   | 1,173,158.00           | 1,173,158.00            | 1,226,082.00             |
|  | OE   | 36,200.00              | 36,200.00               | 38,200.00                |
| <b>Department of Economic Development:</b>                   |      |                        |                         |                          |
| Office of Director   | SW   | 452,711.00             | 452,711.00              | 469,082.00               |
|  | OE   | 112,000.00             | 112,000.00              | 102,000.00               |
| Community Services   | SW   | 338,291.00             | 338,291.00              | 199,305.00               |
|  | OE   | 254,500.00             | 254,500.00              | 7,000.00                 |
| Division of Strategic Planning & Intergovernmental Relations | SW   | 554,344.00             | 554,344.00              | 716,641.00               |
|  | OE   | 471,000.00             | 471,000.00              | 755,000.00               |
| Division of Information Technology                           | SW   | 837,749.00             | 837,749.00              | 863,870.00               |
|  | OE   | 2,052,000.00           | 2,052,000.00            | 2,126,000.00             |
| Insurance:   |      |                        |                         |                          |
| Group Health Insurance Plan for Employees                    | OE   | 53,417,533.00          | 55,417,533.00           | 60,732,777.00            |
| Surety Bond Premiums   | OE   | 12,000.00              | 12,000.00               | 12,000.00                |
| Other Insurance Premiums                                     | OE   | 9,239,409.00           | 9,239,409.00            | 9,800,184.00             |
| Employees' Prescription Plan                                 | OE   | 26,803,875.00          | 24,803,875.00           | 27,432,410.00            |
| Dental Plan  | OE   | 900,000.00             | 900,000.00              | 575,000.00               |
| Disability Insurance   | OE   | 200,000.00             | 200,000.00              | 200,000.00               |
| <b>TOTAL GENERAL GOVERNMENT</b>                              |      | <b>124,204,615.00</b>  | <b>124,191,777.13</b>   | <b>134,511,206.00</b>    |
| <b>PUBLIC SAFETY:</b>  |      |                        |                         |                          |
| Sheriff's Office   | SW   | 23,390,653.00          | 23,347,653.00           | 24,556,017.00            |
|  | OE   | 517,000.00             | 610,000.00              | 605,000.00               |
| Division of Corrections                                      | SW   | 6,285,971.00           | 6,135,971.00            | 6,126,896.00             |
|  | OE   | 18,403,500.00          | 18,403,500.00           | 18,668,500.00            |
| Juvenile Detention   | SW   | 74,290.00              | 74,290.00               | 74,300.00                |
|  | OE   | 1,500,000.00           | 2,000,000.00            | 2,000,000.00             |
| <b>Department of Public Safety</b>                           |      |                        |                         |                          |
| Office of Director   | SW   | 304,380.00             | 304,380.00              | 313,122.00               |
|  | OE   | 1,000.00               | 1,000.00                | 1,000.00                 |
| Division of Weights and Measures                             | SW   | 391,015.00             | 391,015.00              | 402,265.00               |
|  | OE   | 4,100.00               | 4,100.00                | 4,050.00                 |
| Division of Medical Examiner                                 | SW   | 708,993.00             | 733,993.00              | 706,317.00               |
|  | OE   | 640,924.00             | 940,924.00              | 885,744.00               |
| Division of Emergency Management                             | SW   | 1,412,187.00           | 1,462,187.00            | 1,452,389.00             |
|  | OE   | 377,100.00             | 377,100.00              | 481,575.00               |

**2024 EXECUTIVE BUDGET  
APPROPRIATION SCHEDULE**

|   | Type | 2023 Adopted<br>Budget | 2023 Modified<br>Budget | 2024 Executive<br>Budget |
|---|------|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Emergency Medical Services                              | SW   | 1,878,735.00           | 2,303,735.00            | 2,341,111.00             |
|   | OE   | 135,000.00             | 206,000.00              | 215,000.00               |
| Division of County Police                               | SW   | 11,599,934.00          | 11,924,934.00           | 12,133,174.00            |
|   | OE   | 306,000.00             | 306,000.00              | 314,600.00               |
| Division of Health                                      | SW   | 506,396.00             | 435,396.00              | 410,931.00               |
|   | OE   | 217,683.00             | 217,683.00              | 168,183.00               |
| County Prosecutor's Office                              | SW   | 25,276,022.00          | 25,276,022.00           | 25,882,894.00            |
|   | OE   | 916,000.00             | 916,000.00              | 970,249.00               |
| Contribution to Soil Conservation District              | OE   | 37,832.00              | 37,832.00               | 39,723.60                |
| <b>TOTAL PUBLIC SAFETY</b>                              |      | <b>94,884,715.00</b>   | <b>96,409,715.00</b>    | <b>98,753,040.60</b>     |
| <b>OPERATIONAL SERVICES:</b>                            |      |                        |                         |                          |
| <b>Department of Public Works &amp; Facilities Mngt</b> |      |                        |                         |                          |
| Office of the Director                                  | SW   | 67,659.00              | 67,659.00               | 41,852.00                |
|   | OE   | 9,700.00               | 9,700.00                | 9,700.00                 |
| Engineering, Land and Facilities Planning               | SW   | 1,156,253.00           | 1,156,253.00            | 1,169,085.00             |
|   | OE   | 419,000.00             | 419,000.00              | 434,500.00               |
| Division of Public Works                                | SW   | 2,552,697.00           | 2,552,697.00            | 2,524,553.00             |
|   | OE   | 50,200.00              | 50,200.00               | 71,200.00                |
| Division of Facilities Management                       | SW   | 8,141,707.00           | 7,741,707.00            | 7,996,219.00             |
|   | OE   | 8,577,500.00           | 8,577,500.00            | 8,424,500.00             |
| Contribution for Flood Control                          | OE   | 15,335.00              | 15,335.00               | 15,642.00                |
| <b>TOTAL OPERATIONAL SERVICES</b>                       |      | <b>20,990,051.00</b>   | <b>20,590,051.00</b>    | <b>20,687,251.00</b>     |
| <b>HEALTH AND WELFARE:</b>                              |      |                        |                         |                          |
| Children's Specialized Hospital                         | OE   | 50,000.00              | 50,000.00               | 50,000.00                |
| Cornerstone Psychiatric Facility                        | SW   | 7,116,828.00           | 7,116,828.00            | 6,858,376.00             |
|   | OE   | 7,462,663.00           | 7,462,663.00            | 7,438,520.00             |
| Adult Diagnostic Center                                 | OE   | 9,000.00               | 9,000.00                | 9,000.00                 |
| Psychiatric Treatment                                   | OE   | 5,000.00               | 5,000.00                | 5,000.00                 |
| Maintenance of Patients: Mental Health Services         | OE   | 3,984,304.00           | 3,984,304.00            | 3,780,195.00             |
| Rutgers Behavioral Health Care                          | OE   | 12,377.00              | 12,377.00               | 36,476.00                |
| Maintenance of Patients: Geriatric Center               | OE   | 153,000.00             | 153,000.00              | 153,000.00               |
| <b>Department of Human Services</b>                     |      |                        |                         |                          |
| Office of Director                                      | SW   | 939,690.00             | 939,690.00              | 965,977.00               |
|   | OE   | 1,687,708.00           | 1,687,708.00            | 1,694,450.00             |
| Division of Aging                                       | SW   | 419,235.00             | 419,235.00              | 456,673.00               |
|   | OE   | 2,185,234.00           | 2,185,234.00            | 2,185,134.00             |

**2024 EXECUTIVE BUDGET  
APPROPRIATION SCHEDULE**

|  | Type | 2023 Adopted<br>Budget | 2023 Modified<br>Budget | 2024 Executive<br>Budget |
|--|------|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Division of Youth Services                       | SW   | 925,379.00             | 925,379.00              | 953,566.00               |
|  | OE   | 104,499.00             | 104,499.00              | 111,439.00               |
| Division of Outreach & Advocacy                  | SW   | 665,443.00             | 670,443.00              | 683,232.00               |
|  | OE   | 22,100.00              | 22,100.00               | 27,100.00                |
| Employment & Training                            | SW   | 261,539.00             | 261,539.00              | 273,278.00               |
|  | OE   | 38,550.00              | 38,550.00               | 355,050.00               |
| Division of Social Services                      | SW   | 38,946,837.00          | 38,716,837.00           | 38,743,462.00            |
|  | OE   | 9,817,737.00           | 10,047,737.00           | 10,455,938.00            |
| Division of Individual & Family Support Services | SW   | 623,522.00             | 623,522.00              | 655,249.00               |
|  | OE   | 846,567.00             | 846,567.00              | 884,551.00               |
| Division of Paratransit                          | SW   | 56,082.00              | 57,082.00               | 58,927.00                |
|  | OE   | 2,600,000.00           | 2,600,000.00            | 2,600,000.00             |
| <b>TOTAL HEALTH AND WELFARE</b>                  |      | <b>78,933,294.00</b>   | <b>78,939,294.00</b>    | <b>79,434,593.00</b>     |
| <b>RECREATION:</b>                               |      |                        |                         |                          |
| <b>Department Parks &amp; Recreation:</b>        |      |                        |                         |                          |
| Office of the Director                           | SW   | 1,125,941.00           | 1,125,941.00            | 1,015,689.00             |
|  | OE   | 222,000.00             | 222,000.00              | 230,500.00               |
| Recreational Facilities                          | SW   | 2,310,968.00           | 2,310,968.00            | 2,291,553.00             |
|  | OE   | 8,285,020.00           | 8,285,020.00            | 9,466,310.00             |
| Division of Planning & Environmental Services    | SW   | 668,402.00             | 668,402.00              | 687,638.00               |
|  | OE   | 107,000.00             | 107,000.00              | 145,900.00               |
| Park Maintenance                                 | SW   | 3,096,894.00           | 3,096,894.00            | 3,098,950.00             |
|  | OE   | 590,100.00             | 590,100.00              | 784,100.00               |
| Cultural and Heritage Affairs                    | SW   | 190,675.00             | 190,675.00              | 190,999.00               |
|  | OE   | 19,860.00              | 19,860.00               | 20,000.00                |
| <b>TOTAL RECREATION</b>                          |      | <b>16,616,860.00</b>   | <b>16,616,860.00</b>    | <b>17,931,639.00</b>     |
| <b>EDUCATION</b>                                 |      |                        |                         |                          |
| Office of County Superintendent of Schools       | SW   | 291,937.00             | 291,937.00              | 295,832.00               |
|  | OE   | 12,500.00              | 12,500.00               | 12,500.00                |
| Vocational Schools                               | OE   | 5,553,393.00           | 5,553,393.00            | 5,581,160.00             |
| Union County Extension Service in Agriculture    | SW   | 56,400.00              | 56,400.00               | 51,236.00                |
|  | OE   | 132,691.00             | 132,691.00              | 135,500.00               |
| Union County Community College System            | OE   | 16,053,315.00          | 16,053,315.00           | 16,133,582.00            |
| Scholarship Program                              | OE   | 190,000.00             | 190,000.00              | 190,000.00               |
| Reimbursement for Residents: Out of County       | OE   | 217,000.00             | 217,000.00              | 217,000.00               |
| Educational Services Commission                  | OE   | 70,000.00              | 70,000.00               | 70,000.00                |
| <b>TOTAL EDUCATION</b>                           |      | <b>22,577,236.00</b>   | <b>22,577,236.00</b>    | <b>22,686,810.00</b>     |

**2024 EXECUTIVE BUDGET  
APPROPRIATION SCHEDULE**

|  | Type      | 2023 Adopted<br>Budget | 2023 Modified<br>Budget | 2024 Executive<br>Budget |
|--|-----------|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>UNCLASSIFIED:</b>                             |           |                        |                         |                          |
| Prior Year Bills                                 | OE        | 213,046.21             | 213,046.21              | 111,597.12               |
| Salary Adjustment                                | SW        | 1,118,162.13           | -                       | 1,914,527.80             |
| Accumulated Absences                             | SW        | 2,000,000.00           | 2,000,000.00            | 2,250,000.00             |
| Utilities  | OE        | 9,462,100.00           | 9,462,100.00            | 10,212,600.00            |
| <b>TOTAL UNCLASSIFIED</b>                        |           | <b>12,793,308.34</b>   | <b>11,675,146.21</b>    | <b>14,488,724.92</b>     |
| <b>STATE AND FEDERAL PROGRAMS:</b>               |           |                        |                         |                          |
| State and Federal Grants                         | OE        | 23,299,493.43          | 91,962,691.31           | 14,731,084.08            |
| Matching Funds                                   | OE        | 1,250,000.00           | 1,250,000.00            | 1,250,000.00             |
| <b>TOTAL STATE AND FEDERAL PROGRAMS</b>          |           | <b>24,549,493.43</b>   | <b>93,212,691.31</b>    | <b>15,981,084.08</b>     |
| <b>TOTAL OPERATIONS</b>                          |           | <b>395,549,572.77</b>  | <b>464,212,770.65</b>   | <b>404,474,348.60</b>    |
| Contingent                                       | OE        | 50,000.00              | 50,000.00               | 50,000.00                |
| <b>TOTAL CONTINGENT</b>                          |           | <b>50,000.00</b>       | <b>50,000.00</b>        | <b>50,000.00</b>         |
| <b>DETAIL:</b>                                   |           |                        |                         |                          |
| <b>TOTAL SALARIES &amp; WAGES</b>                | <b>SW</b> | <b>163,668,699.13</b>  | <b>162,279,699.13</b>   | <b>167,054,544.80</b>    |
| <b>TOTAL OTHER EXPENSES INCLUDING CONTINGENT</b> | <b>OE</b> | <b>231,930,873.64</b>  | <b>301,983,071.52</b>   | <b>237,469,803.80</b>    |
| <b>CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS:</b>                     |           |                        |                         |                          |
| Capital Improvement Fund                         | OE        | 3,300,000.00           | 3,300,000.00            | 3,300,000.00             |
| Road Resurfacing                                 | OE        | 2,750,000.00           | 2,750,000.00            | 2,750,000.00             |
| <b>TOTAL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS</b>                |           | <b>6,050,000.00</b>    | <b>6,050,000.00</b>     | <b>6,050,000.00</b>      |
| <b>DEBT SERVICE</b>                              |           |                        |                         |                          |
| Bond Principal                                   |           |                        |                         |                          |
| State Aid College Bonds                          | OE        | 3,275,000.00           | 3,275,000.00            | 3,610,000.00             |
| Vocational School Bonds                          | OE        | 4,115,000.00           | 4,115,000.00            | 3,690,000.00             |
| Other Bonds                                      | OE        | 43,215,000.00          | 43,215,000.00           | 41,470,000.00            |
| College Bonds                                    | OE        | 3,475,000.00           | 3,475,000.00            | 2,190,000.00             |
| Interest on Bonds                                |           |                        |                         |                          |
| State Aid College Bonds                          | OE        | 775,034.00             | 775,033.50              | 787,635.00               |
| College Bonds                                    | OE        | 599,610.00             | 599,609.17              | 457,588.00               |
| Vocational School Bonds                          | OE        | 896,803.00             | 896,802.22              | 762,200.00               |
| Other Bonds                                      | OE        | 9,221,284.00           | 9,121,283.08            | 7,807,563.00             |
| Interest on Notes                                | OE        | 1,586,250.00           | 1,566,249.97            | 3,520,000.00             |
| Principal on Notes                               | OE        | -                      | -                       | -                        |
| Lease Payments                                   |           |                        |                         |                          |
| UCIA - Lease Payments                            | OE        | 10,895,372.00          | 8,378,678.59            | 10,625,340.00            |
| UCIA - State Aid College Bonds                   | OE        | 813,294.00             | 813,293.76              | 812,669.00               |
| Dam Restoration Loans                            |           |                        |                         |                          |
| Dam - Principal                                  | OE        | 189,250.00             | 189,249.66              | 193,054.00               |
| Dam- Interest                                    | OE        | 20,291.00              | 20,290.66               | 16,487.00                |
| License Agreements - Pace                        | OE        | -                      | -                       | -                        |
| <b>TOTAL COUNTY DEBT SERVICE</b>                 |           | <b>79,077,188.00</b>   | <b>76,440,490.61</b>    | <b>75,942,536.00</b>     |

**2024 EXECUTIVE BUDGET  
APPROPRIATION SCHEDULE**

|  | Type | 2023 Adopted<br>Budget    | 2023 Modified<br>Budget   | 2024 Executive<br>Budget  |
|--|------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>DEFERRED CHARGES:</b>                       |      |                           |                           |                           |
| Deferred Charges to Future Taxation - Unfunded | OE   | 703.26                    | 703.26                    | 317,965.46                |
| <b>TOTAL DEFERRED CHARGES</b>                  |      | <b>703.26</b>             | <b>703.26</b>             | <b>317,965.46</b>         |
| <br><b>STATUTORY EXPENDITURES:</b>             |      |                           |                           |                           |
| Public Employees Retirement System             | OE   | 19,869,708.00             | 19,869,708.00             | 18,967,388.00             |
| Police and Firemen's Retirement Fund           | OE   | 17,047,393.00             | 17,047,393.00             | 15,644,776.00             |
| Social Security System (OASI)                  | OE   | 11,000,000.00             | 11,000,000.00             | 11,000,000.00             |
| Defined Contribution Retirement Fund           | OE   | 100,000.00                | 100,000.00                | 115,000.00                |
| Unemployment Compensation Insurance            | OE   | 150,000.00                | 150,000.00                | 150,000.00                |
| <b>TOTAL STATUTORY EXPENDITURES</b>            |      | <b>48,167,101.00</b>      | <b>48,167,101.00</b>      | <b>45,877,164.00</b>      |
| <br><b>TOTAL GENERAL APPROPRIATIONS</b>        |      | <br><b>528,894,565.03</b> | <br><b>594,921,065.52</b> | <br><b>532,712,014.06</b> |



|   |  |              |  |                      |             |
|---|--|--------------|--|----------------------|-------------|
| The instructions can be found on the Instruction Tab of the workbook.   |  |              |  |                      |             |
| <b>Summary Levy Cap Calculation</b>   |  |              |  |                      |             |
|   |  | County       |  | EXAMINER             |             |
|   | 2000   | Union County |  |                      |             |
| <b>Model Tax Levy Calculation Worksheet</b>   |  |              |  |                      |             |
| <b>Levy Cap Calculation</b>   |  |              |  |                      |             |
|   | Prior Year Amount to be Raised by Taxation - County Purpose Tax                      |              |  | \$367,295,299        |             |
|   | Cap Base Adjustment (+/-)  |              |  | \$0                  |             |
|   | Less: Prior Year Deferred Charges: Emergency Authorizations                          |              |  | \$0                  |             |
|   | Less: Prior Year Deferred Charges to Future Taxation Unfunded                        |              |  | \$703                |             |
|   | Less: Changes in Service Provider: Transfer of Service/ Function                     |              |  | \$0                  |             |
|   | Net Prior Year Tax Levy for County Purpose Tax for Cap Calculation                   |              |  | \$367,294,596        |             |
|   | Plus 2% Cap increase   |              |  | \$7,345,892          |             |
| <b>Adjusted Tax Levy</b>  |  |              |  | <b>\$374,640,488</b> |             |
|   | Plus: Assumption of Service/ Function  |              |  | \$0                  |             |
| <b>Adjusted Tax Levy Prior to Exclusions</b>  |  |              |  | <b>\$374,640,488</b> |             |
|   | Exclusions:  |              |  |                      |             |
|   | Allowable Shared Service Agreements Increase   |              |  | \$0                  |             |
|   | Allowable Health care costs increase   |              |  | \$3,962,971          |             |
|   | Allowable Pension increases  |              |  | \$0                  |             |
|   | Allowable Capital Improvements Increase  |              |  | \$0                  |             |
|   | Allowable Debt Service and Capital Lease Increases                                   |              |  | \$530,140            |             |
|   | Current Year Deferred Charges: Emergencies   |              |  | \$0                  |             |
|   | Deferred Charges to Future Taxation Unfunded   |              |  | \$317,965            |             |
|   | Add Total Exclusions   |              |  |                      | \$4,811,077 |
|   | Less Cancelled or Unexpended Exclusions  |              |  |                      | \$2,636,697 |
| <b>Adjusted Tax Levy After Exclusions</b>   |  |              |  | <b>\$376,814,867</b> |             |
|   | Additions:   |              |  |                      |             |
|   | New Ratables - Increase in Apportionment Valuation of New Construction and Additions |              |  | \$506,448,351        |             |
|   | Prior Year's County Purpose Tax Rate (per \$100)                                     |              |  | \$0.395              |             |
|   | New Ratable Adjustment to Levy   |              |  |                      | \$2,000,000 |
|   | Amounts approved by Referendum   |              |  |                      | \$0         |
| <b>Maximum Allowable Amount to be Raised by Taxation - County Purpose Tax</b>   |  |              |  | <b>\$378,814,867</b> |             |
|   | Plus: 2021 Cap Bank Utilized in 2024*  |              |  | \$0                  |             |
|   | Plus: 2022 Cap Bank Utilized in 2024*  |              |  | \$0                  |             |
|   | Plus: 2023 Cap Bank Utilized in 2024*  |              |  | \$0                  |             |
| <b>Maximum Allowable Amount to be Raised by Taxation - CPT After All Exclusions</b>   |  |              |  | <b>\$378,814,867</b> |             |
| <b>Amount to be Raised by Taxation - County Purpose Tax</b>   |  |              |  | <b>\$373,722,967</b> |             |
| <i>*Can only be added to the extent that the Maximum Allowable Amount to be Raised by Taxation – CPT After All Exclusions (Cell E37) does not exceed the "1977 Cap" Maximum County Purpose Tax After All Exceptions (Levy Cap Determination and Budget Preparation Worksheet – Cell D45).</i> |  |              |  |                      |             |

2023

| 1977 Cap Exclusions Calculation   |       |               |                |
|---|-------|---------------|----------------|
| The instructions can be found on the Instruction Tab of the workbook.     |       |               |                |
| County of:  | Union | Municode:     | 2000           |
| County Purpose Tax  |       |               | 367,295,299.43 |
| CAP Base Adjustment   |       |               |                |
| Revised County Purpose Tax:   |       |               | 367,295,299.43 |
| EXCEPTIONS:   |       |               |                |
| (Less:)   |       |               |                |
| Debt Service  |       |               | 70,904,264.83  |
| Deferred Charges  |       |               | 703.26         |
| Emergency Appropriations  |       |               | 0.00           |
| Capital Improvements  |       |               | 6,050,000.00   |
| Matching Funds  |       |               | 1,250,000.00   |
| Authority - Share of Costs MUA  |       |               | 0.00           |
| County Welfare Board  |       |               | 25,625,880.00  |
| Special Services School District  |       |               | 0.00           |
| Vocational School   |       |               | 5,553,393.00   |
| Out of County Vocational School   |       |               | 0.00           |
| County College (Current Year)   |       | 16,053,315.00 |                |
| Less County College (1992 Base)   |       | 8,995,000.00  |                |
| Net County College  |       |               | 7,058,315.00   |
| Out of County College (Current Year)                                      |       | 217,000.00    |                |
| Less Out of County College (1992 Base)                                    |       | 275,000.00    |                |
| Net Out of County College   |       |               | 0.00           |
| Capital Lease Payments  |       |               |                |
| 9 1 1 Emergency Management Services                                       |       |               |                |
| Health Insurance  |       |               |                |
|   |       |               |                |
|   |       |               |                |
|   |       |               |                |
|   |       |               |                |
|   |       |               |                |
|   |       |               |                |
| TOTAL EXCEPTIONS  |       |               | 116,442,556.09 |
| Amount on which 2.50% Cap is applied                                      |       |               | 250,852,743.34 |
| 2.50% Cap Amount  |       |               | 6,271,318.58   |
| Allowable County Tax Before Additional Exceptions per (N.J.S. 40A:4-45.4) |       |               | 257,124,061.92 |

| 2024 Levy Cap Determination and Budget Preparation   |        |               |                |
|--|--------|---------------|----------------|
| 2000   | County | Union County  |                |
| 'The instructions can be found on the Instruction Tab of the workbook.   |        |               |                |
| Allowable County Purpose Tax Before Additional Exceptions per (N.J.S. 40A:4-45.4)  |        |               | 257,124,061.92 |
| <b>Add:</b>  |        |               |                |
| New Construction   |        |               | 2,000,000.00   |
| Debt Service and Capital Leases  |        | 75,942,536.00 |                |
| Less Debt Service & Capital Lease Revenues Offset by Approps   |        | 6,830,994.81  |                |
| Net Debt Service and Capital Lease Obligations   |        |               | 69,111,541.19  |
| Deferred Charges to Future Taxation - Unfunded   |        |               | 317,965.46     |
| Emergency Authorizations   |        |               |                |
| Capital Improvements   |        |               | 6,050,000.00   |
| Matching Funds   |        |               | 1,250,000.00   |
| County Welfare Board   |        | 70,612,252.00 |                |
| Less Welfare Revenue Offset by Appropriation   |        | 44,850,000.00 |                |
| Net County Welfare Board   |        |               | 25,762,252.00  |
| Special School Districts   |        |               |                |
| Vocational School  |        |               | 5,581,160.00   |
| Out of County Vocational School  |        |               |                |
| County College   |        | 16,133,582.00 |                |
| Less County College 1992 Base  |        | 8,995,000.00  |                |
| Net County College   |        |               | 7,138,582.00   |
| Out of County College  |        | 217,000.00    |                |
| Less Out of County College 1992 Base   |        | 275,000.00    |                |
| Net Out of County College  |        |               | 0.00           |
| 911 Emergency Management Services  |        |               |                |
| Health Insurance   |        |               | 2,495,204.28   |
|  |        |               |                |
|  |        |               |                |
|  |        |               |                |
|  |        |               |                |
|  |        |               |                |
|  |        |               |                |
| <b>Subtotal</b>  |        |               | 376,830,766.84 |
| 2022 Cap Bank Utilized*  |        |               |                |
| 2023 Cap Bank Utilized*  |        |               |                |
| COLA Increase Available/Utilized*  |        | 2,508,527.43  |                |
| <b>"1977 Cap" Maximum County Purpose Tax After All Exceptions</b>  |        |               | 376,830,766.84 |
| <b>"2010 Cap" Maximum Allowable Amount to be Raised by Taxation After all Exceptions</b>   |        |               | 378,814,867.41 |
| (From the Summary Levy Cap Worksheet)  |        |               |                |
| <b>Amount to be Raised by Taxation - County Purpose Tax</b>  |        |               | 373,722,967.17 |
|  |        |               | Use 1977 Calc. |
| *Can only be added to the extent needed to support the budget and to the extent that the "1977 Cap" Maximum County Purpose Tax After All Exceptions (Cell D45) does not exceed the "2010 Cap" Maximum Allowable Amount to be Raised by Taxation After All Exceptions (Cell D47). |        |               |                |

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# Overview of Union County Government

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**Office of Clerk of the Board**

**Office of Communication and Public  
Information**

**Office of Open Space, Recreation  
And Historic Preservation Trust Fund**

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# CLERK OF THE BOARD

## Mission

To prepare for and coordinate the activities of Union County Board of County Commissioners meetings; act as the depository and maintenance of vital County documents; act as custodian of the official County seal and provide administrative services for the Board.

## Programs & Services

**Commissioner Meetings:** Coordination of Commissioner meetings including but not limited to: scheduling, agenda development and preparation, policy execution, correspondence, attendance, recording of votes and actions, processing of all resolutions and ordinances and forwarding of same to appropriate entities, required legal advertising and constituent outreach and recognition.

**Record Keeping:** Note and preserve the minutes of the Board, recording all actions and votes taken, and the substance of discussions and debate relating thereto.

**Official Depository:** Preserve all official records, actions, votes, and substance of discussions of the Board of County Commissioners. Keep and compile all ordinances, resolutions, minutes, contracts, surety bonds, insurance policies, and other official papers. Maintain a system of receiving and processing all Open Public Records Act (OPRA) requests. Maintain a system of receiving and processing all departmental requests for archived government documents.

## 2023 Accomplishments

The Office successfully re-organized the structure of the Office; accounting for the recent retirements, successfully redistributed tasks and responsibilities among staff. The Office sent one employee to obtain their Registered Municipal Clerk's (RMC) License, which was obtained in November 2023, and has served as an asset in supporting the re-organization of the office.

On January 3, 2023, the Office successfully coordinated the annual Installation Ceremony and Reorganizational Meeting of the Union County Board of County Commissioners held in-person in the Courtroom of the Honorable Assignment Judge Lisa Miralles Walsh, at the Union County Courthouse in Elizabeth, New Jersey.

Following the Reorganizational Meeting the Office coordinated twenty (20) double meetings (meetings where both the Agenda Setting Session and the Regular Meeting were held on the same night), totaling 40 meetings, held in-person at the County Administration Building in Elizabeth, New Jersey. The Office coordinated two (2) Budget Meetings of the Fiscal Committee.

The Office continued its implementation of the electronic (and paperless) agenda process. The agenda, packet including all the back-up, is created electronically and emailed to the Commissioner Board, eliminating the need for duplication at the print shop and reducing labor hours of the messengers to deliver the packets to the Commissioners prior to the meeting, saving printing, gas and personnel costs.

The Office coordinated and prepared numerous Laudatory Resolutions to honor individuals, citizen groups, community and non-profit agencies for their outstanding achievements and/or worthwhile endeavors. In 2023, the office prepared approximately 200 Commissioner Sponsored resolutions; many of which required the drafting of multiple resolutions tailored to specific to multiple individualized presentations. Additionally, the Office prepared, in coordination with the Office of Public Information, Policy Resolutions offering either the Board's support or protest to legislative bills affecting residents of Union County. The Office reviewed all Departmental resolutions submitted to the Board for approval, and disseminated in accordance with said resolution and advertised same in accordance with the law.

Each meeting of the Board of County Commissioners was considered a double meeting, and as such, in an effort to continue to provide information to the public, the agendas for both the Agenda Setting Sessions and Regular Meeting were typically posted to the website no later than the Tuesday prior to the ensuing Thursday meeting.

Ordinances approved by the Board of County Commissioners were posted to the website after introduction and then in final format after final adoption. Said ordinances were advertised in accordance with the law. The public hearing dates and final adoption dates were posted on the website as well.

The Office maintained a record of the Union County Advisory Boards, maintaining the official Oaths of Offices for said boards, and successfully appointed members to various vacancies to a number of Union County Advisory Boards.

Open Public Records Act Compliance: The Office of the Clerk of the Board continues to maintain a thorough process for handling Open Public Records Act (OPRA) requests. The OPRA office continues to see a strong interest in

government documents from the public. In 2023, there were 1,180 OPRA submissions, yielding requests for an amount upwards of 6,200 documents.

The system by which responses are tracked benefits both the County and the requestor, allowing the OPRA office to track progress and maintain open lines of communication with the public. Requestors are advised in writing throughout the request process: acknowledgment citing the receipt date, response deadline and OPRA guidelines; updates as applicable; and notification the request has been completed. This system helps ensure the County is in compliance with OPRA and responds to requests within the time frame prescribed by law. Additionally, the County responds to the vast majority of OPRA requests electronically, providing documents at no cost to requestors.

Office of Archives and Records Management: The Office of Archives and Records Management (OARM) provides essential services as they relate to records storage, archival preservation and document imaging.

The Office of Archives and Records Management continued to assist County departments in storage and records disposal. The Office continues to use VRC (Vital Records Controls) for our off-site storage. In 2023, the OARM office met with the Vice President of Operations for VRC, and successfully petitioned VRC to assign a staffer to provide daily status updates specific to orders placed by the County's Prosecutor's Office.

The Office Records Manager continues to work closely with the various Departments to ensure their storage and retrieval needs are being met. Given the time-sensitive nature of their materials and requests, the OARM has been in steady communication with all Departments, most notably the Prosecutor's Office, to ensure any delays are not negatively affecting their workflow.

In 2023, the OARM continued to assist the Division of Social Services in Plainfield with a large storage project, adding an additional 500 boxes of new inventory in October, in addition to the 400 boxes the Department archived last year. The staff on-site continues to adhere to the Records Management guidelines and requirements for archiving documents, in addition to tracking box contents with the system they developed last year in accordance with the necessary requirements. Additionally, in October of 2023, OARM assisted Cornerstone Behavioral Health Hospital of Union County with a large archiving project, which added an additional 233 boxes of new inventory. The OARM was responsible for entering box content information for all 233 boxes into the VRC database. In December of 2023, the OARM also assisted



the Department of Finance with a mass permanent withdrawal and disposition request. 749 boxes of existing inventory were removed from VRC and destroyed in accordance with NJ's Records Retention and Disposition Schedule. The mass disposition was completed in collaboration with the County's Bureau of Recycling and Planning. OARM coordinated transportation for the aforementioned requests and provided supplies, guidance, and support as needed.

In addition to the monthly imaging of Resolutions, Ordinances and Minutes of the Union County Board of Commissioners, the OARM continued imaging the back file of the County Adjuster into the OnBase document imaging database. The County Adjuster's records are required to be retained for 70 years by the New Jersey State Department of Archives and Records.

The OARM continued to investigate the potential of "cloud-hosting" for the OnBase database, through the auspices of Naviant.

Office of the Commissioners/Office of Commissioner Advancing and Staffing: The Office of the Clerk of the Board administrated and implemented the Commissioners Office's 2023 Budget.

The Clerk of the Board supervised the Office's responsibilities as they related to providing the day-to-day support to members of the Union County Board of County Commissioners. These responsibilities included, but were not limited to, managing each Commissioner's independent schedules; coordinating and confirming the Commissioners' attendance to various events - often involving the coordinating of Commissioner Talking Points, photography, and Resolution or Certificate Presentations; advancing the Commissioners at various events and relaying the logistics of said event prior to a Commissioner's arrival; drafting constituent letters in response to constituent concerns and constituent outreach letters; and assisted in the overall promotion of County Events, County Programs & Services, and the County of Union/County Board of County Commissioners.

The Office coordinated the implementation of the Commissioner Sponsorship program, working alongside the Department of Parks, to ensure County equipment was made available and delivered to approved County sponsored community events.

## **2024 Initiatives**

Office of the Clerk of the Board: In 2024, the Office of the Clerk of the Board will continue to perform statutory duties as required in an efficient and effective manner and continue to provide a high level of service to the public, the Board of County Commissioners and all other users of the office as is expected. In addition to the Agenda Setting Sessions, Regular Meetings and any Special Meeting of the Board, the Clerk of the Board's Office will coordinate each of the Fiscal Committee's public hearings on the budget and all other Subcommittee Meetings of the Board.

The Office will coordinate a countywide training for all users of the County's electronic (and paperless) agenda process to ensure all resolutions and ordinances are entered with appropriate attachments and all documents are scanned in their entirety. The Office will continue to explore ways to use the website to provide easier access and transparency, and continue to maintain a monthly updated record of advisory boards and any agendas and/or minutes of said advisory boards.

The Office will create a complete ledger of all Advisory Boards highlighting purpose, membership, meeting minutes and recommendations to the Commissioner Board. The Office will continue to research and revise previous initiatives proposed, and implement amended initiatives accordingly.

The Office will work in conjunction with County Counsel on expanding the digital Document Management process for all contracts, resolutions and ordinances.

The Office will continue to assist in the coordination of the Chairman's initiatives and all initiatives of the Board of County Commissioners.

Open Public Records Act Compliance: The OPRA staff will continue to respond to OPRA requests in an expeditious manner, allowing greater accessibility to government documents to members of the public.

The OPRA staff will continue to explore ways to enhance the efficiency of the communication between the Office of the Clerk of the Board and County departments to facilitate the compilation of documents responsive to OPRA requests, and work with the Office of County Counsel to obtain legal guidance as necessary and review documents for legally required redactions. The Office will continue to explore available technologies that may allow for greater transparency and efficiencies within the OPRA office. The Office will continue to provide continuing-education opportunities for OPRA staff to ensure their knowledge of the OPRA law is current and anticipatory of potential changes.

Office of Archives and Records Management: The Office will continue to ensure the proper processes relative to the storage and retrieval of its documents.

The Office will also continue to pursue training and or written instruction relative to State regulations regarding retention periods and disposal methods for emails and other electronic documents. The Office will continue to maintain the Certification of the County of Union's Electronic Data Management System, working closely with the State of New Jersey to document the County's imaging process and adhere to all State regulations. The OARM will explore alternatives to the current maintenance and IT services.

The Office will look to expand its OnBase records management document inventory and will incorporate new document types to promote convenience and mitigate document retrieval time within the Countywide OnBase system.

The Office staff will continue to monitor the retention schedules of the County's archived records and documents and set a biannual review of inventory and permanent withdrawal of records and documents that have reached their retention period, as prescribed by the New Jersey Department of Archives and Records Management (DARM), and will continue to implement a twice-a-year review of expired records in storage and destruction, and in compliance with the Bureau of Recycling & Planning Guidelines on shredding documents.

The Office will continue the purging of expired records from VRC; and seek to exponentially increase the number of purged documents through a "Scan and Shred" program for documents that have not met their retention date, but can be archived digitally in accordance with DARM guidelines, in its attempt to reduce the number of physical documents archived at an off-site location.

The Office will continue to work with the various departments with the retention of their documents and review unidentified boxes inventoried in the offsite document archive storage facility for destruction and retention schedules. OARM will continue to coordinate training for all Departmental Records Management personnel to minimize the on-site paper and file storage in County facilities and offices.

OARM will continue to assist municipalities in purging their inactive inventories at no cost under the successful municipal inventory purge project. Additionally, OARM will continue to make available scanning and indexing services to municipal clerks.

The OARM will continue to investigate the potential of “cloud-hosting” for the OnBase database, through the auspices of Naviant. The Office will continue to discuss this concept, and any other concepts that will increase efficiency.

Office of the Commissioners/Office of Commissioner Advancing and Staffing: The Clerk of the Board’s Office will continue to administer and implement the budget of the Union County Board of County Commissioners’ Office. The Office will continue to supervise the advance and staffing for the nine (9) elected County Commissioners; and furthermore, supervise the responsibilities of the Commissioner Aides as they relate to providing the day-to-day support to members of the County Commissioners. The Office will continue to coordinate the implementation of the Commissioner Sponsorship process. The Office will look to research and effectuate the most practicable and cost-effective method to provide informational outreach opportunities at community events.

# **OFFICE OF COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC INFORMATION**

## **Mission**

The Office of Communication and Public Information connects the residents of Union County's 21 municipalities with the programs and services initiated by the Commissioner Board and implemented by Union County Government, and for the Constitutional Offices on request. This is accomplished through media relations that have evolved from traditional print, television and radio outlets to include a wide range of online publications as well as the County's social media channels and website, along with an increased focus on graphics, videos and livestreaming. The Office also connects with members of the public on a daily basis to provide information and service referrals, through staffing the toll free Public InfoLine and Public Info email contact.

## **Programs & Services**

The Office conducts all media and social media communications for County Government, maintains and updates the County website, composes Commissioner speeches including the annual Chair's Re-Organization speech outlining County initiatives for the coming year, writes talking points for Commissioner meetings, answers inquiries from the public through the Public Info phone line and email, compiles and distributes daily news clips for internal use, staffs public events and creates signage and other materials for public events, and acts as the interface between County offices and the County's print services vendor. Additionally, in-house staff provides Spanish translation services.

The Office's Director of Digital, Web and Social Media Services manages all aspects of the County's web and social media portals with the assistance of other Office staff, including the UCIA, UCUA and UCJIF websites under shared services agreements. This individual also administers in-house bidding systems, is a 24-7 responder on all County communication platforms, and provides management of UC First Alert, IT support to the Commissioners and County Manager's Office, and tech presentation support to all County agencies.

The Office also provides web support for the Constitutional Offices of the County Clerk, Sheriff, Prosecutor, and Surrogate. Additionally, the Office provides frequent media and social media support to the County Clerk, Board of Elections and Rutgers

Extension, and provides media and social media support as requested by the Vocational-Technical School District and other County-related offices.

The Office works closely with dozens of publications and media outlets throughout Union County and the New York metro region including newspapers, websites, social media sites, magazines, broadcast TV, cable television outlets, radio stations, and newsletters. The Office's Director is in 24-hour contact with media, Commissioners, County Directors and personnel on police and all-County-related emergency events and emergent policy initiatives. Other Office staff are also on 24-7 call as needed.

The Office also works closely with all departments of County Government to provide information assistance and support pertaining to written, designed or drafted documents, comments, press inquiries, public outreach and more, and works with the Board of Commissioners and County Manager's office to answer constituent letters, emails and media questions quickly and accurately.

## **2023 Accomplishments**

### **1. Extensive Initiative Roll-Out**

In coordination with the visionary leadership of the Commissioner Chairman, the Office of Communication and Public Information has orchestrated over 35 dynamic initiatives in cooperation with various departments.

Our endeavors have transcended the conventional, embracing a multifaceted approach that includes the production of informational videos, the creation of engaging social media content, press releases, and the design of visually pleasing graphics—each tailored to complement every initiative.

This concerted effort represents a vibrant fusion of creativity and strategic communication, marking our commitment to not only disseminate information but to elevate each initiative into an increase of public awareness and engagement.

### **2. Social Media**

In 2023, our Union County social media presence has experienced significant growth on both Instagram and Facebook. We gained over 2,200 new followers on Instagram and nearly 2,000 new followers on Facebook. Our reach on Instagram increased by more than 23%, and Facebook recorded over 152,000 visits throughout the year.

The strategic emphasis on visual content, including videos and pictures, has played a key role in elevating our overall engagement and follower counts.

### **3. Regular Activities**

Among other actions, the Office of Communication and Public Information produced hundreds of press releases and of social media updates, and facilitated a revamp of the County Website, boosting different sections to make it more user friendly.

In its multi-layered endeavors, the Office of Communication and Public Information has demonstrated a dynamic commitment to disseminating vital information through hundreds of press releases and social media updates. Concurrently, the office spearheaded a renovation of the County Website, strategically enhancing various sections to elevate its user-friendliness.

This concerted effort not only fortified the accessibility of information but also exemplified a dedication to modernizing communication channels for the benefit of the public.

### **2024 Initiatives**

The Office of Communication and Public Information will continue to be the principal point of contact for communication to the Union County Board of Commissioners, County Officials, and external participants such as residents, media, businesses, municipalities and partners, as well as employees. OPI will continue to coordinate any crisis communications and duties as needed for the County Commissioners.

OPI will announce the introduction of a new app and a revitalized website, incorporating innovative tools and easier access to events and resources. Right at their fingertips, residents will be able to access up front information on local County events, parks, trails and maps highlighting where sports fields are, how to reserve a park area, bike paths and more.

It will feature interactive maps, event calendars and access to programs and services right at your fingertips.

We will continue to maintain the social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Twitter) with the most up-to-date information pertaining to the County of Union.

OPI has welcomed two new staff members dedicated to maximizing content creation, encompassing writing, graphics, photography, and more. Their expertise will significantly enhance the promotion of County events, programs, and services.

OPI will be working closely with each Department on their initiatives to gain more attention and interest from the public.

OPI will continue to be responsible for driving public and employee awareness to events, news, policies and initiatives for the County of Union, while upholding our reputation in developing relationships with local, regional and national press outlets.



# **OFFICE OF UNION COUNTY OPEN SPACE, RECREATION AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION TRUST FUND**

## **Mission**

The mission of the Open Space, Recreation and Historic Preservation Trust Fund is to assist in the execution of policy made by the Union County Board of Commissioners to conserve open space, provide recreational opportunities, and preserve historic sites throughout the twenty-one municipalities in Union County.

## **2023 Accomplishments**

### **Trust Fund**

The Open Space, Recreation and Historic Preservation Trust Fund was created by referendum on November 7, 2000 to be funded by establishing a levy of 1 ½ cents per \$100 of total County equalized real property valuation for twenty years. In 2016, a public question was placed on the November ballot to continue the Open Space, Recreation and Historic Preservation Trust Fund without an end date, and it was approved by the voters of Union County.

The Trust Fund will continue to provide monies for:

1. Acquisition of lands in Union County for recreation and conservation purposes;
2. Development of lands acquired for recreation and conservation purposes;
3. Maintenance of lands acquired for recreation and conservation purposes;
4. Historic preservation of historic properties, structures, facilities, sites, areas, or objects in Union County and the acquisition of such properties, structures, facilities, sites, areas, or objects in Union County for historic preservation purposes;
5. Payment of debt service on indebtedness issued or incurred for purposes (1), (2) and (4) above.

According to a report prepared by the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Policy at Rutgers University, the following was noted: “The preservation and maintenance of Union County’s park system... will be necessary to help sustain an attractive quality of life for the residents of Union County. Initiatives to create an Open Space Trust Fund that will support this effort... are highly recommended.”

## **Open Space**

The commitment to the acquisition of open space in the County of Union by the Union County Board of Commissioners is, and will remain, a cornerstone of the Trust Fund. With over 318 acres of land preserved as we ended 2021, the residents of Union County benefit each day from the increased quality of life those acquisitions bring.

In 2022, the Open Space, Recreation and Historic Preservation Trust Fund acquired 1.5+ acres in Berkeley Heights. This property is surrounded on two sides by County-owned parkland, and a third side by the Passaic River. This acquisition will provide a valuable connection to the Passaic River, and will be developed to provide access to walking trails along the Passaic River, along with river access for non-motorized boating.

This and other acquired parcels continue to prove the thoughtful commitment of Union County voters when this initiative was approved in 2000. It is not difficult to imagine the economic hardship that the development of the 63-acre American Water Property in the Watchung Reservation, the 17 acres in Berkeley Heights, or the varied dozens of acres in Clark, Rahway, Union and other municipalities would have caused. Equally as distressing would have been the irreversible loss of that open space in our already crowded county.

## **Recreation**

Through the Open Space, Recreation and Historic Preservation Trust Fund, the Union County Board of Commissioners has had a great impact on the recreational health of our county residents through multiple avenues of assistance.

In 2023, The Trust Fund administered various programs under the direction of the Chairman's Initiatives. These Grant programs promoted a stem-based education, improved nutrition, social activities, and volunteer service in local neighborhoods, and funding towards school and community art programs.

Plant A Seed Initiative- \$70,000.00 was awarded to School and Community Gardens. The Plant a Seed program garden grant program began in 2018. It is funded by the Chairman Initiatives and administered through the Trust Fund. It includes the Union County Kids Dig In grant program for schools, and the Union County Means Green community garden grant program. With the inclusion of Roselle Park and Summit for the first time in 2023, Kids Dig In has now funded

school gardens in all 21 municipalities of Union County. In addition, for the first time a Union County Blog was created for gardeners all around Union County to learn and keep up to date with each other.

On Stage! Grant Program- \$53,875.00 was awarded to high school productions and non-profit community organizations to support performing arts programs throughout Union County.

Sensory Friendly Theater- Sensory Friendly Theatre (SFT) is a series of live performances specially designed and adapted for children with autism and similar sensory sensitivity. Five shows were offered this year at the Union County Performing Arts Center.

In addition, the Board has provided direct assistance to municipalities through the Kids Recreation Trust Fund Grant Program and the Greening Union County Grant Program. This grant allows for municipalities to create, improve and expand recreational opportunities in their own backyards, as dictated by their needs and abilities.

Some highlights of these two avenues of improvement include:

Kids Recreation Grant Program- \$1,000,002.00 was awarded to municipalities in 2023 through the Kids Recreation Trust Fund grant program. It is important to note that this matching grant program provides for recreational improvements with municipalities, directed by municipalities. Since its inception in 2004, this grant program has put more than \$19,000,000.00 back into the parks and playgrounds in each of the 21 municipalities in Union County

Greening Union County Grant Program- Approximately \$100,000.00 was awarded to municipalities throughout Union County through the 2023 Greening Union County grant program. First offered in 2004, this grant program has provided over \$1,600,000.00 to municipalities throughout the County of Union. This matching grant program has added hundreds of trees throughout our county, improving the environmental health for the residents.

## **Historic Preservation**

The Open Space, Recreation and Historic Preservation Trust Fund continues to work to preserving the rich history in Union County. In 2023 the Trust Fund offered for its 11th year the “Preserve Union County Grant”.

Preserve Union County Grant- Approximately \$300,000.00 was awarded for projects that include the acquisition, stabilization, rehabilitation, restoration and/or preservation of historic sites by County, municipalities and qualified non-profit historic Preservation organizations. This grant was offered again in 2005, 2007, 2009 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019 and 2021 bringing the total amount awarded through the Preserve Union County grant to over \$4,000,000.00.

## **Revenue Generation**

The Open Space, Recreation and Historic Preservation Trust Fund continues to be an excellent vehicle for the generation of additional revenue to the County of Union. The State of New Jersey, through its Green Acres Program, has been an important partner in the Freeholder Board's efforts. Since the inception of the Trust Fund, the Union County Board of County Commissioners have generated over \$22,500,000 in grant awards from the Department of Environmental Protection, Green Acres Program.

## **2024 Initiatives**

### **Trust Fund**

The creation of the Open Space, Recreation and Historic Preservation Trust Fund in 2000, and the 2016 approval to continue this Fund, affirms the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders' continued commitment to the quality of life in our area. This unprecedented opportunity allows the ability to pursue that goal, while bringing an obligation to manage in a responsible and thoughtful manner. It is an opportunity that is respected, and an obligation that is taken seriously.

This Board will continue to pursue every avenue available as it seeks to preserve open space in the County of Union. Through its own efforts in the area of recreational expansion, the Board will continue to seek to improve existing facilities and add recreational opportunities as deemed necessary and affordable.

Grant programs like the Kids Recreation Trust Fund will continue to allow municipalities a strong voice in the management of their own recreational needs. Preserve Union County, a matching grant program available to historical sites within the County of Union, will continue to bring our rich history to life through the preservation of the buildings and areas of history in our own backyard.

Greening Union County will continue the important work of replacing trees throughout the County of Union, shaping the landscape and the environmental health of our municipalities.

The importance of planning documents commissioned by the Union County Board of Commissioners in the past several years will become strong tools as we move forward.

This Board also believes strongly in the maintenance of the heralded Union County Park System as it presently exists and, in keeping with the tenants of the original ordinance, will continue its efforts to make certain that our park system remains a jewel of our county.

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# **County Counsel**

**Office of County Counsel**

**Office of Adjuster**

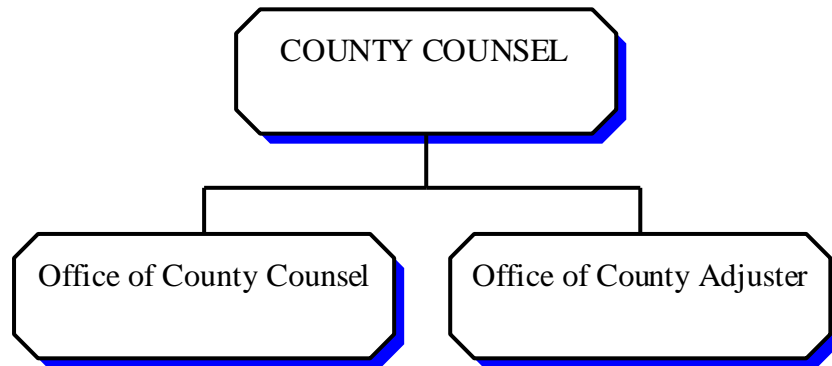
**Office of Affirmative Action**

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# Organizational Chart

## County Counsel







# **OFFICE OF THE COUNTY COUNSEL**

## **Mission**

The mission of the Office of the County Counsel is to provide a full range of legal representation, legal guidance and legal services to the Board of County Commissioners, the County Manager and to all departments, divisions, and offices within the County in a timely, efficient and cost-effective manner.

## **Programs & Services**

### **Representation in Civil Actions**

Prosecute or defend all civil actions brought on behalf of, or against, the County, its agents, employees, or representatives during the performance of their duties.

### **Legal Opinions and Advice**

Advise County government, all divisions and departments thereof, and all constitutional officers on legal rights and responsibilities, remedies, and ramifications of actions taken by them in the performance of their duties.

### **Draft County Legislation**

Prepare all resolutions and ordinances for consideration by the Board of County Commissioners.

### **Negotiate and Draft All Contracts**

Negotiate, draft and approve all contracts entered into by the County, including labor contracts, contracts committing County taxpayer funds for the performance of any work or service rendered by or for County and for the lease, purchase or sale of property.

### **Briefing of Current Laws, Rules and Regulations**

Advise and inform all County officials and personnel of current relevant State and Federal statutes, regulations, rules, and administrative orders.

**Review and Update of County Codes and Policies**

Assist in the continuing review and revision, as required, of the Administrative Code, by-laws, and all other policies of the County.

**Participate in Disciplinary Actions**

Provide for hearing officers and counsel as appropriate, in all disciplinary actions filed against County employees and at other administrative hearings.

**Division of Social Services**

Provide on-site legal services, guidance, and advice to the Division of Social Services and carry out statutory mandates as they relate to State or Federal reimbursement programs, including appearances in all court and fair hearings on behalf of the Division.

**Review of Bids**

Review and evaluate all bids and bidding practices and procedures in accordance with the Local Public Contracts Law.

**Fair and Open Process**

Provide guidance on the Fair and Open process to the various departments, offices and constitutional officers, including overseeing and supervising the public openings and the review committee process in evaluating all the submitted proposals.

**OPRA Requests**

Provide advice and guidance to the Office of the Clerk of the Board on approximately 1100 OPRA requests received annually and provide representation at both the Government Records Council (GRC) and the Superior Court of New Jersey on all litigated OPRA matters.

**Recovery of Bail Forfeitures**

In conjunction with the Superior Court of New Jersey and the County Finance Division seek recovery of forfeited bail monies, responding to a variety of motions, the filing of Default Judgments and other forfeiture matters, as well as negotiating bail forfeiture matters with counsel for the insurance companies and bail bond agencies.

## **2023 Accomplishments**

### **Case Management**

- Handled over 110 new Tort Claims filed against the County.
- Handled approximately 94 lawsuits, primarily where the County is named as a defendant or co-defendant, including all phases of the litigation from the initial pleadings through discovery, motions and, if necessary, trial.
- Successful utilized demands for dismissal of frivolous actions pursuant to Court rules, to expeditiously terminate unnecessary litigation.
- Where appropriate, filed motions for Summary Judgment to end litigation prior to trial.
- In conjunction with the Department of Administrative Services, coordinated assignment of personnel counsel relative to disciplinary matters to ensure timely and effective representation of the County and adjudication of claims.

### **General Office**

- Continued to update the County Administrative Code.
- Updated contracts in the areas of service, construction and products.
- Updated computer bank of alternate contract provisions and leases to County property.
- Continued to initiate collection on County matters.
- Continued to update and revise the Request for Proposal and Request for Qualification process and drafted, administered and supervised more than 75 such requests during the year.

## **2024 Initiatives**

- Continue to limit the County's exposure as it relates to self-insured liability claims.
- Continue to collect monies due to the County on bail forfeitures and to work in conjunction with the State of NJ on collection of past due judgment orders.

- Continue to investigate and where appropriate and necessary, initiate litigation to recover County expenditures relative to State obligated services/responsibilities.
- Present recommendations to the County Commissioner Policy Committee, to revise and update the Union County Administrative Code.
- Continue to ensure investigations are conducted, defenses are properly asserted and where applicable, insurance coverage is provided in all litigation matters.
- Continue our aggressive programs of identifying frivolous lawsuits and where appropriate seeking summary judgments in favor of the County, to save counsel fees and costs associated with litigation.
- Continue to play an active role in securing the County's fair share for all reimbursable services/expenditures, especially reimbursement from both the State and Federal Governments. Particular emphasis will be devoted to Medicaid and Medicare reimbursements for both Cornerstone Behavioral Health Hospital and for resident psychiatric patients in State facilities.
- Provide legal assistance for all shared services initiatives with municipalities and other public entities.
- Continue to provide counsel at all involuntary commitment proceedings, regardless of location.
- Continue to work with the Affirmative Action Officer to update our Affirmation Action/Equal Employment Opportunity Manual to ensure compliance with federal and State laws.

# **COUNTY ADJUSTER**

## **Mission**

County Adjuster is a statutory office authorized to act in cases of commitments or admission of persons to State, County or private hospitals for the mentally ill. It processes applications to determine both the legal residence of the patient and the ability of the patient to contribute toward care and maintenance. The Office also schedules all judicial initial and reviews hearings held at the hospitals on behalf of the patient and prepares all Court Orders relative to same. Handle all mental health searches for gun permits and remit forms to municipal and state police.

## **2023 Accomplishments**

- Approximately 1356 initial hearings and 972 review hearings were heard at various hospitals for Union County. During this year, the Office worked with the Courts, Public Defender and Hospitals to effectuate remote hearings for the safety of all participants.
- A total of 3485 hearings were scheduled.
- Over 230 cases were investigated and 234 cases court ordered.
- Over 958 consents for mental health reports were processed relative to firearm applications.

## **2024 Initiatives**

- Continue input of current data into the State issued Civil Commitment Automated Tracking System (C-CATS). A new system has been implemented for paper jackets to be uploaded to C-CATS system in order to access medical records from all patient's files who were admitted to psychiatric hospitals in New Jersey. This helps Judges to access records of patients at hearings.
- Continue to maintain the procedure by which all hard copy files of psychiatric patients are reviewed for retention/destruction evaluation.
- Attend training sessions by State on the County Billing System which will manage electronic data transfer between the State Psychiatric

Hospitals, the Department of Human Services of NJ, and its County Adjusters, Institutional Users and SPA Administrators.

- Continue to retrieve files from archives and prepare for scanning for immediate departmental access.
- Continue to retrieve files from archives and prepare for scanning for immediate departmental access.
- Continue to handle all gun permits and check mental health records.
- Continue to input all Expungements for Disability Relief into C-CATS for gun permit requests.
- Continue to address all correspondence from Out of State Police requests for gun permits and FBI requests for proof of admissions.
- Continue to coordinate, prepare and submit all documents and information needed by attorneys to attend all civil commitment hearings in person.
- Starting July 3, 2024, the Office of the County Adjuster will take on Ann Klein Forensic & Trenton Psychiatric hearings for 17 counties and will be responsible for preparing and scheduling weekly calendars for hospitals, public defenders and county counsels involved in the weekly hearings.
- Prepare 2024 and 2025 Calendars for Trinitas Psychiatric Hospital, Greystone Hospital in Summit, Cornerstone Behavioral Health, Ann Klein Forensic and Trenton Psychiatric Hospital, then distribute to all County Adjusters in the 21 municipalities, Hospitals, Public Defenders Offices, Office of County Counsel and Judge's Civil Division Manager from NJ Superior Courts.

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# **Department of Administrative Services**

**Motor Vehicles**

**Personnel Management and Labor Relations**

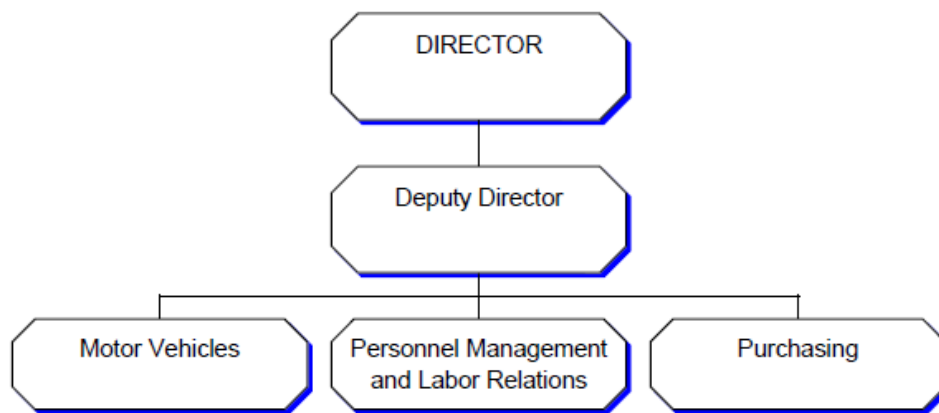
**Purchasing**

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# Organizational Chart

## Department of Administrative Services







# **DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES**

## **Mission**

To provide administration and internal structure for the departments of Union County government to allow for their effective and cost-efficient delivery of services to the public.

## **Programs & Services**

- Provides programs designed to control costs for wages and benefits, comply with Civil Service requirements and increase workforce productivity.
- Provides expertise towards procurement pursuant to the New Jersey Local Public Contracts Law, management for the self-insurance funds of the County, and transportation and repairs to vital County work equipment and also for maintenance of the telecommunication systems of the County including landlines and cellphones.
- Works in conjunction with expert brokers of the County to manage health and prescription insurance costs, general liability insurance, risk management costs and equipment maintenance costs. Seeks insurance vehicles to lower said costs.
- Heads the County Safety Committee which examines and reacts to any potential hazardous situations and also takes preventative steps such as training for drivers/workers. Also works in conjunction with Sheriff to insure the safety of County workers against potential threats.

## **2023 Accomplishments**

### **Administrative Services**

**Office of Asset Management:** The Office of Asset Management, in conjunction with our vendor for equipment repair, conducts a yearly County-wide investigation into covered items and ensures accurate adjustments to the policy.

### **Division of Motor Vehicles**

The Division's repair facilities consist of two service garages located at the Quarry in Springfield and Scotch Plains DPW. The DMV oversees the repair, maintenance

and procurement of the County's motor vehicles and active motorized equipment. The Division is also responsible for the management of the Telecommunications systems for landlines and cellular devices, operates the Messenger's dispatch office and the County's Mailroom.

Repair garages completed 1934 work orders as of October 31, 2023 for preventative and unscheduled repair and maintenance. The hours attributable to these work orders totaled 5764.0 hrs.

2023 (10/31) Repair orders: DMV Shop – 1357; Turf Shop (Public Works & Parks equipment) - 272; Paratransit - 286; Scotch Plains (Heavy Equipment Shop) - 120.

The Division operates 9 fueling sites across the county that has 452,917.3 gallons of gasoline and 95,185.7 gallons of diesel fuel, for a total of 548,103.0 as of October 31, 2023. These sites also provide fuel for various municipalities and authorities throughout the County, which are billed at a per-gallon charge. A total of 91,213.3 gallons were dispensed to Garwood, Kenilworth, Springfield, Winfield, The Elizabeth Housing Authority, The Elizabeth Parking Authority, Union County Education Commission, and The Utilities Authority.

**Messengers:** Performed all duties and tasks assigned to them in an orderly and timely fashion. The messengers have completed 17,440 deliveries as of October 31, 2023.

**Mailroom:** Processed 405,917 pieces of mail as of October 31, 2023, through the postage machines and delivered interoffice letters and packages throughout the County Complex daily.

**Telecommunications Unit:** Provides the entire phone and communication service for the County of Union, manages all providers of communication services throughout all the facilities owned and operated by the County from routing phone calls to repairing and maintaining the communications infrastructure. Completed as of October 31, 2023, approximately 800 repairs and installations for both telephone and computer network lines in the various County complexes.

### **Division of Personnel and Labor Relations**

- Administers New Jersey Civil Service Commissions matters relative to classifications, examinations, and certifications in compliance with the New Jersey Administrative Code.

- Manages programs and services including health benefit administration, classification and compensation, general insurances, employee/labor relations, employee assistance, risk management, and loss prevention.
- Provides staff training and development to maintain a highly skilled and productive workforce.
- Processes property, auto and workers compensation claims with our Third-Party Administrators.

## **Staff Training and Development**

**Supervisor and Employee Training--Preventing Workplace Harassment and Discrimination:** Coordinated an online training seminar including employment discrimination, workplace harassment, sensitivity, diversity, state laws and guidelines for Supervisors.

**Cybersecurity:** Coordinated an online training seminar that educated and trained employees about the threats that lurk in cyberspace, how to prevent and what to do in the event of a security incident.

## **Wellness Programs**

**Wellness Workshops:** Broadcasts periodic emails to all employees on current health topics including registration for webinars and coordinates with our Wellness Coach for nutrition and healthy lifestyle information sessions.

**Wellness Coach Program:** Coordinated a wellness coaching program for the employees to provide health coaching, smoking cessation, stress management and health challenges are offered one-on-one in person. A second coach was added to the program, and has been assigned to the Division of Social Services in the Westminster and Plainfield office locations.

### **Wellness Fair 2023: Wellness Fair and Flu Shot Program:**

The Division coordinated several Wellness Fairs for County employees in January. Biometric health screenings were offered to all employees free of charge. A nutritionist was provided onsite to consult, educate, support and promote healthy choices to employees as part of the health screening process and to cultivate a healthy work environment. Interactive stations were added to the event, including massages, hand scrubs, chair yoga sessions, a nutrition station with games and food samples, as well as a Derma Scan machine to view possible skin damage under UV

light. Employees also had the opportunity to meet with representatives from all of the County's healthcare insurance carriers to ask any questions they may have

**Flu Shot Clinic:**

Flu Shot Clinics were coordinated for County employees. Acme Pharmacy was brought onsite to administer flu shots to employees that wanted to be immunized for the upcoming winter season. There were 4 locations offered around the County throughout 1 week. In total, over 150 flu shots were administered.

**Employee Assistance Program (EAP):** In cooperation with the County's EAP vendor, ComPsych, coordinated referrals on an as-needed basis. ComPsych was also available to all employees and their family members to provide guidance and assistance with various issues and needs.

**Policies & Procedures**

**Employee Handbook/Manuals:** Updated and finalized the employee handbook, disciplinary manual and FMLA/NFJLA manual to be distributed in 2024.

**Performance Evaluation Process:** Enhanced the performance evaluations in our HR system to ensure employees are evaluated equally, fairly and consistently as well as creating an easier way to enter and track evaluations online. In 2022, a supervisor evaluation was implemented to review applicable employees on the leadership abilities expected in a supervisory position.

**Disciplinary and other General Matters:** Managed approximately 42 matters with the assistance of personnel attorney in regards to major disciplines.

**Fitness for Duty:** Coordinates physical and/or psychological examinations regarding an employee's physical and/or mental ability to perform their job.

**Leaves of Absence:** Processed approximately 273 leaves of absences.

**FMLA Services:** Tracks leaves that meet FMLA requirements between vendor and the Division of Personnel to ensure documentation and accurate processing.

**ACA Compliance:** As an "Applicable Large Employer" that offers health coverage under self-insured plans, the County is subject to IRS reporting requirements under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Information regarding offers of health coverage and enrollment for each month of the year is provided for each eligible employee and for all other County health insurance subscribers using IRS form 1095-C. The deadline for furnishing the forms to benefit eligible employees and covered retirees is March 2, 2023.

For tax year 2022, approximately 3,950 1095-C forms were furnished for eligible employees and other subscribers, including COBRA recipients and retirees, and must include enrollment data for approximately 4,000 dependents. The Division of Personnel monitors health enrollments on a consistent and ongoing basis throughout the year, conducting audits of enrollee and dependent names, birthdates, social security numbers and other relevant data in order to ensure compliance with the IRS deadline.

In cooperation with the County's payroll vendor, Primepoint, multiple process improvements have been made to ensure smooth and timely fulfillment of the County's ACA reporting requirements.

**Certificate and Graduate Programs in Public Administration with Kean University: County of Union Tuition Reimbursement Plan – 2023:** The County of Union Tuition Reimbursement Program continues to offer our County employees the opportunity to enroll in a degree program that provides career development in an area related to the work they perform for the County. Tuition Reimbursement is payable according to the grade as stipulated on the transcript; 100% for A; 75% for B; and 50% for C for tuition only. In 2023, eight more employees have enrolled in our tuition program, four in the Master's Degree category, and four in the Bachelor's Degree category. One of our previous participants graduated with their MA in accounting this year, congratulations to them. Offering tuition reimbursement to our employees shows that we value their dedication to the County and their willingness to improve their skill sets. In addition, we anticipate more employees will join the program and the benefits it has to offer.

### **Health Benefits**

**Donated Catastrophic Leave Program:** Assists incapacitated employees and employees with an immediate family member suffering from a life-threatening affliction or injury. In 2023, the program included eight (8) employees.

**Health Insurance Plans:** Eight years ago, the County introduced two new cost-effective medical plan options for all employees: Horizon Exclusive Provider Organization and Horizon Health Savings Account. The County requires all new hires to select one of these two options for medical and prescription coverage through the County. They cannot join any other medical plan offered by the County until completing two full years of employment, although they may switch between the two plans during the waiting period. As of December 2023, participation in the

two plans increased to a combined total 421 enrolled employees, which accounts for 26% of all insured active employees.

**Vision Plan:** An enhanced vision plan was secured effective January 2022, which includes upgraded eyewear coverage and more flexibility in using vision benefits. The plan has been positively received and has 193 members as of December 2023. Employee interest in the plan has caused an increase in enrollments for 2024.

**Dental Benefits:** In conjunction with the County's health insurance broker, BGIA, the County was able to secure a new 1-year with Dental Services Organization (DSO) to take over the Dental Managed Care plan with Eastern Dental with a 13% rate reduction for all enrolled participants. This change was needed as the previous provider, Healthplex, no longer functions in the state of NJ.

### **Salary Administration**

- Processing of 577 cost-of-living increases for Non-Contractual employees effective January 1, 2023.
- Approximately 1,685 merit increases for Contractual employees throughout the year as required per collective bargaining agreements
- 48 Personnel Agendas consisting of 680 personnel change actions (transfers, new hires, promotions, job changes, etc.)
- Retroactive salaries processed for seven (7) Bargaining Units during 2023:

| <b>Bargaining Unit</b>              | <b>Time Period<br/>due Retro</b> | <b>Employees<br/>Impacted</b> |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Council 8                           | 01/01/2021 – 12/31/2022          | 443                           |
| HPAE Nurses                         | 01/01/2022 – 12/31/2022          | 27                            |
| Assistant Prosecutor's Association  | 01/01/2021 – 02/28/2023          | 64                            |
| PBA 203 Weights & Measures          | 01/01/2021 – 03/31/2023          | 3                             |
| IBEW                                | 01/01/2022 – 04/30/2023          | 44                            |
| PBA 250 Detectives/Investigators    | 01/01/2021 – 08/14/2023          | 58                            |
| PBA 250A Det/Investigator Superiors | 01/01/2021 – 08/14/2023          | 33                            |
|                                     |                                  | <b>672</b>                    |

### **Labor Relations**

**Employee/Labor Relations:** Finalized negotiations with 6 bargaining units.

#### ***Non-Law Enforcement Settlements:***

| <b>Bargaining Unit</b> | <b>Contract Duration</b> | <b>Salary Increase</b> |
|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|

|   |                         |   |
|---|-------------------------|---|
| IBEW Local 1158 –<br>Prosecutor Exclusionaries          | 1/1/2022-12/31/2024     | 2022- 2% across the board<br>2023- 2% across the board<br>2024- 2% across the board   |
| <b><i>Law Enforcement<br/>Settlements:</i></b>          |                         |   |
| Assistant Prosecutor’s<br>Association                   | 1/1/1/2021 – 12/31/2023 | 2021 - 2% across the board<br>2022 - 2% across the board<br>2023 – 2% across the board  |
| PBA Local 203<br>Weights & Measures                     | 1/1/2021- 12/31/2024    | 2021 - 2% across the board<br>2022 - 2% across the board<br>2023 - 2% across the board<br>2024 - 3% across the board  |
| PBA 250 - Prosecutor’s<br>Detectives & Investigators    | 1/1/2021- 12/31/2025    | 2021 - 2% across the board;<br>2022 - 2% across the board;<br>\$1500 added to top step only<br>effective 1/1/2022<br>2023 - 2% across the board;<br>\$2000 added to top step only<br>effective 1/1/2023<br>2024 - 3% across the board<br>2025 – 3% across the board |
| PBA 250A - Prosecutor’s<br>Detectives Superior Officers | 1/1/2021- 12/31/2025    | 2021 - 2% across the board;<br>2022 - 2% across the board;<br>\$1500 added to top step only<br>effective 1/1/2022<br>2023 - 2% across the board;<br>\$2000 added to top step only<br>effective 1/1/2023<br>2024 - 3% across the board<br>2025 – 3% across the board |
| Assistant Prosecutor’s<br>Association                   | 1/1/2024- 12/31/2025    | 2024 - 3% across the board<br>2025 - 3% across the board  |

**Collective Bargaining:** Efforts continue on reaching settlements with FMBA, and PBA 73. As some settlements have expired on 12/31/2022 and 12/31/2023, bargaining units are expected to commence negotiations meetings in 2024.

### **Division of Purchasing**

- Use of Edmunds computerized requisition system to vet, amend and approve over 10,000 requisitions for goods and services in 2023. Staff proofs each requisition for legal requirements.
- Advertised and processed about 40 public bids and 4 competitive contracts for County entities and cooperatives.



- Held an educational program and tour of Covanta to obtain continuing educational credits as a shared service.
- Held an educational “green purchasing” forum to obtain continuing educational credits as a shared service.
- Met with departments throughout the County to educate, reiterate and train employees on purchasing policies and the local public contracts law.
- One staff member completed their educational courses to become certified as a Registered Public Purchasing Specialist and another has started the certification courses.

## **2024 Initiatives**

**Administrative Services:** Will continue to manage insurance aspects and investigate avenues to increase services and effectuate savings while providing managerial and strategic planning to: Motor Vehicles (maintenance including heavy duty truck fleet); Telecommunications (cell phones, land lines, systems); Mailroom and messenger service; Purchasing (state procurement law and assurance of open competition), and Personnel (human resources and health insurance management).

**Division of Motor Vehicles:** The division continues to operate at the Quarry Service Yard vehicle maintenance facility and offers the repair and preventive maintenance services for the counties fleet that it has throughout the years. We will continue update our facilities for the technicians with the latest diagnostic equipment through vendor partnerships and training. Motor Vehicles is completing a tank replacement project at the Watchung Stables and will continue working on plans to upgrade other various County operated fueling sites. In 2024 Motor Vehicles will be completing the planned updates to the fueling sites located at the Echo Lake and Quarry Service Yards.

**Mail Room:** Has moved to its updated service area in the courthouse. Staff will continue to work diligently to keep mail going out on time and tracking all certified and priority mail. We anticipate the delivery of new mail processing equipment to expedite our mail services.

**Messengers:** Will continue prompt completion of work orders (with 18,905 total deliveries in 2021 and 20,094 total deliveries in 2022)

**Telecommunications:** Phone Room and Technicians will continue to assist Constituents and County employees, and complete work orders.

Telecommunications is looking into new equipment and processes to better streamline phone and data services throughout the County complexes.

**Personnel -- Staff Training and Professional Development:**

- Departmental Personnel Liaison seminar training on all Personnel matters to include policy & procedures for FMLA, attendance, disciplinary, position control actions, salary, benefits, and worker's compensation.
- Continue to arrange Personnel staff meetings, broadcast monthly emails and Wellness Seminars on current health topics, and coordinate Wellness Fairs, Flu Shots and Health Screenings.
- Continue to promote employee participation in the updated Certificate and Undergraduate/Graduate Programs in Public Administration and other programs in cooperation with Kean University and Union College of Union County.
- Continue wellness coach program for overall health of County employees and to help reduce the cost of health insurance. Wellness Coach will continue to meet with County employees on an individual basis to reduce health risks.
- Continue to enhance the online employee portal for County Policies and Personnel forms to make it accessible to all employees.
- As a Local Appointing Authority, the Division continues to support the New Jersey Civil Service Commission in all endeavors by participating in their efforts to streamline efficiency. The Division will continue to enforce and comply with all laws, statutes, and regulations for improving communication and workflow.
- Continue to digitize records and important documents including all insurances and employee training documentation.
- Distribution of updated employee handbook, disciplinary manual and FMLA/NFJLA manual to all county employees.

**Risk Management and Loss Prevention:** Last year Union County trained over 600 employees in PEOSH job-related Health and Safety courses, General Safety and Building Evacuation Safety Drills. These courses in 2023 include:

- CPR Defibrillator Recertification for Employees.
- CPR Defibrillator Certification for Employees who request training.
- On Site Safety Audit Inspections of County owned and Leased Buildings.
- Confined Space Entry Team Drills.
- Continue Work Site Specific Safety Training.
- 6-hour New Jersey Safety Council Defensive Driving Course (DDC) for CDL Drivers

- Building Emergency Action Plan Drills. (BEAP) FIRE DRILLS.
- In addition, continue employee training to meet or exceed PEOSH Standards for Blood Borne Pathogens, Right to Know/Hazardous Communications, Lockout/Tagout, Fork Lift, Fall Protection, and Respiratory Protection/Fit Testing.
- Training of Supervisors on Reasonable Suspicion.
- Conducted fire drills in all County buildings, leased and owned. Ensured all drills were conducted safely, and that all fire equipment is being maintained in a good-working condition.
- Received and reported all motor vehicle accidents and property damage to the claim management TPA, as well all legal matters pertaining accidents to County Council.
- Ensure all Departments have all required PEOSH Education and Trainings are current.
- Investigate all accidents to create a safer work environment.
- Performed investigations and evaluations of the air quality in County buildings.
- Required monthly Tool Box Talks for employees in Parks and Public Works departments that work out in the field on a regular basis.
- Verify that all registered CDL drivers are enroll on the clearing house system.
- Participated in our Labor Safety meetings, as well on our executive safety meetings.
- Participate as a member in NJCE JIF Safety and Education Committee meetings.
- Conducted loss-control visits to all County Building with the assistance of J.A Montgomery and the JIF.
- Reviewed and approved invoices for services rendered by safety consulting vendors.

### **Employee Benefits**

- Assist in County compliance with Federal Affordable Care Act mandates and guidelines.
- Coordinate health benefits modifications and implementation of the new plan options with carriers and employees.
- Assist with the Federal Retiree Subsidy Drug Program application where required.

- Perform audit of all benefit enrollment information across all in-house databases, as well the databases of our service providers, to ensure data integrity among all systems.
- Financial administration of insurance plans and incurred claims.

### **Salary Administration & Labor Analysis**

- Continue working with Primepoint on customization and optimization of new HR System, including moving toward additional electronic personnel action processing and application tracking.
- Continue training on new system usage for departmental personnel and attendance liaisons.

**Division of Purchasing:** Continue to employ membership in the County Purchasing Agent Association, Governmental Purchasing Association, Northern Chapter of NIGP and the National Institute for Governmental Purchasing to network and keep abreast of peers in public purchasing to find solutions for common problems. Cooperation with the N.J. Association of Counties, N.J. League of Municipalities and the Rutgers Educational Forum also contributes. Goals for 2024 include:

- Hold educational forums for county employees and as a shared service to other Union County governments. Approved continuing educational credits for purchasing officials, finance, clerks, public works, recycling coordinators and clean communities' coordinators.
- Continue to meet with each department throughout the County to educate, reiterate and train new employees on purchasing policies and the local public contracts law.
- Staff continuing to be trained and certified as a Registered Public Purchasing Specialist.

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# **Department of Economic Development**

**Strategic Planning**

**Community Services**

**Workforce Development Board**

**Information Technologies**

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# Organizational Chart

## Department of Economic Development





# DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## Mission

The mission of the Union County Department of Economic Development is the promotion and development of planning and growth in the County of Union, through the implementation and coordination of all economic development plans and programs including matters affecting workforce development and the quality of community services.

## Programs & Services

**Workforce Development Board:** Responsible for all strategic planning efforts under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), including the oversight of the American Job Center.

**Bureau of ADA Compliance:** Ensures compliance with federal and state disability rights laws by the County and will assist municipalities and school districts within the County with training and guidance concerning same.

**Division of Community Services:** Partners with communities and non-profit agencies to reduce the causes of poverty, increase job opportunities, expand economic security for individuals/families and revitalize communities. The Division of Community Services prepares matters pertaining to planning, development, and community development mandated by federal or state government; performs all functions related to implementing a housing and community development program, as required by the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 and any amendments thereto; and is responsible for all aspects of Veteran Services.

**Bureau of Housing:** Improves accessibility to safe, affordable housing in the county and assure the continuation of an adequate housing stock. The Bureau serves as administrator for the Union County Home Improvement Program, Section 8 Program, and the Senior Home Improvement Program.

**Bureau of Community Development:** Oversees the Community Development Block Grant Program, HUD's primary program for promoting community revitalization. CDBG funds are used for a wide range of community development activities directed toward neighborhood revitalization, economic development, social service programs and improvements to community facilities. CDBG funds



are leveraged with municipal, state and private dollars to meet long- and short-term objectives. To maximize the effectiveness of CDBG dollars, efforts are coordinated with the Union County Department of Human Services.

**We Are One New Jersey:** Provides U.S. citizenship application guidance, voter registration, and notary services in conjunction with the New Jersey AFL-CIO. The goal is to build stronger communities by engaging new Americans to become active participants in our democracy.

**Division of Strategic Planning:** Consists of two bureaus and five offices – the Bureau of Transportation Planning, the Bureau of Planning and Land Use, the Office of Community Engagement and Diversity, the Office of Business Development, the Office of LGBTQ Affairs, Office of Veteran Services, and the Office on Women. The Division's responsibilities are:

- Strengthen the County's economy and positioning it to compete in a global marketplace by stimulating and creating new jobs, retaining existing businesses, and facilitating economic development in partnership with the Union County Economic Development Corporation and other public/private partnerships.
- The establishment of an ongoing program of legislative advocacy at the federal, state and/or local levels; lobby for and/or develop legislation as needed; provide analysis of legislation as needed; and act as liaison with municipal, state and federal levels of government.
- Maximize federal, state and foundation grant dollars and reduce the property tax burden by increasing revenues into the county to fund existing and/or new programs and services as consistent with the needs of the county.
- Develop and administer continuing shared service opportunities with other public entities throughout the county and state; and facilitate intergovernmental relations on behalf of the County.

**Bureau of Transportation Planning:** Develops and sponsors major mass transit, road infrastructure, transportation management and freight movement planning studies. The Bureau secures federal and state grant funds for technical studies and strategic planning initiatives regarding countywide transportation issues. It is also involved with the development of programs to enhance countywide transportation systems, in addition to coordinating and reviewing transportation data developed for the county area by regional transportation agencies. The Bureau works closely with the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority through which it receives funding to conduct its work program.

The Bureau provides the administrative support for the Union County Transportation Advisory Board which meets six times a year. The Bureau arranges presentations on timely issues for TAB meetings. The TAB offers local and citizen input on transportation policy matters to the Board of County Commissioners. Each of the 21 municipalities within the county can appoint representatives.

**Bureau of Planning and Land Use:** Assures that the County complies with all state planning statutes and regulations, including the review of site plans and subdivisions. It maintains a central repository of all local Master Plans and zoning ordinances and provides support staff for the County Planning Board and the County's involvement in the State Cross Acceptance Process. Staff also serves as a conduit between municipalities regarding planning information, municipal redevelopment efforts and brownfield/grayfield information. The Bureau applies for and secures federal and state grant funding for Smart Growth Studies, brownfields/grayfields and any other planning and economic development-related studies. The Bureau develops and maintains a County Master Plan, County Land Development Ordinance, Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and the Transportation Circulation Plan for the County. These plans and other study efforts outline potential economic development opportunities while providing the principles and strategies to guide economic growth and enhance the quality of life.

**Office of Community Engagement & Diversity:** Provides outreach to local community-based groups and volunteer organizations to create a network and directory of same. The Office coordinates countywide community events and programs which foster and promote volunteerism in Union County. The focus is to reinforce strategies for building relationships with the County's diverse communities to include culture, lifestyle, ethnicity, and race.

**Office of Business Development:** Cultivates strategies for business attraction and retention. In partnership with the Union County Economic Development Corporation and Chamber of Commerce stakeholders, the Office integrates strategic activities to attract and retain industry businesses, stimulates job creation and increases the capacity of small businesses to remain competitive. The *Union County Means Business* networking business events are coordinated through this office.

**Office of LGBTQ Affairs:** Assesses the needs of LGBTQ residents to plan for and facilitate access to resources, increase understanding of civil rights and promote

unity. The Office provides information and referrals to resources and services that improve the quality of life for LGBTQ residents of the county, educates individuals and organizations on rights and advocacy support, and develops outreach activities to promote community diversity and unity.

**Office on Women:** Provides information and referral to resources to improve the quality of life for women, and serves as an advocate to coordinate programming with other offices to promote community diversity and unity.

**Office of Veteran Services:** Provides information and advocacy for veterans and their families including burial and memorial benefits, education and training programs availability, and coordination of flag placement on all veterans' graves.

**Bureau of Information Technologies:** Responsible for the County's data center, wide-area high-speed network, and office technology. Plans, develops and manages software applications to improve workflow processes in County offices.

## **2023 Accomplishments**

### **Workforce Development Board:**

1. The Union County Workforce Development Board developed a strategic plan for the years 2022-2026 that outlines the goals, objectives, priorities, and strategies for the implementation of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programs in Union County in alignment with the plans of the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development and the New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission.
2. The Union County Workforce Development Board developed a Memorandum of Understanding between the Union County Workforce Development Board and the Union County Board of County Commissioners outlining the roles and responsibilities of both parties in accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act 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.
3. Awarded a contract for the provision of an Affiliate American Job Center Site Provider for Career Services to Adults and Dislocated Workers under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to Union College of Union County, New Jersey, in the amount of \$500,000.
4. Adopted Workforce Development Area Program Year 2023 Budget: WIOA

Adult in the amount of \$1,253,692; WIOA Dislocated Worker in the amount of \$1,278,385; WIOA Youth in the amount of \$1,367,083; Work First New Jersey (“WFNJ”)—Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (“TANF”) in the amount of \$1,054,164; General Assistance (“GA”) and Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (“SNAP”) in the amount of \$798,013; Workforce Learning Link (“WLL”) in the amount of \$210,000; Supplemental Workforce Development Benefits (“SmartSteps”) Program in the amount of \$3,210; and WIOA Data Reporting and Analysis Allocation funding in the amount of \$12,971.

5. Awarded Workforce Advantage a contract in the amount of \$485,455 (\$316,250 TANF and \$169,205 GA/SNAP) for the Program Year 2023.
6. Awarded Union College of Union County, New Jersey, a contract in the amount of \$255,416 (\$105,416 TANF and \$150,000 GA/SNAP) for the Program Year 2023.
7. Awarded a contract to the County of Union Department of Human Services to serve as the One Stop Operator (American Job Center Operator) and to provide Comprehensive One Stop Career Center Services for Adult, Dislocated Workers and Youth Services for the period of July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2025, with an option to extend the contract for two additional one-year periods through June 30, 2027, for an amount not to exceed \$100,000 annually.
8. Awarded a contract to the County of Union Department of Human Services for the provision of comprehensive One Stop Career Center services to Adults and Dislocated Workers for the period of July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2025, with an option to extend the contract for two additional one-year periods through June 30, 2027, for an amount not to exceed \$1,700,000 annually.
9. Award a contract to the County of Union Department of Human Services for the provision of comprehensive One Stop Career Center services to Youth for the period of July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2025, with an option to extend the contract for two additional one-year periods through June 30, 2027, for an amount not to exceed \$400,000 annually.

**Bureau of ADA Compliance:** In the second year of its creation, the Bureau continued assisting county employees with accommodations including accessible phones, temporary parking, and improving accessible routes to the workplace. The Bureau also:

- Assisted the Parks Department with evaluating and suggesting ways to remove barriers to the public in county parks. In addition, assisted Parks with creating new communication boards at playgrounds for children with limited speech, in Warinanco Park, Mattano Park, Ponderosa Park, Nomahegan Park.

- Attended ADA Conferences throughout the year to remain current with all the Federal and State regulations and ADA Certification credits.
- Linked constituents to the appropriate resources in relation to their concerns.
- Assisted County Police, Sheriff and Prosecutor's Office with a new program called "Blue Envelope Program" for drivers who are on the Autism Spectrum.
- Developed and launched the Transition Plan to remove physical barriers in County buildings and parking lots.
- Assisted the Division of Personnel with the safety measures in the Administration Building.
- Assisted the Engineering Department on roadway projects.

### **Division of Strategic Planning:**

- Awarded US Department of Transportation (USDOT) Safe Streets and Roads for All Program Action Plan Grant as a joint application with the City of Elizabeth to study the road network in Union County and develop a comprehensive safety action plan.
- Applied for and was awarded a \$1,500,000 New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program Grant to convert the abandoned Rahway Valley Railroad Line section from Roselle Park to Kenilworth into a Rails-to-Trails bikeway/greenway with a connection to the East Coast Greenway.
- Applied for and was awarded a \$1,000,000 New Jersey Department of Transportation's FY2023 Local Aid Infrastructure Fund Program Grant to implement the County's *NY Connects to Union County NJ East Coast Greenway Bikeway Project*. This project will connect approximately 6.33 miles of bikeways to the larger East Coast Greenway trail network. It will begin in the City of Elizabeth near the Goethals Bridge and will end at Centennial Avenue in Cranford, NJ. The project will span across the municipalities of the City of Elizabeth, Cranford Township, and Roselle Borough.
- Applied for and was awarded \$375,718.50 in Local Efficiency Achievement Program (LEAP) Implementation Grant funding for the Union County & Plainfield EMS Shared Services Implementation Project to house fulltime EMS in eastern Plainfield.
- Continued to support shared services of the Emergency Services Regional Dispatch Center through the successful award of LEAP Grants. Applied for and was awarded \$279,750 to assist New Providence and Springfield transition to the Union County Regional Emergency Services Dispatch Center.

- Applied for a LEAP County Shared Services Coordinator Fellowship Grant for 2023.
- Prepared CoStar reports for real estate inquiries.
- Continued to administer LEAP Grants.

#### **Office of Business Development:**

- Helped promote online workshops centered on helping small businesses (Business Certifications, Business Protection workshops, bookkeeping, etc.).
- Coordinated efforts with Union County Microbreweries, Department of Parks & Recreation, and Union County Police to create an inaugural Union County Oktober Fest event. Scheduled for October 7<sup>th</sup> as part of the Union County Concert Series, it was unfortunately cancelled due to inclement weather.
- Coordinated the “Future of Work” panel discussion at Kean University Donald R. Conklin Conference Center, May 10, 2023.
- Continued outreach to new businesses. Sent welcome letters from the Commissioner Chair to approximately 1,200 new businesses.
- Continued to provide crucial business information to the Union County Business Community via newsletters and email communication.
- As part-time County Shared Services Fellowship Coordinator, updated the Union County Shared Services Directory.
- Coordinated Union County Loves Small Business Campaign to encourage the public to shop and dine at local establishments during the holiday season. Helped design UCLOVESSMALLBIZ webpage and marketing campaign.

#### **Office of Community Engagement & Diversity:**

- Continued to expand the Union County volunteer directory; compiled and posted a list of volunteer opportunities
- Organized cultural events included:
- Treasures for The Transition - Organized collection of basic necessities for young adults aging out of foster care to living independently.
- Organized Hairitage Workshop/ Crown & Creative Coif Walk (for Black History Month)
- Organized Flag Raisings that include: Black History Month, Columbus Day, Juneteenth, and Hispanic Heritage Month.
- School Supply Drive -Items donated to Boys and Girls Clubs of Union County.

#### **Bureau of Transportation Planning:**

- The Bureau continued to participate in the Union County Paratransit System's Senior Citizen Disabled Resident Transportation Advisory Board (SCDRTAB) and worked to improve awareness of the Route 22 Safety Shuttle.
- Applied for, received, and managed \$172,277 in grant funds through the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority Subregional Transportation Planning Program and the extra \$15,000 grant through the Subregional Support Program, for computer equipment, a part-time intern, and more.
- Continued to manage the Union County Transportation Advisory Board
- Continued to provide support to the Raritan Valley Rail Coalition.
- The Bureau represented the County on the NJTPA Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) and on the Rutgers Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Council. It worked with the Transportation Management Association, EZ Ride, on an Elizabeth Street Smart Campaign.
- The Bureau successfully completed the *Union County Electric Vehicles Infrastructure Study* in June 2023. The Study supports the growth of electric vehicle ownership by planning the expansion of electric vehicle service equipment throughout Union County.

#### **Bureau of Planning and Land Use:**

- **Planning Board:** From January to late October 2023, the County received 116 land development applications with 113 found to be complete, and the planning office reviewed 105 development applications. In comparison, the planning office received 135 complete development applications at this point last year. The number of complete applications compared to last year represents a 16% decrease in the number of complete applications compared to 2022, mainly due to increase in interest rates that have slightly reduced development in the County, State, and Country. The slight decrease in development applications shows the resilience in development growth of Union County and New Jersey as a whole in the face of the later stages of the pandemic, associated inflation, and increase in interest rates to the economy. The County continues to have a significant participation in development throughout County municipalities. The number of participating municipalities in the County based on submitted applications is 19 of the 21 county municipalities which represents all but two municipalities with proposed developments.

Of the 113 applications reviewed to date, 66% were approved, 22% withheld and 12% were conditionally approved. The types of development applications consist of 64% - site plans, 14% - subdivisions, 18% - revised and 4% - combined plans. To date there have been seven (7) plat recording creating fifteen

(15) new development lots producing 269 new residential units with one development accounting for 250 units.

In 2023, the amount of development application fees collected to this date (January to end of November) was \$68,605.62. This represents a slight 6% decrease compared to the amount of land development fees collected at this time last year.

**Constituents Served:** In 2023, from January to end of October, the Bureau received 183 municipal notices representing an average of eight towns per month. The Bureau also received 298 data requests, a total of 43 municipal ordinances/updated master plans or redevelopment plans, 72 environmental notices, and 362 OPRA requests. The majority of these requests relate to environmental or planning information requested by citizens, attorneys, engineering firms, and environmental associations or professionals.

**Office of LGBTQ Affairs:**

- Reconnected with local non-profit and health organizations.
- Restarted Ad-Hoc committee meeting with our community and internal partners.
- Restarted Queer Empowerment Hour.
- Coordinated Pride Flag Raising in June in partnership with Judiciary.
- Planned a Pride-in-the-Park event at Tëmike Park in Plainfield but was canceled due to flooding/rain.
- Provided schools and organizations Pride related supplies.
- Worked with Lighthouse Collaborative to continue the GSA Grant, providing support and guidance to schools around Union County to start and continue their GSA programs.
- Began the process of creating a new, updated resource directory.
- December 1st – Partnered with RWJ to hold a World AIDS Day – Remember and Commit event at Warinanco Sports Center featuring keynote speaker Yolanda Fraizer.

**Office on Women:**

- Organized *Read Across America: 'Commissioners' Literary Circle Book Club* – March 2023. Book Chosen, Commissioner Williams: “More Stories We Tell: The Best Short Stories from North American Women.”
- Organized *Women, Wine and Wealth Event*: May 10th/The Hill Restaurant. Presentation about wealth management done by MidAtlantic Financial Group.



- Organized *Women's Self Defense Workshop*, Cranford Rec. Center/Sheriff Riccio and Officer DeFilippis (Summit) with a 2 hour talk about Self Defense.
- Helped organize the 9<sup>th</sup> *Annual Union County Women Mean Business Summit*, "UCWMB Working Womens Summit" June 13. Keynote speaker was Esther Pak, Legal Counsel for the Jersey Devils organization. Well attended with over 225 attendees.
- Commission on the Status of Women – County Commissioner Advisory Board - Served as the Executive Secretary to the Commission. Assisted with outreach for Women of Excellence nominations, an award program that celebrates and honors women's achievements in work, community life and volunteer activities.
- Assisted with Moms Helping Moms program that provided diapers and other needed feminine products.
- Continued support of the Union County YWCA Advocacy Board.

### **Office of Veterans Services:**

- Filed over 100 Veteran's claims with the Veteran Affairs Benefits Department. 139 claims are in various stages of progress.
- Sourced, and distributed approximately 28,000 American flags for placement on graves of veterans in observance of Memorial Day.
- Coordinated "First Swing Golf Clinic" - a joint venture with the Office for Persons with Disabilities and Special Needs was held in October.
- Increased Veteran parking spots around the County by seven spots; five in Rahway and two in New Providence.
- Mailed out 103 new parking placards to Union County Veterans.
- Participated in Operation Green Light to show support for our veterans.
- Coordinated "MVP" Movie screening at AMC Springfield, NJ approximately 50 Veterans and family members attended.
- Continued to work with the New Jersey SOS Veterans Stakeholders meetings
- Participated in Community Outreach:
- The Elizabeth Coalition's Annual Service Fair held at the Mickey Walker Center.
- Participated in Tax Rebate Workshop for Seniors & Disabled Veterans.
- Participated in Suicide Awareness Seminar, held at the Kenilworth Veterans Center.

### **Division of Community Services**

#### **Community Development Block Grant Program 2022**

**Facilities Improvements:**

A total of \$721,500 was allocated for facility projects. Some of the accomplishments are as follows:

- The ARC of Union County was funded \$50,000 to replace their gas generators.
- New Providence DeCorso Community Center was funded \$50,000 to renovate their roof.
- Covenant Development Corp. was funded \$50,000 for their food pantry remodel and expansion.
- Plainfield Neighborhood House was funded \$50,000 to renovate their parking lot.
- Rahway Community Action Center was funded \$66,500 for upgrades to their electrical safety and replacement of their freezer.
- Rahway Housing Authority Clifford P. Case Apartments was funded \$50,000 to upgrade existing elevators.
- Senior Housing Corporation of Scotch Plains was funded \$30,000 to replace windows and kitchen cabinets.
- Westfield Area YMCA was funded \$30,000 to install 12 individualized handicapped accessible locker spaces.
- Greater Refuge Church of Christ was funded \$10,000 to install a chair lift in the front step area inside the church.

**Public Improvements:**

A total of \$2,000,000 was allocated for projects. Some of the accomplishments are as follows:

- Clark (\$33,000), Cranford (\$28,000), Fanwood (\$38,000) and Kenilworth (\$28,000) utilized their funding for curb cuts and ramps at various locations within each municipality for the purpose of complying with ADA codes.
- Hillside utilized \$80,000 of CDBG funding for resurfacing various streets that had deteriorated.
- Linden utilized \$370,000 of CDBG funding for various streets, curbs and sidewalk improvements.
- Plainfield utilized a total of \$423,000 CDBG funding for two (2) projects covering street rehabilitation, basketball court upgrade and drainage improvements.
- Rahway utilized \$385,000 of CDBG funds for the rehabilitation of deteriorated streets at various locations within the city.
- Roselle utilized \$260,000 of CDBG funds for the rehabilitation of deteriorated streets at various locations within the city.
- Roselle Park utilized \$225,000 of CDBG funds for the rehabilitation of

deteriorated streets at various locations within the city proper.

- Springfield utilized \$130,000 of CDBG funds for the rehabilitation of deteriorated streets at various locations within the city proper.

### **Public Services:**

A total of \$658,500 was allocated for projects. Some of the accomplishments are as follows:

### **Child Care Services:**

Over 600 children Countywide from low to moderate income families were provided with daycare programs; as well as afterschool and summer programs. The after-school programs provided homework and reading assistance, tutoring, cultural and recreational activities. The summer programs the children were provided activates such as swimming, arts and crafts, field trips and other recreational services. This funding allowed parents the opportunity to work without having to worry about their children receiving quality care.

### **Emergency Shelter Services:**

To address homelessness in the County, 182 individuals were served by programs such as Family Promise and Gateway YMCA of Eastern Union County. These programs provide case management, counseling, follow-up services, hot meals, transitional housing, one-time rental assistance payments, transportation, clothing, assistance with job and apartment searches and medical care to persons who are homeless and are homeless due to abusive family members.

### **Food Pantry Program:**

Linden Food Pantry LINCS, The Salvation Army Hygiene Pantry, New Covenant Development Corp and Crescent Avenue Presbyterian Church have served over 4,500 people and families with essential food and health care products. These programs have helped to support hard working families in their biggest time of need. This population consists of low-income and no income residents of Union County.

### **Handicapped Services:**

Approximately 755 Handicapped individuals were served in the County of Union with programs that provided individuals with rehabilitation services promoting physical, emotional and cognitive development and assuring their safety and wellbeing. Program included ARC of Union County, Cerebral Palsy, Occupational Center of Union County, Shut-In Council for Disabled Care Services in Plainfield, Westfield Y Adult Special Needs Program and the Union County Recreation Program for Disabled Adults; providing individuals with rehabilitation services

promoting physical, emotional and cognitive development and assuring their safety and wellbeing. These programs provided services to low- and moderate-income families who would not be able to afford these programs and also allows other family members the chance to work which otherwise would not be possible.

### **Maternal & Child Health Care Services:**

Over 265 parents and their children were able to participate in Hillside's Maternal Child Health Care Program. Public nursing staff provided counseling services, medical screening and referrals to appropriate resources as needed. Children care wellness was also provided on a monthly basis, which included vaccinations administered by physicians to ensure proper immunizations protection, lead screening and more. Typically, a health fair is held, however, we administered immunizations for children, flu shots for children, eye screening and lead screening in office.

### **Mental Health Services:**

To address mental health in the County, approximately 25 individuals were served by programs such as Jewish Family Services of Central NJ and United Family & Children Services.

### **Senior Citizens Social Service Programs:**

Approximately 7,000 Senior Citizens throughout the County received a variety of cultural, educational, nutritional, medical, health related, and recreational programs and the following benefits during the contract year: health benefits included educational presentations by guest speakers on topics of maintaining wellness and fitness through nutrition and exercise, health aide services to seniors who are unable to attend outside programs showing them how to live safely in their homes and prevent nursing home placement or hospitalization, health assessments including weight and vital signs, cardiovascular, diabetic, urinary, mental health, skin and wound healing and much more.

Recreational benefits included Arts & Crafts workshops, Line Dancing, Bingo, Tai Chi, Yoga and Zumba just to name a few. Seniors also had the opportunity to participate in special events such as a Fashion Show and Holiday Party.

Transportation benefits included pick up and drop off service to various senior programs as well as weekly trips to food markets, doctor appointments, post office, hair appointments and many more events.

These programs enable the seniors to have a more enjoyable life in addition to giving

them the opportunity to socialize with other individuals which promotes a better quality of life.

**Teen Programs:**

Over 730 teens were assisted in achieving a better quality of life by several agencies and programs including the, the Boys and Girls Club of Plainfield, Buie Center Youth Recreation Program in Hillside, Second Street Youth Center Afterschool Program and Teen Resource Program in Plainfield and the Summit Youth Center.

**United Way of Greater Union County:**

The County of Union and United Way of Greater Union County partnered to administer a project called the “Family Strengthening Program”. Community Development funds in the amount of \$150,000 was provided to the United Way for this program. This program is designed to support family strengthening activities for the most vulnerable and at-risk population in Union County. Funds were spent on quality child care services, disabled services, homeless prevention, domestic violence programs, and mental health/counseling services. Fourteen agencies working directly with United Way provided a coordinated systematic approach to delivering the various services. The agencies included: ARC of Union County, Cerebral Palsy League of Union County, Community Coordinated Child Care, Jewish Family Services of Central New Jersey, Kings Daughter Day Care, Neighborhood House Association, Occupational Center of Union County, Rahway Community Action Organization, Rahway Day Care Center, Roselle Day Care Center, United Family and Children’s Society, Gateway Family YMCA, YM-YWHA of Union County and YWCA of Eastern Union County.

**Housing Counseling Agencies:**

A total of \$80,000 was allocated to Counseling Agencies.

The County of Union has utilized the services of one HUD certified Housing Counseling Agencies – Urban League. Urban League has expanded their services beyond regular counseling services to include foreclosure, rental, mortgage and re-entry issues. These agencies are CBDO (Community Based Development Organization) agencies.

**Economic Development:**

A total of \$160,000 was allocated to the Union County Economic Development Corporation to provide technical assistance to businesses and to administer a loan program.

**CDBG-CV:**

A total of \$5,439,197 was allocated to the County of Union, Community Development Block Grant Program CARES Act (CDBG-CV) to prevent, prepare and respond to COVID-19 Related Community Needs. Over 7,500 individuals were served for a variety of programs by over 23 organizations including Family Promise, Urban League of Union County, United Way of Greater Union County Urban League of Union County, YWCA of Eastern Union County, and the Arc of Union County.

**We Are One New Jersey:**

Continued to provide: citizen applications, citizenship and English as a second language training, assistance to legal residents, assistance to obtain certificate of naturalization, referral services, additional services such as translations and notarization.

- Citizenship Applications: 493
- Citizenship training: 4,208 (129 classes)
- English as a second language training: 375
- Additional services such as translations and notarizations as the community needs.
- Citizenship and Basic English Classes provided: 215
- Legal Permanent Residents – Renewal of their green card - 85
- Certificate of Naturalization Processed - 21
- Translations – 2306; Notarizations – 2,527

**Section 8:**

- Successfully managed 417 vouchers.
- Received 100% on the County's SEMAP (HUD's evaluation system).
- Added Mainstream Vouchers to UC Section 8 Program.
- Updated UC Housing Authority's Policy and Procedures.
- Cleared over 3,000 names on waiting list.
- Established Qualified PHA status.
- Issued an RFP for the years 2024 through 2026.

**HOME:**

- Home Investment Partnerships Program funds for the year 2023 were committed for one project following our Request for Proposals in May.
- The Union County Home Investment Partnerships Program policies and procedures were reviewed and updated by HOME staff.

- The Program is currently working on 2 projects that will begin construction in early 2024.
- In April 2023, the County's Home Investment Partnerships Program – American Rescue Plan (HOME-ARP) was approved by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).
- HOME staff are currently developing Policies and Procedures, as well as a Request for Proposals, for American Rescue Plan funding in order to launch a Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) program in early 2024.
- Home Investment Partnerships Program monitoring of HUD projects for compliance that were due for inspection in the year 2023 have been completed.

#### **Bureau of Information Technologies:**

- Between January and December of 2023, the IT Bureau responded to 7,486 Help Desk calls for support from all County facilities.
- Started the implementation of the Union County Fiber Project.
- Replaced outdated network switches for faster connectivity.
- Setup new training rooms for Social Services.
- Routine replacement of outdated PCs, printers, and servers as well as monitoring and maintenance on all servers and firewalls.
- Implemented MFA (multi-factor authentication) using DUO.
- Assisting with implementation of Sentry 911-Baum Act.
- Setup Cloud base backup for our data.
- Installed new Ricoh Copiers at Social Services to replace old and outdated printers.
- Replaced and migrated data to new server with Synergix to communicate with State Social Services.

## **2024 Initiatives**

#### **Bureau of ADA Compliance:**

- Implement an ADA Access & Inclusion Solutions Process for county employees and Union County residents.
- Implement and monitor the ADA transition plan into a database to monitor the improvements in our Union County Parks.
- Assist the Office of Public Information on website and documentation accessibility.
- Continue to assist employees with any reasonable accommodation requests.
- Educate all employees, especially supervisors on the ADA.
- Assist the Engineering Department with evaluating any new building or roadway structure to ensure ADA compliance.

**Division of Strategic Planning:**

- Continue to facilitate shared services agreements wherever feasible.
- Continue to support shared services of the Emergency Services Regional Dispatch Center through the successful award of LEAP Grants.
- Continue to prepare CoStar reports for real estate inquiries.
- Continue outreach to new businesses.
- Continue to explore grant opportunities.
- Continue to administer LEAP Grants.

**Office of Business Development:**

- Expand UC LOVES SMALL BIZ Campaign and Webpage.
- Union County Oktober Fest/ Spring or Fall event. Consider a "Taste of Union County" section to showcase local restaurants and microbreweries along with entertainment.
- Continue the coordinate Union County Means Business events that may include networking breakfast, Lunch and Learn Series, and Union County Business Expo (at the Warinanco Sports Center). Plan for panel discussion, possibly focusing on topics such as technology in business or local economic trends.
- Continue Quarterly Departmental Newsletter.
- County Shared Services Coordinator – will assess current and potential shared services opportunities and create shared services agreements when appropriate. Maintain data that demonstrates cost savings and efficiencies of shared services.

**Office of Community Engagement & Diversity:**

- Continue to expand the Union County volunteer directory, compile a list of volunteer opportunities, and organize cultural events.
- Financial Literacy Workshops in Partnership with Youth Services and Union County Savings Bank - Age appropriate financial literacy workshops and activities.
- Children's Storytime Under the Stars - An evening tented event for Union County youth in homeless shelters and/or foster care, scheduled during National Read Across America, National Read a Book Month/Week.
- Collaborate with the Office of the Prosecutor on community outreach initiatives.
- Non-profit agency to be featured quarterly on the Office of Community Engagement & Diversity website. Pre-recorded segment highlights services, mission, need and client success story.



**Bureau of Transportation Planning:**

- The Bureau will continue to participate in the Union County Paratransit System's Senior Citizen Disabled Resident Transportation Advisory Board (SCDRTAB) and work with the Paratransit Office to improve awareness of the Route 22 Safety Shuttle.
- Manage the \$172,277 in grant funds through the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority Subregional Transportation Planning Program and the extra \$15,000 granted through the Subregional Support Program, for computer equipment, a part-time intern, and more.
- Continue to manage the Transportation Advisory Board with membership appointed by the municipalities and arrange presentations at the meetings on timely and relevant transportation topics.
- Provides staff support to the Raritan Valley Rail Coalition which advocates for retention and expansion of the one-seat ride on the Raritan Valley Rail Line as well as other service improvements.
- Continue to represent the County on the NJTPA Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) and on the Rutgers Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Council. It will work with the Transportation Management Association, EZ Ride, on Smart Campaigns.
- Advance the recommendations of *Electric Vehicles Infrastructure Study* and maintain the website with regular updates.
- Safety Initiative – Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) - Transportation Planning will work with County Engineering on the new safety grant, Safe Streets for All (SS4A) and assist with the Public Leadership Group which will have oversight in the development of the Plan and on goal setting.

**Bureau of Planning and Land Use:**

- Planning Board – Continue to provide coordination of materials, development reviews, and associated reporting to the Planning Board.
- Planning, Environmental & Economic Development – Continue researching and reviewing legislature and programs to assist to in County Planning.
- Land Development Standards – Continue reviewing potential improvements to the County Land Development Standards with a focus on updating design standards where possible and needed.

**Office of LGBTQ Affairs:**

- Continue the GSA Grant for our local schools.
- Possible merging of the Pride flag raising and Pride-in-the-Park events into one event.

- Work with Judiciary to offer more employee related sport events.
- Partner with the Division of Personnel to offer an employee lunch and learn.
- Partner with Kean University to plan an event for the students.
- Offer monthly or bi-monthly virtual/in-person support groups for the community on various topics.
- Research the resumption of a Martha P. Johnson monument / plague project in her honor.

#### **Office on Women:**

- Organize a forum/event for National Human Trafficking Awareness Day.
- Create a Caucus of three of five female Commissioners who report on women's activities in the County.
- Continue to support the Union County Commission on the Status of Women.
- Event for Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month (February).
- Continue to coordinate Union County Women Mean Business Summit.
- Continue to coordinate Women of Excellence Dinner.
- Women's Health Fair: In conjunction with Atlantic Health Union, NJ.
- Explore grant opportunities.

#### **Office of Veterans Services:**

- Equine Therapy: Summer of 2024, Watchung Stables.
- 30,240 American Flags to be purchased and distributed for Memorial Day.
- POW/MIA Flag Raising Ceremony.
- NJ SOS Stakeholders Meeting (Bi-Annual).
- NJ SOS "Save Training" – Part 2, Suicide Awareness Seminar.
- Veteran's Services Advisory Board Meetings (Bi-Annual)
- Continue quarterly newsletter.

#### **Division of Community Services**

##### **HOME:**

The 2024 Initiatives for the County of Union Home Investment Partnerships Program include the development of affordable rental units for the following projects:

- **A&T Housing, LLC - New construction of 8 affordable rental units.**
- **Westfield Village - New construction of 3 affordable rental units.**

Upon the release of the 2024 NJHMFA Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), we will begin the process of developing more rental units for the following projects:

- **Heritage Village at Rosegate: New construction of 110 affordable rental units.**
- **Estherbrook Senior Housing: New construction 41 affordable rental units.**

Under the Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) the County will assist in the development of the following project: **Glendenning Homes - New construction of 56 affordable rental units.**

Home staff is in the process of developing a Tenant-Based Rental Assistance Program using the HOME-American Rescue Plan funding.

In addition, HOME staff will continue monitoring the HOME assisted units currently in their affordability periods for Housing Quality Standards and income compliance.

### **Section 8:**

Continued compliance of the Section 8 Program. Provide administrative support to other County Housing Authorities. Pursue additional Section 8 vouchers. Continue outreach efforts for new Section 8 landlords.

### **We Are One New Jersey:**

Continue to provide: citizen applications, citizenship and English as a second language training, assistance to legal residents, assistance to obtain certificate of naturalization, referral services, additional services such as translations and notarization. Goals for 2024 include:

- Citizenship Applications: 493
- Citizenship training: 4,208 (129 classes)
- English as a second language training: 375
- Additional services as translations and notarizations as the community needs.
- Citizenship and Basic English Classes provided: 215
- Legal Permanent Residents – Renewal of their green card - 85
- Certificate of Naturalization Processed - 21
- Translations – 2306; Notarizations – 2,527

### **Bureau of Information Technologies:**

- Provide Cybersecurity Awareness Training to county employees.

- Finish County wide fiber project.
- Upgrade and improve Cyber Security.
- Increase storage capacity for County data.
- Upgrade Microsoft Exchange-Email

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**Department of  
Engineering, Public Works & Facilities  
Management**

**Engineering**

**Public Works**

**Facilities Management**

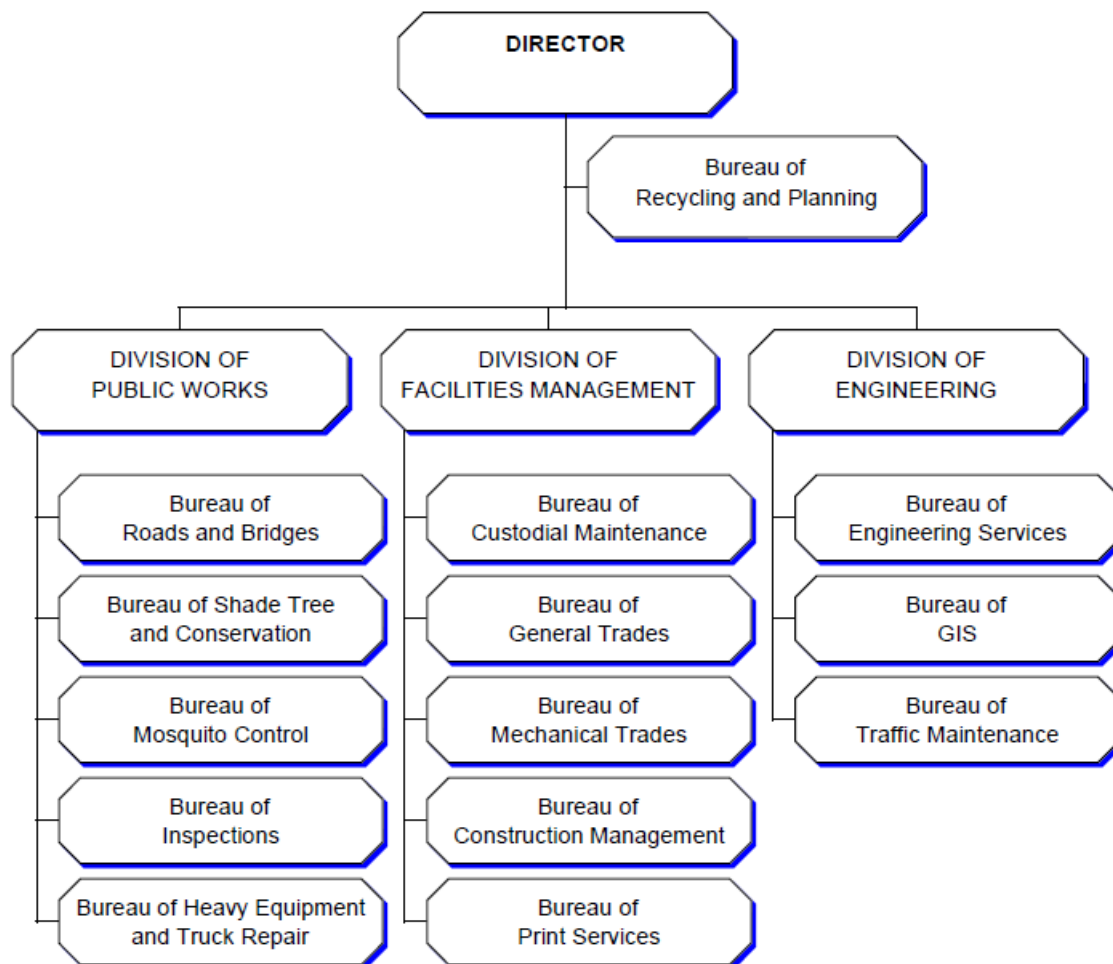
**Recycling & Planning**

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# Organizational Chart

## Department of Engineering, Public Works and Facilities Management





# **DEPARTMENT OF ENGINEERING, PUBLIC WORKS & FACILITIES MANAGEMENT**

## **Mission**

The mission of the Department of Engineering, Public Works & Facilities Management is to provide and administer professional design and construction services for the planning, development and maintenance of the county's infrastructure, while supporting various other County departments, divisions and agencies in bringing to fruition the Capital Program.

## **Programs & Services**

### **Division of Public Works**

**Bureau of Roads & Bridges:** Repairs and maintains a safe surface on 340 lane miles of County roadways, 413 bridge and culvert surfaces, County Park roads and paths, County Golf Course parking lots, and over 30 County-owned facilities and parking lots. The Bureau completes thousands of work requests through our *CarteGraph* work order system.

Roadways are swept a minimum of twice each month. Storm drains including 4,564 inlets and catch basins are cleaned and maintained on schedule in compliance with the Clean Water Act and requirements of Union County Highway Agency Storm Water General Permit NJ0141887 of 2005, as required by the State of New Jersey.

The Bureau is responsible for snow and ice removal on all county roads and bridges, and assists with snow removal for other County agencies. Snow accumulation totals, cost of material, labor, and duration of storms are recorded as required.

The 141 major bridges and 240 culverts are inspected and maintained on a regular schedule. Major and minor repairs on these structures are performed as outlined through a bi-annual inspection. Debris blockages are cleared when needed to maintain the downstream flow to reduce flooding. Bridge rails, decks, and walkways are cleaned, repaired and repainted as required. Graffiti is removed instantly. Beam guiderail repair, replacement, and installations are performed as required for the benefit of public safety. Right-of-way maintenance is conducted whereby vegetation is cut back or removed through treatment to aid in driver visibility on County roads, intersections and bridges.



In late winter and early spring, a comprehensive pothole repair program is instituted. Crews are dispatched to repair any and all potholes resulting from harsh winter conditions or anything else causing them. Crack sealing of county roadways and parking facilities is carried out during the winter, summer, fall and spring.

A bi-annual Road Rating Survey is conducted. The intent of this survey is to provide the means to establish priority repairs and preventive maintenance measures. This aids in providing recommendations for the County's Resurfacing Program conducted in cooperation with the Division of Engineering.

The Bureau maintains a mutual aid/shared services agreement with other county agencies and municipalities, providing equipment, personnel, and/or materials. Examples of these services include milling, paving, and vegetation removal.

Solid waste and recyclable hauling is performed weekly. Roll-off containers at various locations are dropped off, picked up, and emptied and returned upon request. The roll-off trucks and personnel also assist with Union County sponsored recycling and disposal events through the Bureau of Recycling.

The Bureau of Roads & Bridges is proactive on employee safety, providing up-to-date training and equipment for employees. The Bureau maintains a trained and equipped Confined Space Rescue Team on staff to monitor safety when confined space entries must be performed. Snow plow safety training is performed in-house yearly for new employees.

Equipment maintenance is performed daily. Snow equipment undergoes routine maintenance year-round to ensure readiness at the start of the winter season. Repair to snow equipment is also made available to other county departments and divisions.

The Bureau is on call and available 24 hours a day, seven days a week for emergency responses including flooding, snow & icing conditions, and downed trees, blockages at our culverts and bridges, and much more other unforeseen emergency conditions.

**Bureau of Mosquito Control:** Responsible for controlling the mosquito population in Union County. The Bureau inspects, constructs and maintains drainage ditches to eliminate standing water where mosquitoes breed. Applications of pesticide are kept to a minimum; however, Union County has many marshes and wetland areas that need to be monitored and treated when mosquito breeding reaches levels endangering the health of human and animal populations. Mosquito samples are

gathered for identifying species and for virus testing at the State Lab in Trenton using New Jersey light traps, BP Pro (dry ice) and Gravid (grass and water) traps. Other main activities include:

- Public education and outreach to eliminate potential breeding sites.
- Individual inspections at homes and businesses when complaints are received by the Bureau, which provides identification of breeding sites and remediates any standing water when practical.
- Working with local Boards of Health to inspect and remediate breeding sites at abandoned properties (requires annual recertification of staff).

After the monitoring and treatment season ends on November 1 each year, the Bureau assists in Union County's annual Leaf Collection Program, and covers snow plow routes as needed. The staff is trained annually in safety seminars, storm water discharge, and county policy and is also trained biennially for fork lift operation and is required to attend defensive driving courses.

**Bureau of Shade Tree & Conservation:** Maintains approximately 15,000 trees along County roads. To maintain and improve the shade canopy on County roads, the Bureau exceeds the requirements of Resolution 493-2000, which calls for at least one tree to be planted for every tree removed. The Bureau also maintains thousands of trees throughout the County parks system.

We also maintain all the trees along the county road. Trimming and removal of dead trees, working along with PSEG and Jersey central removing dead trees that may cause a problem with the wires if they fall and general trimming by request we also do root cutting for sidewalk repairs.

**Bureau of Inspections:** Responsible for the proper restoration of roadway excavation performed by private contractors and utility companies. The safeguarding of our underground utilities and properly restored roadway are essential in a congested area like Union County.

**Bureau of Heavy Equipment & Truck Repair:** Repairs all heavy equipment including trucks in the Divisions of Public Works and Park Maintenance including hydraulic and diesel mechanics. All mechanics have CDL permits with Hazmat and tanker endorsement; this enables the shop to provide delivery of fuel to various departments throughout the County. The shop also has two 4X4 Road Service vehicles for all-year service including winter storms.

**Bureau of Recycling and Planning:**

- Responsible for implementing county-wide recycling programs including scrap metal, fluorescent bulbs, Styrofoam, computer and electronics, tires, used motor oil and motor oil filters, plastic film, mobile paper shredding events and the reusable bag recycling/ reuse program.
- Manages New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) Recycling Enhancement Act (REA) and New Jersey Clean Communities grants, which Union County receives, and their associated responsibilities.
- Coordinates Household Hazardous Waste Disposal days for disposing non-latex paints, pesticides, fertilizers, solvents, pool chemicals, used motor oil and more as well as tires, which are recycled through our tire vendor, Casings, Inc.
- Sponsors regular meetings for Municipal Recycling Coordinators (MRCs) to help them network and improve recycling efforts in their municipalities, and therefore the County. The Bureau aids the municipalities with filing their annual recycling tonnage reports and therefore obtain annual state recycling grants.
- Disseminates environmental education and recycling information.
- Implements Union County Clean Communities Program.
- Provides recycling compliance assistance and support to municipalities.
- Supports municipal and County recycling efforts by distributing flyers, labels, and other items to help instruct residents, businesses, and government entities on proper recycling techniques.
- Answers questions and responds to residential concerns regarding recycling, hazardous waste disposal and handling, as well as similar topics.

## **Division of Engineering**

The Division of Engineering consists of Engineering Services, the Bureau of Geographic Information Services and the Bureau Traffic Safety and Maintenance. In support of the mission of the Division several goals have been established: provide for a well-trained, knowledgeable staff, provide adequate space for staff, and automate file storage and retrieval of engineering drawings, maps, projects and a complete electronic inventory of the County's infrastructure.

### **Bureau of Engineering Services:**

- Responsible for the inspection, design, rehabilitation, and replacement for 141 major bridges and 272 culverts for a total of 413; and 13 dams.
- Coordinate and manage the annual resurfacing program for 174 miles of County roadways, averaging about 17.4 miles of rehabilitation per year.
- Manage environmental remediation programs for former underground storage tanks (UST) and other contaminated sites.

- Support all of the Municipalities within the county with design and construction programs for traffic signal rehabilitation and replacement, as well as analyzing traffic needs for new traffic signals.
- Manage the New Jersey Storm Water Program for Union County and its municipalities, and support their flood control efforts.
- Support other County departments and agencies, including the Department of Engineering, Public Works and Facilities Management, Department of Parks and Recreation, the Office of Open Space, Recreation and Historic Preservation Trust Fund, and the Department of Public Safety in fulfillment of their capital programs by providing design services for and supervising construction on their facilities.
- Provide engineering review of the site plans and subdivision applications that are brought before the Union County Planning Board.

**Bureau of Geographic Information Systems:** Maintains, manages and supports countywide systems: GIS system with over 200 GIS layers, 5 GIS websites and 5 users in various Departments, five GIS websites and 21 municipal GIS and their police force.

- Supports the County Prosecutors office, Office of Emergency Management and State defender's office on a daily basis.
- Supports, manages and maintains the countywide asset management system that is used by over 50 employees and 24 countywide GIS layers.
- Supports all aspects of IT operation for the Public Works Department, which includes desktop support, hardware and software support, replacement and coordinating the purchasing of hardware are just some of the other responsibilities of the Bureau.
- Maintains County bridge inventory, priority bridge repair requests from NJDOT, and tracks the progress.
- Creates and supports hundreds of GIS layers including two dozen layers for the Prosecutor's office for their Megan's Law notification and sex offender tracking.
- Maintains about 20 layers for the Department of Public Safety, 18 layers for Union County Police, 25 layers for the Division of Engineering and 23 layers for the Department of Public Safety. We update and reprint no loitering zone maps, official county maps, park maps and various other official maps quarterly.
- Maintains and manages the County GIS investment by updating GIS layers on a regular basis. Updates include county parcel layer, road layer, public and private school layers, Board of Election layers and community organization layers. The Bureau of GIS has been actively supporting our 21 municipalities by providing data which reduces their cost.

- Maintains and updates certified digital drug free zone maps, distributed by the Bureau through a secured website to the local law enforcement entities.
- Implements Cartegraph work and asset management systems for the County.
- Prepares approximately 40-50 maps per month for the Union County Prosecutors office for crime scene analysis and drug free zone prosecution.
- Maintains automation of our playground and outfall inspection systems using Cartegraph and iPad.
- Geo-locates County assets and connects to Cartegraph for cost tracking purposes.
- Moved Cartegrapg system to the cloud hosted by Cartegraph
- Created and automated new monthly park inspection system for Park employees
- Designed and implemented new “paper vision” document management system
- Collects drone data for areas of the county that are related to county projects
- Created several asset layers in Cartegraph
- Created and published several GIS layers in the system
- Created a duplicate Hydro layer that is showing the erosion for the past 20 years
- Update 160,000 parcels with owner information and new subdivisions
- Actively updating 2022 road resurfacing map while creating new map for 2023
- Build a GIS layer showing the East Coast Greenway throughout county
- Created 10-foot county contour lines using points
- Continue to update Watchung Trail map
- Updated NHS layer

**Bureau of Traffic Safety & Maintenance:** Maintains Union County’s traffic signs and roadway striping along its 174 miles of roadway. The Bureau also approves, designs and implements temporary work zones, collects and documents traffic movement data, designs and installs custom signs and vehicle markings, conducts traffic safety studies and audits, and provides support for other Engineering Division responsibilities such as inspections. Each task is vital in protecting the county by limiting its liability in traffic tort claim cases, saving the county large sums of money in any given year. The Bureau also interfaces with the County’s twenty-one municipalities through co-op purchasing, shared services, and mutual aid services as well as providing technical guidance on various traffic issues.

The functional attributes of the Bureau are: Sign Design and Fabrication, Sign Installations, GIS Asset Management, Line Striping, Data Collection, Traffic Studies and Investigations, and Traffic Control. Additionally, the Bureau:

- Maintains over 9,000 roadside signs and over 500 miles of linear roadway striping that is managed through the GIS Asset Management System.

- Conducts traffic studies for volume, speed, and classifications of vehicles on County and Municipal roads, vehicle turning movements, and pedestrian crossing movements. Also conducts investigations in order to determine unsafe conditions and their causes, and make recommendations to the County Engineer.
- Supports the 21 municipalities through mutual aid and the Municipal Striping and Signs Programs, assists with traffic control for local events and emergencies, and supports communities by providing traffic data and studies when requested.
- Reviews detour and work zone traffic control plans for private and public construction and maintenance projects, in concurrence with the Departments of Engineering & Public Works. The Bureau also developed and maintains a page on the County's web site providing the public with educational material and up-to-date roadway traffic construction project information.
- Supports other County departments and agencies with the fabrication and installation of outdoor metal signs, fabrication and installation of vehicle graphics, and the application of pavement markings.
- The Bureau provides the County Counsel's Office with information and professional consultation related to depositions, and interrogatories, and testimony in regard to tort claims and law suits.
- Assists municipalities and other County agencies with traffic related issues, and works with community and professional organizations to further traffic safety.

### **Division of Facilities Management**

Services, maintains and repairs State Court System facilities, various properties and facilities owned and operated by Union County, including but not limited to general trades, custodian maintenance and printing.

The Division provides technical and mechanical services required by all County agencies for their safe and efficient operation. This encompasses two million square feet of multi-purpose facility space including the maintenance of boilers, generators, electrical, plumbing, and structural, elevators, HVAC and carpentry in addition to providing custodial services for all County facilities.

The Division also provides coordination for the County's capital improvement projects working collectively with various professional service consultants to accomplish set goals in a timely, cost efficient manner. The majority of the County's standard utilities such as Public Service Electric, Water and Gas are monitored and paid through Facilities. Monitoring also incorporates contractual bids, non-bid

agreements, and collective purchasing through New Jersey State Contracts, Middlesex Regional Education Commission and Somerset Cooperative.

The Division consists of four Bureaus:

**Bureau of Construction Management/Bureau of Trades:** Maintains approximately 60 Union County buildings, leased and owned, consisting of the non-mechanical trades. The Bureau sees to all maintenance issues such as cleanliness, recycling, personnel moves, etc. Trades governed by this Bureau are the carpenters, masons, painters and maintenance repair (day shift).

- Conducts Countywide renovation projects such as, but not limited to, framing and dry wall of new offices, ceiling tile replacement, painting and the installation of vinyl base and carpet tile, setting up or modifying cubicles provided by staffed furniture installers. Cost effective carpentry cabinet work and furniture is done in-house instead of buying same from outside vendors at higher cost.
- Directs compliance and maintenance with safety regulations and standards such as the replacement of damaged sidewalks, retaining walls, steps, etc., and snow removal from the County Complexes and parking lots.
- Completes approximately 4,000 work orders annually from a computerized system that records the job type, the shop, and the man-hours to complete the job.

**Bureau of Custodial Maintenance (Night Shift):** Works with day shift maintaining approximately 22 Union County buildings with 21 employees under direct supervision. Primary responsibility is an effective work schedule for cleaning, garbage removal, recycling, stripping and waxing of floors and carpet shampooing.

- Daily record keeping and equipment inventory required to provide cost effective measures and the ability to complete the job.
- Oversight of work areas in order to ensure safety for all employees and public.
- Training of new employees, consisting of building familiarity, uniforms, safety equipment, emergency situations, cleaning techniques and products, individual employee conduct and individual responsibilities.
- Works collectively with the day shift on snow removal and emergency situations such as the use of snow plows, shovels and salt deposits in addition to addressing any crisis situation on an as needed basis.

**Bureau of Stationary Engineers:** Strictly coordinates and monitors four mechanical trade units in the Division of Facilities Management -- electricians, plumbers, HVAC and stationary engineers -- to ensure adherence to Federal, State and County mandates regarding health, safety and fire code enforcement.

- Maintains approximately 28 buildings with two million square feet, 24 hours per day, seven days per week. The electricians, plumbers and HVAC function on the standard time frame with the exception of being on an on-call basis when needed.
- Oversees larger scale capital projects, in-house renovations and reconstruction independently and in conjunction with the architects and engineers retained by the County. The bureau Chief will attend vital meetings to enforce and monitor progress tracked by computerized system and work orders.
- Monitors the Automatic Logic Control System (ALC) reporting and regulating individual building temperature control.
- Enforces compliance and consistency with New Jersey EPA STACK testing mandates guideline and permits.
- Maintains power house consisting of: three high pressured vessels, electrical buss with 480 switches gears, all generators within the County buildings.

**Bureau of Print Services:** Provides a wide range of services including printing, graphic design, image & document scanning, creation of digital files including .pdf, .tiff, .jpg, .indd, .ai and .psd image file preparation for Digital Printing and Sign Making. The Bureau installs custom signs of vinyl, plastic, foam board, aluminum, paper etc. Printing includes carbonless (NCR) forms, flyers, business cards, invitations, door tags, nameplates, labels, calendars, menu directories, event signs, temporary signs, indoor/outdoor banners, posters, presentation checks etc.

- Countywide support for production, job tracking and management of Union County's In-house Print and Sign Shop including Print Services Xerox contract.
- Provide print and sign services to several municipalities, government agencies, local non-profits and the Union County Courts through shared services.
- Orders and tracks copy paper deliveries county wide, maintains various consumable inventories, and supports numerous computer equipment, printers and software at the division level.
- Maintains spreadsheets (printed and digital) for tracking, monitoring and logging.
- Offers guidance on design, layout/paper, software usage and troubleshooting.
- Utilizes a variety of software such as Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, In-Design, Acrobat, MS Word, Excel, Power Point, Gerber Omega, Onyx Production-House, Fiery RIP, Ustore, Uproduce and FFCore.
- Operates equipment such as Gerber thermal printers, various Gerber plotters, HP Latex 360 printer/ HP Latex 365, HP Scitex FB550B Printer and Summa F1612. Other equipment includes PSI digital printer, Neopost HD CX1600 printer, Neopost Mach 6 printer and numerous other post-press equipment.



## **2023 Accomplishments**

### **Division of Public Works**

**Bureau of Roads & Bridges:** In 2023 the Bureau filled in and repaired hundreds of potholes. Minor and major road surface repairs and preventive maintenance were completed throughout the county. Repairs to related infrastructure on county roadways were performed such as sink holes and storm line failures. The County's 340 lane miles of roadway were swept approximately twice per month as per our Sweeping Schedule. Vegetation maintenance was performed as required. The County's 4,564 inlets and catch basins were cleaned and or inspected twice per year, as scheduled. Repairs were made as required. Union County's 386 bridges and culvers were inspected and maintained as needed. Beam Guide Rail was repaired as needed. Weather related events including snow & ice were managed, staffed and tackled during and following each occurrence. There were approximately 500 tasks completed related to snow and ice removal during this time frame.

During County sponsored recycling events, the Bureau provides assistance through personnel and equipment. Assistance was provided to the Office of the County Clerk with hauling records to the incinerator from various agencies and municipalities throughout the County. Assistance was also provided to the County Police in hauling confiscated drugs to the incinerator for destruction.

The Welding Shop performed fabrication projects included Park Maintenance, Public Safety, Bureau of Shade Tree & Conservation, Bureau of Heavy Equipment and Truck Repair as well as repairs and modification to DPW Equipment.

The Bureau assisted the Bureau of Shade Tree & Conservation with personnel and equipment for the Leaf Compost Facility in Springfield, including receiving leaves and related materials for composting, forming windrows, and turning as required.

Routine inspections and preventive maintenance and priority repairs of bridges, culverts and parapets were conducted throughout the county. Graffiti removal was performed at various locations. Priority repairs are evaluated, scheduled and repaired via reports from DOT, Consulting Engineers and supervising staff of the Bureau.

The Bureau completed over 2,500 work requests in 2022 including services and mutual aid to all Divisions, Agencies and Municipalities. Approximately 2,000 tons of asphalt were used for Roads & Bridge Maintenance and Repairs and Mutual Aid requests. The Bureau also provided personnel and equipment to multiple pandemic

related projects including COVID-19 test sites and vaccination call centers, as well as Food Drives.

**Bureau of Inspections:** In 2023 the Bureau issued 549 roads and curb permits, collected \$177,844.30 in permit fees and \$246,739.95 in refundable bond fees, for a total of \$424,584.25. The Bureau also provided continuous monitoring of curb installations, and roadway and right-of-way excavations to ensure restoration and compliance with county specifications, and provided personnel for snow removal.

In addition to Roads & Bridges Inspectors, the Bureau personnel also include the Department's Safety Coordinator, who scheduled safety programs to ensure compliance with Local, Federal and State regulations. Examples of these regulations are: OSHA and Hazcom Right to Know Compliance, Commercial Driver's Licensing, CDL Medical Certifications, Storm Water Management, and Work Zone Safety. We now do tool box talk monthly.

Examples of in-house training included: chainsaw, forklift, backhoe and bucket truck operations, fire extinguisher, ladder usage, and proper flagging techniques. Reporting and recording of employee injuries and motor vehicle accidents also fall under this Bureau. Other safety training added in 2018 included slip and fall precautions, lifting techniques, PPE and defensive training.

**Bureau of Shade Tree & Conservation:** Each year, the Bureau plants 150 trees throughout the County along County roadways. This is done yearly due to the amount of trees that were removed due to decay or as a result of storm damage.

To date the Shade Tree Bureau has completed most of the work orders from last year and is focused on outstanding complaints. We are focused on removing all dead and dying trees along County roads and in the parks, including approximately 300 trees in the parks. There have been more than 700 trees removed due to safety and over 1,000 trees have been trimmed, mainly identified through requests from the public as well as county personnel.

This year, the Bureau completed a large request for tree trimming and removal in all of our park system and large amounts of requests Scotch Plains, Elizabeth, Plainfield, Cranford, Clark, Roselle and Roselle Park. The Bureau also continues to work with PSEG and Jersey Central Power & Light electric companies on tree removal. This year a few hundred trees were lost due to the Asian Longhorn Beetle.

The Shade Tree Bureau also provided aide to Summit, Mountainside, Roselle, Berkeley Heights, New Providence and Roselle in removing large trees and hanging branches. The Bureau also loaned equipment to assist municipalities.

The Bureau also completed work in several parks as requested by Park supervisors, including Cedar Brook, Echo Lake and Rahway River.

**Bureau of Mosquito Control:** Mosquito Control completed 151 tasks related to ditch maintenance and 204 tasks for Drainage maintenance prior to the start of our surveillance and treating season. The mosquito surveillance season began March 1. To date, we had 3 human cases of West Nile Virus reported in Union County and 5 Dengue Fever cases (travel history). EEE was not detected in any samples submitted by Union County to the NJ State PHEL labs for virus testing. Our Bureau submitted 15 different weekly portable trappings at locations in our data base, collected 9,763 mosquitoes, identified and encapsulated 220 pools for testing. Those pools were tested for 5 different viruses carried by mosquitos (WNV, EEE, SLE, JCV & Dengue Fever) and we had 57 positive pools of mosquitos for W.N.V. This season was monitored by twenty-three semi-permanent New Jersey light traps for tends and populations. Our Inspectors also were active with our WNV surveillance. They performed 15 Gravid trap runs. All 21 municipalities in Union County had at least one portable trap sent for virus testing with all having at least one positive WNV pool. The Inspectors performed 672 NJ light trap runs during the 2023 season. U.C. Bureau of Mosquito Control currently has over 959 identified and cataloged sites registered with the NJ PHEL Labs in Ewing Township, NJ.

This Bureau handled 217 complaints for 2023. There were 491 spray locations during 53 adulticiding operations during evening hours to control adult populations of mosquitoes. There were 2,373 tasks completed for 2023. This includes the work the inspectors do on a daily basis to control breeding at the source in several locations throughout Union County where standing water cannot be eliminated.

The Bureau has offered “Barrier” treatment for problem yards of individual home sites, using a backpack blower that sprays a mist of a barrier pesticide that dries down in an hour and leaves a residue that can provide active mosquito control for up to 12 days. The Bureau has received positive feedback with the results, along with equipment and pesticide cost, we had to reduce our Barrier treatment program for 2023 season.

Our office staff attended outreach venues in order to educate the public to the health risks and public nuisance of mosquitoes and how to prevent breeding of them.

**Bureau of Heavy Equipment & Truck Repair:** There were 957 repair Work Orders including repair of in-house work. The Bureau has also made repairs to equipment for towns within Union County. The shop will continue to work with various schools to keep the mechanics updated on vehicle scanner training, two mechanics attend vehicle scanner training provided by Timmerman Equipment. Our Department will expand our ability diagnose and repair our current fleet of vehicles and equipment. The staff of technicians will be updated by means of either classroom or online training in order to keep up with current and future vehicle technology.

**Bureau of Recycling and Planning:** In 2023, the Bureau launched the first “Beyond the Bin” recycling event, which was held on November 4, 2023 at the Union County VoTech in Scotch Plains. This event provided residents the opportunity to recycle “harder to recycle” items. These materials consisted of plastic film, Styrofoam, electronic devices, unwanted clothing and related items (textiles), reusable cloth bags, and food waste. The event was a success with 151 residents participating. We hope that this will become bigger when it returns next year. The weight of electronics that were collected at the event totaled 9358 pounds. These electronics were recycled with NewTech Recycling, who is a subcontractor of MRM, who our electronics recycling contract is with. We also recycled 1639 pounds of textiles with Helpsy. We also collected multiple bags of plastic film and Styrofoam, which we recycled. We also collected reusable bags, which numbers are included later in this report. Finally, we enabled residents to purchase composters and other waste reducing items from BrandBuilders at a price that was subsidized through Recycling Enhancement Act (REA) grant funds.

The countywide plastic film recycling program, which was introduced in late 2022, continued its success in 2023. This program enabled the recycling of 7.96 tons of recyclable plastic film material recycled to date with Trex for 2023 and 9.16 tons recycled overall in the program.

Thanks to our newly hired Recycling Aide, the Bureau finally has a draft of a County-wide recycling directory. This directory brings together information regarding all of the County-wide recycling programs, municipal programs, and recycling markets in one place. This document will eventually be put into one hard-copy pamphlet and online as well for easy access by all county residents and businesses.

The Pumpkin Recycling Program was expanded in 2023. The County is continuing pumpkin collection with Elizabeth, Berkeley Heights, and Westfield, as

we have in past years. However, in 2023, we have added Linden, Plainfield, and Kenilworth, as partners, to help maximize the number of pumpkins that we recycle. These pumpkins will be converted to green energy through the Waste Management CORE facility in Elizabeth. This year, the program will end on November 27<sup>th</sup>. This program, as well as the other County recycling programs were publicized through The Star-Ledger/nj.com, TapInto, RecycleCoach and through County advertising channels.

The Clean Communities Program continued a strong presence to date in 2023. Through November 13, 2023, the Program assisted with 37 group cleanups and 11 individual efforts involving participants who worked a total of 2297.5 manhours. The personnel involved with the program collected 509.25 estimated bags of litter and 53 estimated bags of recyclables. A total of 262.8 acres were cleaned. This program was heavily assisted by Parks staff. The Bureau's Environmental Specialist 1, which was on staff through mid-July, was heavily involved in this program until her departure, when she accepted another position outside of Union County.

Recycling in Union County Parks: In collaboration with Parks staff and the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Environmental Stewards Program, the Bureau created and distributed recycling brochures and posters in English and Spanish to all park kiosks. This process also included the purchase of one hundred recycling and one hundred solid waste "toter" containers to make pick up of solid waste and recycling easier in the in Rahway River Park. This purchase, along with the purchase of a dump body for a pick-up truck, which will allow materials to be picked up around the park in this truck with the dump body and then dumped into a packer truck for easy transportation to the incinerator/ recycling market. The final step to this project was the purchase of solid waste dumpsters and recycling dumpsters for the picnic areas. Due to supply chain issues, the dump body for the truck is delayed. This project will hopefully be fully functional by the summer of 2024.

Styrofoam Recycling: Unfortunately, FoamPak, the vendor that we have used since the inception of this program closed its doors in 2023. With that being said, we began a new relationship with Plastic Services, Inc. in Middlesex Borough, NJ. This new relationship has allowed the program to continue seamlessly. The County of Union continues to support the program with gaylord bags for towns for collection of Styrofoam as well as educational materials and promotion.

**Recycle Coach:** Union County continues to support all 21 municipalities and their residents for use of the Recycle Coach app. County staff and Municipal Recycling Coordinators continue to communicate and meet with representatives from Recycle Coach to optimize the user experience, including free educational tools.

**Communication with Municipalities:** The Bureau has focused on communications with the Municipal Recycling Coordinators, including multiple meetings and emails at least weekly. Some municipalities in Union County saw a change in Recycling Coordinators in 2023. With that being said, the Bureau continues to build relationships with new staff to make for the best recycling resources for Union County residents.

**The New Jersey “Bag Ban”/ “Straw Law”:** The Bureau continued to assist in public awareness campaigns, including the purchase and distribution reusable shopping bags and ban-related educational materials at county and municipal events. The Bureau also purchased and distributed metal reusable straws. All materials were purchased with Clean Communities funds. The County also created a “pilot” program in which reusable bags are collected at two locations in the County, one in Westfield and one in Elizabeth where Union County residents can give in their reusable bags in, a vendor, GoATote sanitizes them and redistributes them to the Community Food Bank in Hillside for use in their food distribution operations. To date the program has collected 3,192 bags from the Westfield location, 347 from the Elizabeth location, and 540 at the single day “Beyond the Bin” event for a total of 4,079 bags reused.

**Countywide Recycling Collection Events:** Event and tonnage data for the 2023 recycling events are as follows:

- **Mobile Paper Shredding** – Union County sponsored 13 residential paper shredding events in 2023 with 6,836 residents participating and bringing 220,353 pounds of confidential documents for shredding. Union County’s local government document destruction program also assisted seven County offices and ten non-County government entities in shredding their confidential documents and recycling the paper from the process. One of these offices was the Cranford Municipal Clerk’s Office, who suffered a mechanical issue with their dehumidifier and had to get rid of many important documents via shredding. We assisted this office in destroying these documents. We also provided a shredding truck so that the residents at the Cranford Senior housing complex could shred their confidential documents. The Bureau has a contract with IDS AutoShred, who has been very good to work with. REA grant funds were used to cover all costs for both the residential shredding program and office shredding

program, including vendor costs, overtime for staff, and lunch for staff. The service fees for the vendor of office shredding program was also covered.

- Household Hazardous Waste – Union County sponsored five household waste events in 2023 with 2,944 residents participating in the program. REA grant funds covered all costs. These costs included payment for the vendor, overtime for staff, recycling fees for tires, and lunch for employees. The vendor for the events is Radiac Environmental, Inc.
- Fluorescent Bulbs – To date in 2023, 19,296 feet of straight fluorescent bulbs were collected and recycled at nine municipal drop-off sites, along with 195 U-shaped and compact bulbs for a total weight of 3.76 tons. The bulbs are picked up and recycled through AERC/ Clean Venture for recycling. Bulbs were also collected at the County's five Household Hazardous Waste events. All bulb recycling fees were covered by Recycling Enhancement Act (REA) grant funds.
- Tires and Propane Tanks – A total of 569 tires and 204 propane tanks were collected at the Household Hazardous Waste events in 2023. Again, all of the fees associated with recycling/ processing them were covered by Recycling Enhancement Act (REA) grant funds.
- Scrap Metal –The Bureau of Recycling managed bi-monthly scrap metal collection programs from April thru November at two drop-off locations in Cranford and Rahway, collecting 70,160 pounds (35.08 tons) of scrap metal to date (with one event left in 2023).
- Motor Oil/Filters: As of October 31, 2023, Union County successfully recycled 8,270 gallons of oil and 2,700 pounds of spent oil filters for the year. These collections took place via 15 Municipal drop off locations as part of our Motor Oil and Filter Recycling Program. There was additional motor oil and filters accepted at our Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) events.
- Electronics Recycling – Union County continues to provide free electronics drop-off at 17 municipal locations for e-waste covered by state regulations. The amount collected through June 30, 2023 was 287,707 pounds of covered electronics (the most current data available due to reporting) and an estimated 70,000 pounds of uncovered electronics. Our vendor, MRM, notes that devices are evolving to become lighter, meaning that the weight collected in future years may hold steady or become lower, even as more devices are brought for recycling

## **Division of Engineering**

**Bureau of Engineering:** Projects in 2023 including the 2023 Road Resurfacing program of approximately 10 miles in 11 municipalities. Work was completed on the traffic signal project at the intersection of Lambert's Mill Road and Rahway

Avenue in Westfield. Bridge design is near completion for the Irving Street Bridge in Rahway, Trenton Avenue Bridge in Elizabeth, Pine Grove Avenue Bridge in Summit, and Conant Street Park Bridge in Hillside. A scour protection projects was completed at Hamilton Street Bridge in Rahway. New scour protection projects have started at the Randolph Road Bridge in Plainfield and Central Avenue Bridge in Rahway. The Gordon Street Bridge was demolished in Roselle/Roselle Park, and the new bridge is currently being constructed. Design is near completion for replacing and upgrading over 20,000 feet of guiderail throughout Union County. An extensive dam maintenance project is currently underway at 13 Union County dams. Union County has been working with FEMA to secure funds to repair assets damaged by the remnants of Hurricane Ida.

Facilities Projects included the new Public Safety Dispatch Center, the completion of the stairway tower project in the County Court House building, renovation of the County Clerk's office, renovation of the Union County Performing Arts Center exterior, existing parking deck demolition at the Union County Courthouse, New Annex Courthouse roof replacement, Galloping Hill Mason shed restroom construction, UC Courthouse boiler replacements, Fire Academy improvements, Administration Building sliding door replacement, various UC park restroom facility upgrades, Deserted Village roof replacements, Rahway Park pool gutter replacement, and design of the Stamler Police Academy running track.

Park Projects included the paving of paths at Rahway River Park in Rahway, the reconstruction of the azalea gardens at Warinanco Park in Rahway, and the preliminary engineering kick off to 15 new parks projects throughout the County ranging from small improvements to major turf field renovations. Design is underway for the tennis courts at Warinanco Park and is complete for a proposed second ice rink at Warinanco Park.

**Bureau of Geographic Information Systems:** The Bureau maintained, managed and supported the county-wide asset management system which includes over 20,000 assets and over 100 users. Maintained, managed and supported School Crisis Mitigation system with 230 schools and over 400 law enforcements users a key infrastructure piece that assists our municipal partners in keeping schools safe. Maintained, managed and supported the County's GIS public website with 4,000 local certified tax map sheet, sex offender database and supported several staff members within the Prosecutor's office who require access to our data. Created GIS maps and supported GIS operations for 21 municipal partners and kept the parcel layer with 160,000 parcels up to date. Supported and maintained Board of Election maps, road resurfacing maps, road sign database with 20,000 signs,



county road video logs and county park asset. Supported and managed over 150 computers within the PW Department, including upgrade and troubleshooting. Finally, the Bureau launched a new feature to its wide array of services to include an electronic drone to capture of any necessary sites, surveys or specific locations requested.

**Bureau of Traffic Safety and Maintenance:** Conducted traffic control design and implementation for over 20 miles of road during 2022 Annual Resurfacing operations. Conducted numerous Traffic Count Studies for the County and its municipal partners. Upgraded numerous Pedestrian Crosswalks signs and over 300 other warning and streets signs improving pedestrian safety and driver awareness. Assisted our municipal partners via our Mutual Aide/Shared Services Program with over \$11,000.00 of pavement markings, signage and vehicle graphics. Supported County Parks Department with numerous sign installations, pavement marking upgrades, event banner installations, Deer Management sign installations and land encroachment signs. Supported County Police with signs, pavement markings and vehicle graphics. Supported annual Infrastructure Municipal Aid Grant program with sign installations at specific locations. Provided consultations and general information or responses to County Counsel Office related to depositions, interrogatories regarding tort claims or law suits related to traffic incidents. The Bureau also continued updating sign inventory within the County GIS system.

### **Division of Facilities Management**

- UC Courthouse Tower– Fire Code Violation, Interior Stairwell Project: Project commenced in January 2020. Erection of the new Interior Stairwell and Fire Sprinkler System has been installed. Project has been completed.
- Replaced the entrance patio and walkway of Trailside Nature & Science Center
- Upgraded the lighting throughout Stamler Police Academy to LED fixtures
- Renovated the bathrooms at Cornerstone Behavioral Health

### **Bureau of Print Services:**

- Processed 2,289 print/sign/paper requests from Nov. 9, 2022 - November 9, 2023 for Union County and 28 Municipalities & non-profit agencies.
- Printed over 3,535,547 impressions from Nov. 9, 2022 – Nov. 9, 2023.
- Printed and assembled 220+ Banners from Nov. 9, 2022 – Nov. 9, 2023.
- Invoiced \$50,756.80 from Nov. 9, 2022 – November 9, 2023 to various Townships, non-profits and government agencies. Continued to research and

utilize efficient and productive equipment including a wide format digital scanner and a high-speed envelope printer. Researching new vendors and cost-effective materials for signs, banners and printing in spite of the ongoing supply chain issues.

- Upgrading design and production software to keep an efficient workflow.
- Refining digital print submission system.

## **2024 Initiatives**

### **Division of Public Works**

**Bureau of Roads & Bridges:** The goals for the Bureau is to have employees attend driver and operator safety courses specific to equipment used and tasks performed within the department as well as obtaining additional training specific to asphalt projects. The Bureau is replacing time clocks with a new facial recognition.

The Bureau is also seeking approval from the Department of Environmental Protection for a potential milling and paving project within Meisel Park.

The Bureau's in-house paving program will provide Mutual-Aid Milling and Resurfacing services to various Municipalities, Departments and County facilities prioritized as requested through County departments. Requests submitted to the Bureau will commence on or about May 1, 2023.

**Bureau of Inspections:** The Bureau will continue to closely monitor all construction, maintenance, and repair being performed on County roads as it pertains to the proper permitting for curing, road openings, excavations and alterations, and continue to assure compliance with County specifications.

The Safety Coordinator will continue to do more conduct training in areas, and will continue to assure compliance with Local, Federal, and State regulations. The Bureau's goal is to become an injury and accident free workplace.

**Bureau of Shade Tree & Conservation:** The Bureau is looking into the Sponsor A Tree commemorative tree planting program. We hope to partner with five planting programs that work with Sponsor A Tree.

The Bureau is also looking to purchase new equipment to maximize our performance and productivity in getting work orders completed earlier and looking for a new

system using iPad to put locations and conditions of trees. This new system would allow us to upload on site into a GPS system, to increase productivity, identify dead trees and classify work orders. We are looking to replace more trees going forward due to global warming, and increase education for the public.

The Bureau would like to change over from gas power to electric all saws, blowers and trucks. Employees of the Bureau will attend more safety classes which would include bucket safety, stump grinder, crane operations and chainsaw training.

**Bureau of Recycling and Planning:** The Bureau has multiple projects that we are looking to either initiate or improve upon in 2024. The Bureau is looking to institute the first “County-wide” food waste initiative in the state of New Jersey. We are presently researching different options and vendors that can help us in this endeavor. We are also working with the Parks staff at the Trailside Environmental Center to recreate the recycling and litter abatement/ Clean Communities display at the center. This will help improve the County’s ability to teach Union County residents, including students, about recycling, litter abatement, and the issues surrounding both topics.

The Bureau is looking to expand its “Beyond the Bin” program in 2024. Not only are we looking to hold another event, but we are looking to have another event of this nature on the eastern half of the County and potentially collect additional materials at it. The Bureau is looking to begin a training program for municipal Public Works employees from various municipalities on how they can play a part in helping the County recycle better and keep their respective municipalities neat and clean. This will most likely be done by instructional video, which the Office of Communication and Public Information will aid us with.

The Bureau is finally looking to finalize our County Recycling Directory/ Markets Directory in 2024, should it not be done by the end of 2023. We are also hoping to expand our reusable bag distribution program pilot, in which we partnered with the Housing Authority of the City of Elizabeth (HACE), the Town of Westfield, and GOATOTE on.

The Bureau is also looking to convert more of its educational and publicity- based materials into either bilingual or multi-lingual format to accommodate more of Union County’s population. The Bureau would also like to better utilize the solid waste and recycling resources that already exist in the county, namely the Plainfield Transfer Station. We have had discussions with the staff from the City of Plainfield in regard to this. We would like to increase recycling opportunities for those who

use that facility. Plainfield and the Borough of Kenilworth anticipate participating in more County programs to help increase participation in recycling County-wide.

Finally, the Bureau plans to utilize the Recycling Aides that are assigned to the Bureau to help create educational programs regarding recycling and litter abatement that we can take to the elementary schools (or have the elementary schools come to it (possibly at Trailside). The Bureau is looking to open more opportunities to senior residents. This may include more shredding events at eldercare facilities and similar institutions.

Finally, with the departure of our original Environmental Specialist 1, the Bureau's Clean Communities program has not been as formidable as it was with her here. We are looking to reinvigorate this program and work with different community groups to increase litter abatement and like education activities. Finally, the Bureau will be signing a new computer and electronics recycling contract with a new vendor for 2024 and beyond.

With that being said, the County will be making money on the recycling of this material, which we have not done in the past. The RFP materials were received in October of 2023 and the contract will be ready to go by January 1, 2024.

## **Division of Engineering**

**Bureau of Engineering:** The Bureau anticipates the 2023 road resurfacing program to include 12 miles of roadway repaving in 10 Municipalities; Traffic Signal Projects at three intersections on W. Seventh Street in Plainfield; the completion of the Gordon Street Bridge Project in Roselle/ Roselle Park, the start of the Irving Street Bridge Project in Rahway, Lower Road Minor Bridge in Linden, Central Avenue Bridge in Rahway and Randolph Road Bridge in Plainfield. Parks and Recreation and Facilities projects will also be executed.

The Bureau will also seek to improve the project specifications for the annual paving program to make the program more efficiently and timely along with seeking potential traffic safety improvements with our 21 municipal partners via various traffic studies and a potential Safe Streets and Roads for All grant, if awarded.

**Bureau of Geographic Information Systems:** The Bureau will continue to maintain, manage and support the county wide asset management system while adding additional vital assets and increasing its usage by promoting additional users to the system. The Bureau will continue to manage the School Crisis

Mitigation system which include over 400 law enforcement users. The GIS public website will continue to house over 4000 certified tax maps, drug free zone maps and sex offender database information for the UC Prosecutors Office all of which need to be maintained constantly. We will continue to support several staff members of the Prosecutors office on using the system and data, to create GIS maps and support GIS operations.

The Bureau will continue to assist our 21 municipal partners and keep the parcel layer which includes over 160,000 properties up to date. Support and maintain Board of Election maps, road resurfacing maps, Road Sign database which includes over 20,000 signs, County roadway video logs and County park assets. Support and manage over 150 computers within the Engineering, Public Works & Facilities Management Department including upgrades and daily troubleshooting. We will actively capture more drone footage to help with various county projects. In addition, we will capture video footage of the county roads showing current conditions using the 'Go Pro' camera. Uploading pending drawings to the new Paper Vision system and train all employees in the system.

**Bureau of Traffic Safety and Maintenance:** The Bureau anticipates applying approximately 45 linear miles of needed roadway line striping and continually maintaining the line striping machine. We plan to upgrade County route markers and pedestrian crosswalk signs to enhance public safety, as well as continuing to: maintain, replace or upgrade County roadway signs; acquire yearly traffic data for County roadways; provide mutual aid to our municipal partners; and assist all County Departments on their sign and graphics needs.

### **Division of Facilities Management**

- New Annex Courthouse: Replacement of the entire Roof; Asbestos Abatement and Installation of Fire Sprinkler System on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor; Modernization of the existing three (3) Elevators.
- Administration Building: Replacement of the existing aging and outdated Main Entrance/Exit Doors will commence.
- UC Courthouse: Replacement of the Entrance/Exit Doors at rear (Atrium) entrance will commence.
- UC Parking Garage: Existing Parking Garage will be demolished and replaced with a new Parking Deck.
- Parks Restrooms: Renovation of Public and Employee restrooms will continue.

**Bureau of Administrative Support:** Continue the implementation of the XMPie ordering system. Plans to integrate sign shop work orders into XMPie, testing the system with an end user. Purchase a backup ~~new~~ high-speed digital envelope printer. Start evaluating new equipment for the next Xerox contract. Research a replacement for our large hydraulic paper cutter.

Various County Locations: Modernization of Fire Alarm Panels, Smoke Detection and Fire Sprinkler Systems will continue.

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# **Department of Finance**

**Comptroller**

**Internal Audit**

**Reimbursement**

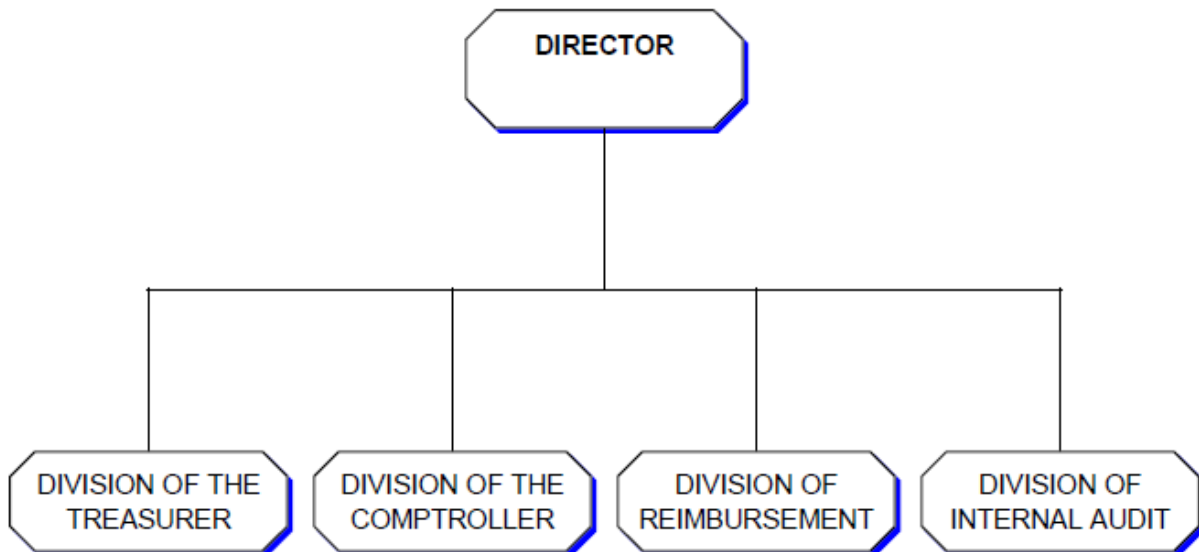
**Treasurer**

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# Organizational Chart

## Department of Finance







# **DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE**

## **Mission**

The mission of the Department of Finance is to provide quality financial services to all Union County operations and provide decision-makers with sound and reliable information for managing resources. The services provided include planning, programming, budgeting, reporting, consulting, investing, and evaluation.

## **Programs & Services**

### **The Division of the Treasurer**

Serves as the custodian of all County funds and disbursing of said funds only on order of the County Manager. Collects and receives all moneys due the County and reports on same as directed. Whenever excess County funds are available for investing purposes, will invest at the best interest of the County government.

### **The Division of Comptroller**

Keeps adequate records and reports on receipts and disbursements when necessary. Maintains general books of accounts in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Local Finance Board. Maintains a central payroll for the County. Assists in the preparation and review of departmental budgets. Reports to the Director of Finance any over-expenditures or budget variations of any departmental budget or any other matters of a financial nature which may come to the Division's attention.

### **The Division of Reimbursement**

Establishes financial and administrative controls for all funding sources received by Union County other than by direct taxation, including all federal and state grants. Implements, manages and enforces of grant management procedures. Provides assistance in development of all grant applications regarding financial controls, contracts and reporting procedures. Responsible for updating and monitoring the Union County indirect cost allocation rate and development new applications of said rate.

### **The Division of Internal Audit**

Performs the routine work involved in auditing and keeping extensive financial records and reports. Prepares reports, examinations and audits of books and financial records. Insures regulations and accounting procedures are properly observed and compiles financial and other statements and reports using data. Periodically reviews accounting and fiscal practices.

## **2023 Accomplishments**

### **Comptroller's Division**

#### Financial Controls and Audit Function Procedures:

Assist other departments with the implementation of the Financial Controls and Audit Function procedures that have been issued by the Department of Finance. These procedures include existing as well as new procedures that assist in improving the maintenance of the financial system, the accounts payable process and payroll process.

### **Treasurer's Division**

#### Sale of Bonds:

- Issued \$4,264,000 College chapter 12 (State Aid) Bonds for the Union College gym expansion at the Cranford campus.

#### Sale of Bond Anticipation Notes:

- Issued bond anticipation notes of \$70,000,000 to fund capital projects such as road and bridge improvements, traffic signals and improvements to buildings and parks.

#### Revenue Enhancements:

- Continued upgrades for various on-line banking platforms.

#### Investments:

- Utilized surplus funds (sale of assets) by investing in a CD.

#### Bond Arbitrage:

- Completed bond arbitrage services to calculate the arbitrage rates for various bonds and notes issues and have the calculations completed and up to date

through 2022 bond and note issues. Additionally, the five-year calculation was completed for the Series 2018 bonds.

**Bond Rating:**

- AAA rating by Moody's Investor Services for Bonds and Notes issued during 2023.

**Miscellaneous:**

- Worked regularly with the County's depositories to make sure interest rates were being increased to take advantage of the Federal Reserve's numerous interest rate increases throughout 2023 resulting in an unprecedented amount of interest on investment earnings.
- Worked with Chase Bank to provide live fraud training to the Department and had the Treasury Division participate in several fraud training webinars to emphasize the importance of staying diligent and vigilante in regards to regular fraud attempts and tactics.

**Reimbursement Division**

The Division of Reimbursement was tasked to oversee the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds-American Rescue Plan Act. Some of the current projects the Division managed funded by this grant are:

1. To continue to provide COVID 19 vaccinations at Warinanco Park, Plainfield High School, mobile operations and homebound vaccinations throughout Union County.
3. Community Infrastructure Projects – the county is reviewing and determining infrastructure deficiencies within the County's neighborhoods.
4. To continue to provide the Food Distribution Program at Kean University and various other sites throughout Union County.
5. County Wide Fiber Ring Project to upgrade the County's fiber optic network to establish a secure county-wide speed network that would enable reliable communication between the County and local government units. Fast reliable communication is crucial to the efforts to combat the COVID-19 public health emergency and its residual effects. An improved network would benefit all public agencies, particularly those responsible for combatting COVID-19, including first responders and public health workers.
6. The County is investing in the upgrades and repairs to parks, public plazas and other public outdoor recreation spaces responding to the needs of

disproportionately impacted communities by promoting healthier environments and outdoor recreation and socialization to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

7. The county is responding to the increase in violent crimes including gun violence in the county as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the county is sustaining the Body Worn Camera Program initiated by the Prosecutor's Office to address the rise in crime, prevent further violence and recognize mental illness in perpetrators for treatment.
8. The county is utilizing funds to continually enhance first responder's ability to safely respond to emergencies and disasters along with advancing support of the County 911 service.
9. To assist the County's most vulnerable populations and combat housing insecurity, the County has provided more than \$800,000 in direct aid to senior citizens and disabled veterans for the purpose of mortgage and rental assistance.
10. Funds were provided for one-time direct cash assistance to qualifying senior citizens and veterans as a result of the disproportionate impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on these two populations. This program provided direct aid in the amount of \$500 to qualified County residents.

### **Internal Audit Division**

In 2023 the Division of Internal Audit ensured that proper accounting procedures and regulations were being followed where necessary.

Ensured all Retroactive Payments in regards to settled Labor Contracts were completed accurately and in a timely manner for those received in 2023.

Maintained appropriate requested position movements based on Internal Controls and Labor Contracts.

Completed all necessary reports for the State and Auditors in regards to the Financial Management of Cornerstone Behavioral Health Hospital of Union County.

### **2024 Initiatives**

#### **Comptroller's Division**

Financial Controls and Audit Function Procedures:

Continue assisting other departments with the implementation of the Financial Controls and Audit Function procedures.

### Deferred Compensation:

During 2024 the Department of Finance will provide services to employees in an effort to provide assistance with a deferred compensation program. Offer the service of onsite consulting services by a licensed investment advisor. The Department of Finance also assists employees with enrollments and changes requested through deductions.

## **Treasurer's Division**

### Banking:

- Continue upgrades and training on electronic banking sites via the County's approved listing of GUDPA approved financial institutions.
- Continue review of minimizing account fees and continue ongoing discussions with the County's approved depositories for opportunities to increase interest rates.

### 2024 Bond Anticipation Notes Sale:

- Bond a portion of the \$70,000,000 bond anticipation notes and issue approximately \$20,000,000-\$30,000,000 new bond anticipation notes for the funding of capital improvement projects.

### 2024 Bond Sale:

- Will issue General Improvement, Vocational-Technical, County College Series A chapter 12 (State Aid) and College Series B bonds to permanently finance a portion of the BANS.

### Bond Arbitrage:

- Follow up with bond arbitrage service provider to stay current with new calculation dates for the more recent issues of bonds and notes.

### Miscellaneous:

- Will continue to provide fraud training to finance staff including a live simulation attack within the first half of 2024.

## **Reimbursement Division**

The development of an automated time keeping program for employees' activity on federal, state and local grants.

Streamline the preparation of the annual central service cost allocation plan to determine fringe and indirect cost rates to be used for various federal and state grant awards.

Continued improvement with the UC Grant Program as a centralized information system for all grants awarded to the county.

Development of monitoring procedures for federal and state grants awarded to the County of Union.

### **Internal Audit Division**

The Division of Internal Audit will continue to verify and retain financial records, as well as ensure that proper accounting procedures and regulations are being followed.

Ensure all documentation required for upcoming audits will be provided in a timely manner.

Will continue to complete all necessary reports for the State and Auditors in regards to the Financial Management of Cornerstone Behavioral Health Hospital of Union County.

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# **Department of Human Services**

**Aging**

**American Jobs Center**

**Cornerstone Behavioral Health Hospital**

**Outreach and Advocacy**

**Paratransit**

**Planning**

**Social Services**

**Youth Services**

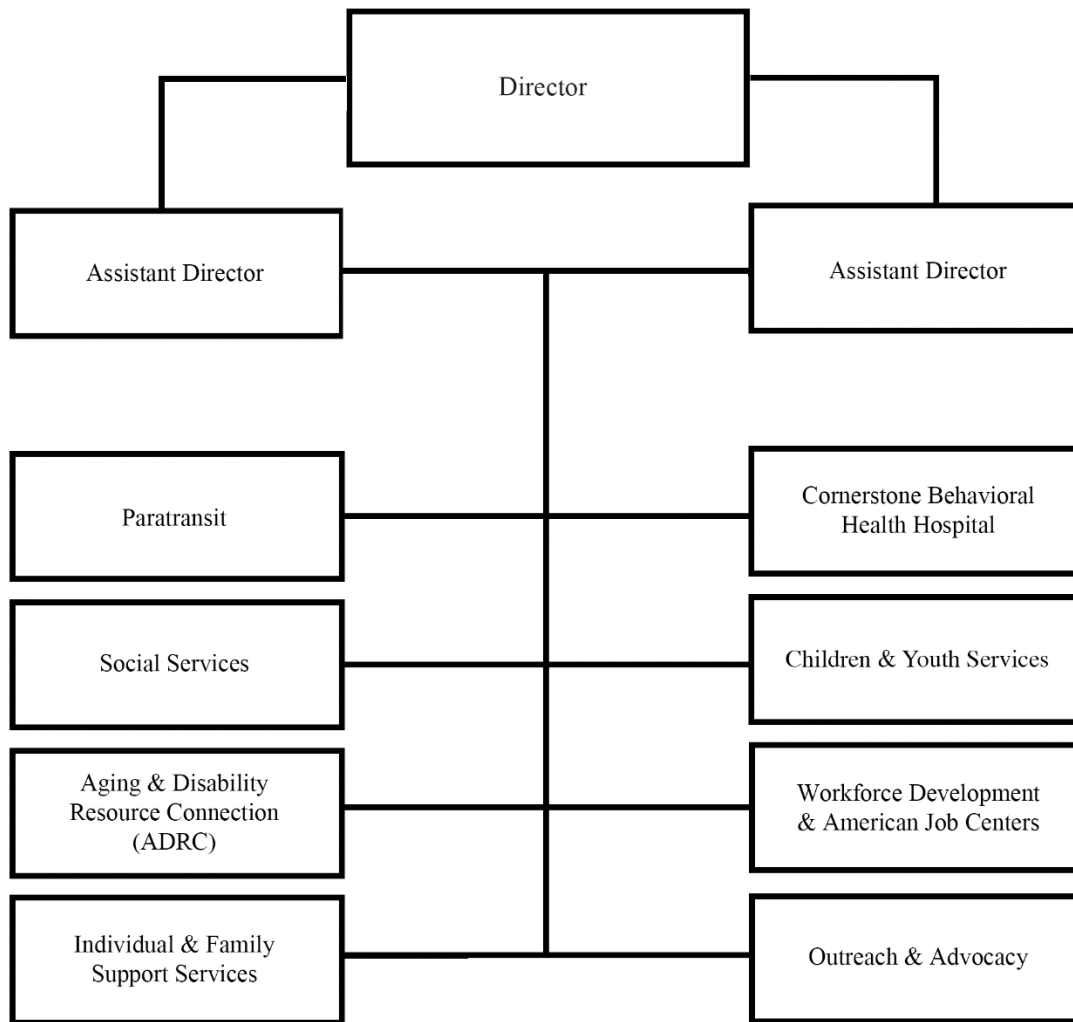
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# Organizational Chart

## Department of Human Services





# **DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

## **Mission**

The mission of the Department of Human Services (DHS) is to empower Union County individuals, families, and communities to achieve their highest level of self-sufficiency and quality of life using an accessible, inclusive and comprehensive approach to service delivery and care.

## **Programs and Services**

DHS encompasses an array of programs and support services administered through its Office of the Director and other offices and divisions, which include: Division on Aging and Disability Resource Connection, American Job Center, Cornerstone Behavioral Health Hospital, Division of Outreach and Advocacy, Paratransit, Division of Individual and Family Support Services, Division of Social Services and Division of Children and Youth Services. Last year, the Department served more than 337,156 individuals more than half of our Union County population, through an array of direct services, contracted community-based provider agencies and received funding to provide services through different state, federal and private foundations.

### **Office of the Director**

#### **Paratransit System**

Countywide curb-to-curb transportation for seniors (60 and over), disabled residents, veterans, and other income eligible residents to provide these individuals independence and/or access to a better quality of life.

#### **Union County Youth Shelter**

Emergency and temporary placement services for youth ages 12-17 involved in a family crisis. This 24/7, 365-days per year service offers safe, non-restrictive, shelter.

#### **Division on Aging and Disability Resource Connection**

Promotes wellness, independence, dignity and choice for seniors and their families. Services include home delivered meals, group meals, information and referral is provided for assistance with home care, health, legal and financial services.

**American Job Center**

The Union County American Job Center is the Union County local workforce delivery system entrusted to assist individuals with barriers to employment, access to and opportunities for employment, education and training and support services they need to succeed in the labor market. It seeks to improve the quality of workforce investment, education and economic development efforts to provide America's workers with the skills and credentials necessary to secure and advance in employment with family-sustaining wages.

**Cornerstone Behavioral Health Hospital of Union County**

A 44-bed inpatient hospital offering mental health services to adults 18 years of age and older referred from short term care facilities, i.e., acute psychiatric hospitals, for stabilization and intermediate care.

**Division of Outreach and Advocacy**

Raises awareness about the Department's programs and services; advocates in response to residents' unmet human service's needs and responds to those needs with effective and accessible resources. Staffs the DHS Action Line to respond to inquiries from the public and service entities, and processes and monitors all Human Services contracts to ensure regulatory compliance. Provides data analytics, research, and evaluation to assess our social service programs to improve the quality of client servicing.

**Division of Individual and Family Support Services**

Provides an array of county-wide human services programming through the most cost-effective use of funding from County, State and Federal resources. This is accomplished either by direct delivery of services or by funding community-based organizations to deliver services. By working together with other government agencies, nonprofits and private sector supporters, the Division helps residents with program areas of Alcoholism & Drug Abuse, Mental Health Services, Intoxicated Driver Resource Center, Rape Crisis Center, Homeless Assistance/Support Services, and Persons with Disabilities & Special Needs.

**Division of Social Services**

Promotes personal responsibility as defined by the state's Work First New Jersey legislation, helping individuals and families move to self-sufficiency through employment and education training, family case management, job readiness, child care assistance, and related support services. The Division also provides administration for the federal nutrition programs (SNAP/Food Stamps) and medical assistance programs (Medicaid/Family Care), financial assistance

programs (TANF/GA), shelter services for the homeless, child support services, and other supportive services.

### **Division of Children and Youth Services**

Provides oversight and planning for county-wide programs and supportive services for children and youth ages 0-24 in health, safety, mental health, education, family crisis, career development, juvenile justice, and other areas of youth development. This ensures that every youth has a fair and equal opportunity to reach their full potential and to prevent and reduce the likelihood of delinquency or other at-risk behaviors. The Division advocates for youth empowerment opportunities, strives to increase public awareness of youth issues and supports youth community-based resources and services through inter-agency collaborations.

## **2023 Accomplishments**

### **Division of Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC)**

The Division received national recognition from the National Association of Counties in the form of an Achievement Award recognizing its pilot Social 60+ restaurant voucher program implemented to increase socialization, address food insecurity, and enhance mental well-being for adults aged 60 and older. More than 596 qualifying individuals received meal vouchers to use at three (3) participating restaurants.

The Division on Aging also instituted a new digital version of the Farmer's Market program which linked 1,651 older adults to electronic benefits to access local and fresh produce valued at \$50 per person. The congregate meals program served more than 62,000 meals to more than 1,206 older adults. Through the launch of a new partnership with the Community Food Bank, the Division provided nutrition education to program participants and assisted with benefit acquisition.

In addition to new partnerships and programmatic expansion, Division introduced new marketing materials and a user-friendly design of its website. Updates to marketing tools were designed to be more universally accessible to the older adult population. Through its bilingual team, the Division increased the number of locations where face-to-face service is provided, by hosting more than sixty (60) Aging Services Kiosk (ASK) events throughout the county. For the first time ever, caregivers participating in the Respite Program were able to offset and alleviate some caregiving costs through a Consumer Directed Option (CDO) which helps share the cost of caregiving items such as incontinence pads, nutrition supplements, and home health aides.

## **American Job Center (AJC)**

In furtherance of its mission, the AJC delivered the following services:

- 1634 orientations
- 14 Job Fairs, including 2 Expungement Series
- Assisted 63 Dislocated Workers and 41 Adult Eligible Clients with Training and training-related services
- Assisted 24 Customers with Supportive Services needs such as transportation and examination fees
- The Business Team issued weekly job postings throughout the year
- In collaboration with the New Jersey Reentry Corporation, a cohort of reentry customers were introduced to a new program that offers tractor trailer and commercial driving education in partnership with the Driving Academy

## **Division of Outreach and Advocacy**

In continuation and collaboration with the Division of Individual and Family Support Services and the Office of the Director, the Division oversaw the Union County Food Distribution in November and December, serving a total of 6,517 families with over 27,000 individuals receiving fresh and shelf stable food boxes. The Division also managed the operations of the FRESH START program, providing Union County residents in need access to a mobile trailer with clean showers, laundry services, bathroom facilities, & necessary resources. In 2023, over 2,650 individuals were serviced at FRESH START events, including 117 individuals were provided showers and 114 were able to utilize laundry services at various locations in the County. In addition, 2,250 households were provided with hot meals through community outreach at FRESH START and at emergency shelters located throughout Union County. Over the course of the year, the division responded to 9,055 inquiries for assistance through its Action Line.

## **Division of Individual and Family Support Services (DIFSS)**

In 2023, DIFSS continued to provide essential and emergency support services for Union County residents; mental health and behavioral health supports; programs for persons with disabilities and special needs; services to survivors of sexual assault and family members, among other services.

Highlights of the year include:

- 2 Mental Health First Aid trainings for Division of Social Services staff
- Receipt of close to \$700,000 in new grant funds to expand Disaster Response services and mental health and recovery support in the community

- Expanded Sensory Friendly Summer Camp to adults with special needs, in addition to youth
- Offered a variety of programs and events to over 1,327 residents with disabilities and special needs
- Expanded the Art for ALL Abilities program to increase opportunities for individuals with special needs to express themselves through art
- Launched a Gender and Violence program in the schools providing 300 youth with education on sexual violence prevention

### **Division of Children and Youth Services (DCYS)**

The Division of Youth Services (DYS) delivered a variety of services to youths and families through its Youth Forward program, Family Crisis Intervention Unit and partners within the Youth Services Commission. During the year, 21 youth engaged in monthly Mentoring Program sessions to prepare them for college and careers. The Division hosted its first “Young Men of Distinction Conference” where 98 youth received life skill training, including health relationship development and leadership skills. The Family Crisis Intervention Unit experienced an unprecedented demand for services, responding to a record 240 crisis calls. The Youth Services Commission received additional grant funding to develop a new School Based Services program in targeted communities where youth engaged in programs to further their development and learning. Over 70 families were engaged in evening events and a professional development workshop was delivered to 30 school personnel focusing on assisting youth in trauma. Youth Drop-In Centers were implemented in 4 communities where safe spaces were available after school hours for youth to receive help with homework, nutritious meals and various programs designed to promote academic and holistic development.

### **Paratransit**

In 2023 the Paratransit system increased completed trips to over 89,550 rides for older adults, disabled and economically disadvantaged residents and veterans of Union County for medical, shopping, employment, educational training, and other essential services. The Route 22 Safety Shuttle is partly funded by JARC (Job Access Reverse Commute). Paratransit shuttle bus provided over 66,000 rides. To date the collection of nominal fares has generated \$176,000.00.

## **2024 Initiatives**

### **Division on Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC)**

The Division will host more outreach events in 2024, and increase its marketing efforts through diverse outward facing media. The division will expand its current programs targeting more participants, most notably the award winning Social 60+ program, and will explore ways to modernize and streamline outreach and programming. A new version of the well-received newsletter will be developed, as well as, further advancements to the website and literature. Further expansion will be made in community partnerships and sites offering Aging Services Kiosk (ASK) events.

### **American Job Center (AJC)**

Following a late December, 2023 Kick-Off, the American Job Center will launch a Financial Opportunity Center, in collaboration with the Urban League, to provide personalized coaching services to residents in the areas for financial health, stabilization of household needs, career retention and advancement.

The AJC will also strengthen relationships with employers in 2024. The business community has initiated more requests for collaboration including increased hires utilizing the On-the-Job Training and Incumbent Worker programs. Additional opportunities for apprenticeships will be explored.

### **Division of Outreach & Advocacy (DO&A)**

In 2024, the Division of Outreach and Advocacy will engage clients in improving services. DO&A will expand technology to gather feedback from our clients about their experiences with DHS services and create real-time dashboards to share this information with program staff.

### **Division of Individual and Family Support Services (DIFSS)**

In 2024, DIFSS will implement a Coordinated Entry System, as a single point of entry for individuals needing housing assistance and other essential services. Together with our community partners, the Division will initiate this simplified method for access across the service continuum. Additional programming will be implemented to assist persons affected by opioid use, funded by Opioid Settlement funds. Community outreach will be expanded in partnership with recreation and community centers to bring sexual assault awareness and prevention resources to youth and adults. The Office for Persons with Disabilities and Special Needs will expand its Art for ALL Abilities program, and will develop a county-wide Disability Resource directory.

### **Division of Social Services**



In 2024, the Division of Social Services will increase the availability and quality of culturally and linguistically appropriate services to ensure the dignity and respect for all people accessing services. The division will create a centralized call center that will provide timely resources to clients looking for information regarding available benefits and services.

**Division of Children and Youth Services (DCYS)**

In 2024, the Division of Children and Youth Services will explore opportunities to introduce programming intentionally targeting youth from 3rd through 5th grades in the schools and communities. In an effort to further expand its mission to address the needs of younger children, the DCYS will seek to create such programming under the advisement and direction of students, school personnel, youth caregivers, county or local social service agencies, and other community organizations. Special attention will be made to the impact of trauma on these younger children.

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# **Department of Parks and Recreation**

**Recreational Facilities and Events**

**Park Maintenance-Park Grounds**

**Park Environmental Services**

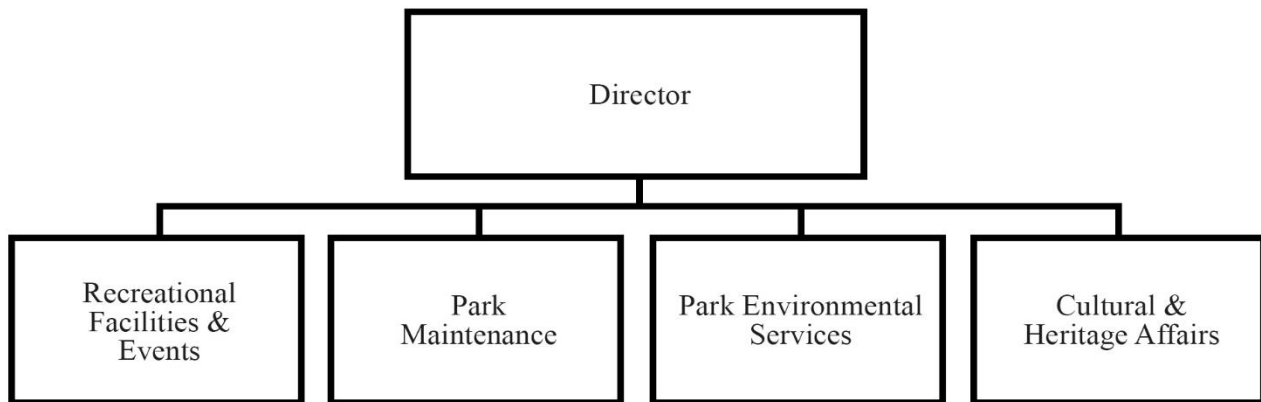
**Cultural and Heritage Affairs**

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# Organizational Chart

## Department of Parks and Recreation





# DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

## Mission

The Union County Department of Parks and Recreation's mission is to develop and maintain Union County parks, playgrounds, recreational facilities, and open space while providing recreational programming and entertainment for County residents.

## Programs & Services

**Bureau of Administrative Support:** Provides financial and administrative support, including accounts payable/ receivable, budgeting, and purchasing.

**Bureau of Recreation:** Develops and administers programs to facilitate the public use and enjoyment of County parks and recreational facilities, including the Trailside Nature and Science Center, Watchung Stable, Warinanco Sports Center, Wheeler Spray Park, and the Walter E. Ulrich Pool.

**Division of Recreational Facilities and Events:** Manages and operates Galloping Hill Golf Course, Ash Brook Golf Course, Warinanco Sports Center, Wheeler Spray Park, Walter E. Ulrich Pool, Watchung Stable, Trailside Nature, and Science Center.

**Division of Park Maintenance/Bureau of Park Grounds:** Preserves and improves County parks and recreational facilities, supports recreation initiatives and programs, facilitates public use and enjoyment of the parks and recreation resources, and assists with new and rebuild projects. Tasks include grass cutting, athletic field maintenance, tree pruning/removal/planting, leaf pick-up, janitorial services, and more.

**Division of Park Environmental Services:** Plans and conducts programs that foster conservation and stewardship of the natural and historic resources of the County Park System, including wildlife management, habitat management, volunteer coordination, hiking and bridle trail maintenance, maintenance of horticultural features, works with Park Maintenance, volunteer groups, and operation of the Deserted Village of Feltville.

**Office of Cultural and Heritage Affairs:** Designated as the County's official cultural agency with a focus on promoting public interest in arts, history & local heritage while ensuring all residents benefit from this rich multicultural environment we call home! The office provides programs and services that contribute to

sustainable economic development, livable communities, civic engagement, and a vibrant quality of life for all residents. The office manages the Board of County Commissioners' HEART (History, Education, Arts Reaching Thousands) grant initiative, the Local Arts Program of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, and a re-grant program through the New Jersey Historical Commission.

## 2023 Accomplishments

**Special Events:** The Union County Department of Parks and Recreation develops and administers programs to facilitate the public use and enjoyment of County parks. Many of these programs are unique to Union County and often fill a void that cannot be provided by the municipalities or the private sector. Unfortunately, this year inclement weather created issues in cancelling or postponing several events, but every program offered low-cost or no-cost entertainment for residents, while taking place close to home.

The Union County Department of Parks and Recreation event team is committed to delivering quality programs to the public. In many instances, the team works hand-in-hand with communities and organizations to reach as many Union County residents as possible, bringing them recreational opportunities they would not have otherwise had the chance to enjoy.

- **Touch-A-Truck:** Unfortunately, after two attempts to hold this program, once in the spring and once in the fall, it was rained out both times. The spring Touch-A-Truck was scheduled to be held in Rahway River Park and would have featured vehicles from many of Union County's departments including Public Works, Public Safety and Parks and Recreation. The spring event was to also feature monster truck rides on Web Slinger. Similarly, the fall Touch-A-Truck event was to be held with the same County vehicles in Oak Ridge Park. A hayride, kids inflatables and food trucks would have accompanied this event.
- **Take Your Sons and Daughters to Work Day:** The Department of Parks and Recreation participated in this event by hosting a day at Galloping Hill Golf Course. Children and parents had the opportunity to try some golf basics including driving, chipping and putting while the staff shared their stories, experiences and knowledge about this highly rewarding occupation.
- **Rhythm and Blues by the Brook:** In 2023, Union County's music events were kicked off with Rhythm and Blues by the Brook, held in Cedar Brook Park, Plainfield. Chrisette Michelle headlined this free event. Shanice, Allure, RIFF, Bone Daddy & the Hoochies and DJ Bookeem all performed as well. In addition to a fun-filled day of entertainment, those

attending enjoyed a car show spectacular presented by G-Wiz Auto Entertainment, a health & wellness fair sponsored by Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, a food court which included ShopRite's Fill the Grill Food Truck and the Childs Play Challenge Course, an obstacle course for the kids.

- **Summer Arts Festival:** In 2023, the County held seven free Wednesday night Summer Arts Festival Concerts in three different parks. Three concerts in July, which took place in Echo Lake Park, Mountainside, three concerts in August, which took place in Oak Ridge Park, Clark and one August concert in Warinanco Park, Elizabeth rounded out our series. Before each Wednesday night concert, we offered a free, hour-long yoga session run by a local yoga studio. Thousands came out to enjoy these events. Fortunately, we did not have any rain for these concerts, but Crossroads in Garwood was on hold as our rain site just in case it did rain.
- **Family Fun and Flix:** Our popular free family movie program, Family Fun and Flix continued this year in Warinanco Park on Tuesday evenings in July and August. The kick-off for Family Fun and Flix was at Cedar Brook Park in Plainfield. Additionally, a movie was brought for the first time to Kawameeh Park in Union. Before each movie a children's dance party kicked off the night's festivities for approximately 1,600 people who attended these events throughout the season.
- **Fall Concert at Oak Ridge Park:** Regrettably, after much preparation and planning, our Fall Festival featuring a concert and the Union County Micro Beer Garden was cancelled due to the weather. The festival was to feature the bands Splintered Sunlight, Willie Nile and The Weight Band. Three local microbreweries were also on the schedule to be in the micro beer garden. Those breweries scheduled to participate were Yale Brewery, Wet Ticket Brewing and Climax Brewing Company. We look forward to hosting a fall event again in 2024.
- **Hayrides and Campfires:** During October and November, four hayrides and campfires took place at Trailside Nature and Science Center and one in Warinanco Park. Participants enjoyed sipping on hot chocolate and roasting marshmallows over an open fire while listening to the sounds of a children's entertainer. They then experienced a hayride aboard one of two hay wagons. Over 1,150 tickets were sold for our 2023 edition of Hayrides and Campfires.
- **The Great Pumpkin Sail:** On the day after Halloween, hundreds of families came to Echo Lake Park with their carved-out jack-o-lanterns to watch them float on the lake. A favorite of many, this sold-out event allows participants to watch their pumpkin set sail as they enjoy singing and dancing along with our entertainer, photo opportunities, hot chocolate, and a cookie. Up to 2400 people can participate in this program.

- **Celebrate the Season:** The very popular Celebrate the Season event, which takes place at Warinanco Sports Center, sold out of 750 tickets. Participants had the opportunity to skate with Santa and then visit with his elves and Mrs. Claus. The \$8.00 admission fee entitles participants to skate rental, a two-hour skate session, hot chocolate, cookies, and a chance to meet Santa, Mrs. Claus, and the elves while listening to the sounds of The Celebration Singers. In addition, this year Elf Sunflower joined in the festivities and a photobooth was available for all to pose at.
- **UC PRIDE:** UC PRIDE was to be held on June 24<sup>th</sup> at Temike Park in Plainfield for the second year. Unfortunately, it was rained and cancelled. It was to include arts and crafts, visiting advocacy groups, food, kickball tournament, and an evening movie. UCPRIDE was planned in conjunction with the Department of Economic Development and its Office of LGBTQ+ Affairs.
- **Rolling Thunder:** Union County supports the Veterans non-profit group Rolling Thunder. This organization dedicates itself to educating the public about veterans' issues and the more than 91,000 missing veterans since WWI. Each year this POW/MIA motorcycle ride stages in Warinanco Park. Participants ride motorcycles to the Vietnam Memorial in Holmdel. This year an estimated 1100 motorcycles participated at the September 17<sup>th</sup> event.
- **Hispanic Heritage Month:** From September 15 to October 15, Union County ran a series of six Hispanic Heritage Month events. The department's event team hosted two of these events: A Family Fun Day in Warinanco Park, and the movie "Spider-Man: Across the Spider Verse" with a viewing at Charles and Anna Booker School in Plainfield. Hundreds of people enjoyed these events, which were held with the Department of Economic Development.
- **Holiday Drive-Up Movie:** An outdoor presentation of the holiday favorite "Elf" was scheduled in the Union County Vocational School parking lot on December 9<sup>th</sup>. This free event included cookies and beverages, as well as photo opportunities with Santa's helpers and a giant snow globe. Presented in conjunction with the Office of the Union County Board of County Commissioners.



| <b>2023 Programs</b>  | <b>Attendance Totals</b>          |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| Bring Your Child to Work  | 60 Children and Adults            |
| Touch-a-Truck   | <i>N/A Rained out TWICE</i>       |
| Rhythm and Blues by the Brook                                     | 3000 attendees                    |
| <b>Family Fun &amp; Flix</b>                                      |                                   |
| FF&F – “The Woman King”   | 100 People                        |
| FF&F – “Puss in Boots”  | 400 People                        |
| FF&F – “Hotel Transylvania 4”                                     | 300 People                        |
| FF&F – “Sonic the Hedgehog 2”                                     | 400 People                        |
| FF&F – “Minions-The Rise of Gru”                                  | 400 People                        |
| <b>Summer Arts Festival</b>                                       |                                   |
| SAF Concert – Pink Floyd USA Experience                           | 800 People                        |
| SAF Concert – Winslow-An Evening of the Eagles                    | 800 People                        |
| SAF Concert – Dead on Live (Grateful Dead tribute)                | 650 People                        |
| SAF Concert – The Benjamins                                       | 800 People                        |
| SAF Concert – Rob Messina’s Dave Matthews Exp.                    | 600 People                        |
| SAF Concert – Ray Anderson’s Bowie & Beyond                       | 500 People                        |
| SAF Concert – Afro Dominicano                                     | 350 People                        |
| SAF Concert – The Weight Band + Willie Nile & Splintered Sunlight | <i>N/A Rainout</i>                |
| Union County Pride  | <i>N/A Rainout</i>                |
| Rolling Thunder   | Approximately 1100 bikes          |
| <b>Hayride and Campfires</b>                                      |                                   |
| H&C – October 6 <sup>th</sup>                                     | <i>Rainout, Held October 22nd</i> |
| H&C – October 8 <sup>th</sup>                                     | 221 Tickets Sold                  |
| H&C – October 13 <sup>th</sup>                                    | 295 Tickets Sold                  |
| H&C – October 15 <sup>th</sup>                                    | 300 Tickets Sold                  |
| H&C – October 20 <sup>th</sup>                                    | <i>Rainout, Held November 3rd</i> |
| *H&C – October 22 <sup>nd</sup> ( <i>Rain Date</i> )              | 100 Tickets Sold                  |
| *H&C – November 3 <sup>rd</sup> ( <i>Rain Date</i> )              | 250 Tickets Sold                  |
| The Great Pumpkin Sail  | 346 Tickets Sold                  |
| Celebrate the Season  | 750 Tickets Sold                  |
| Holiday Drive Up Movie - Elf                                      | 300 Tickets Reserved              |

**Reservations:** Thousands of individuals and groups use our parks throughout the year. Families, church groups, schools, corporations, and athletic teams are examples of those who utilize our park system. Reservable picnic areas had increased to accommodate the increasing demand for permits. Residents from all 21 municipalities also can participate in small or large private events of their liking, at a low cost, close to home. With AstroTurf now installed on 17 fields, those fields have become more sustainable and usable year-round.

- **Maskers Barn (Deserted Village of Feltville, Berkeley Heights):** A popular choice for weddings, bridal/baby showers, fundraisers, art shows, bar/bat mitzvahs, and more. The rustic venue also hosts an Adopt-a-Park Volunteer dinner, nature programming, staff meetings, yoga, Haunted Hayride, the annual Barn Dance for People with Disabilities, and other County events.
- **Reservation permits for picnics:** Due to the increasing number of picnic users and the convenient online reservation system; the picnic permits have increased. Also popular were the covered pavilions that could also be reserved. Six new picnic areas can accommodate the growing number of picnic users.
- **Archery Range (Oak Ridge Park, Clark):** This facility opened in 2009 and continues its popularity. From March to November, 255 people ages nine and up participated in Group Safety Lessons. The range is open year-round, from dawn to dusk (users must pass a safety course or have proof of experience). Union County 4-H Club, among the group users, Open House events, and crossbow qualification for the deer management program.
- **Athletic Fields, Picnic Areas, Archery Range, and Public Special Events:** With 36 parks, plenty of space and amenities are available close by - whether you want lakeside relaxation or active adventure! When combined with playgrounds, walking, running/biking paths, lakes, fishing, boating, basketball, pickleball, volleyball, ultimate frisbee, disc golf, rugby, model airplane flying, and any number of other passive and active recreational activities, the Union County Park System allows County residents from all twenty-one municipalities to participate in the recreational pursuit of their liking, at a low cost, close to home. The Archery Range utilizes general group lessons, private lessons, and practice shooting with bows, arrows, and targets for all archery range photo ID holders. Additionally, the range and crossbow certification course are used for the deer management program.

| 2023 Event Totals | Number of Permits Issued |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
|-------------------|--------------------------|

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| Walk-a-thons/Runs  | 51    |
| Boy Scout Bookings   | 183   |
| School Trips   | 19    |
| Photo Shoots-Video   | 24    |
| Fishing Derbies  | 8     |
| Day Camps  | 2     |
| Picnics  | 2513  |
| Athletic Fields  | 14973 |
| Other events including weddings, exercise classes,<br>church, rallies, reunions, festivals | 228   |
| Fireworks  | 6     |
| Sport Tournaments  | 4     |
| Archery Group Lessons  | 259   |
| Archery Small Group Lessons  | 20    |
| Archery New/Renewed ID's   | 349   |
| General Fitness Class  | 71    |

## Properties

- **Galloping Hill Golf Course (Kenilworth):** Projected to hit 74,000 rounds for 2023 and will beat budgeted revenue by roughly \$110,000 for a total of \$3,300,000. Outings revenue increased year over year by 20% and accounted for an additional \$89,000 in revenue compared to the prior year. The facility continued championing player development and had three PGA junior golf league teams at Galloping Hill. The Hill Tavern has continued to perform well, hosting over 85,000 covers for the year. Galloping Hill Banquets returned to pre-pandemic form and will host over 360 events.
- **The Learning Center at Galloping Hill:** This facility will surpass \$1,100,000.00 in total revenue for the third consecutive year. The relationship with the First Tee of Raritan Valley led to sellouts of all seven weeks of junior camps this summer and culminated with again hosting the state Drive, Chip and Putt competition. In addition to junior golf, the Learning Center is a regular host of Wounded Warrior golf education and special programming for special needs highlighted by the First Swing program in partnership with the County Commissioners.
- **Ash Brook Golf Course (Scotch Plains):** Ash Brook will achieve budgeted rounds of 46,000 and will reach \$1,690,000 in total revenue. The Tavern at Ashbrook continues to be a local favorite for intimate gatherings, as the facility

will host over 60 events in 2023 and host over 50,000 guests. Summer junior camps ran for seven weeks and had nearly 100 participants.

- **The Shady Rest Golf Course** (Scotch Plains): Shady Rest Golf Course is owned by the Township of Scotch Plains and managed under a shared service agreement with the County of Union. For the 2023 season, Shady Rest is trending to surpass budgeted rounds by 36% and budgeted revenue by 19%. The property will exceed \$500,000 in revenue for the first time ever. This push is continued from 3rd party reservation sites, which booked over 600 rounds.
- **Warinanco Sports Center** (Roselle): The Warinanco Sports Center expanded its Ice Rink season from a traditional 19 weeks to 23 weeks in 2023. That change allowed us to host an additional 3,000 skaters 40+ youth ice hockey games. In the fall of 2022, open skate sessions were again available to the public. In the spring and summer of 2023, the facility hosted 6 new youth sports sessions as well as eleven camp sessions, hosting over 450 participants. In addition to camps, the turf was used by local groups for community soccer nights and creative events such as semi-pro Arena Football. The Clubhouse at Warinanco continued to be a hub in the Roselle, Linden & Elizabeth area for private events, as well as community events run by various County Departments including: Job Fairs, Health Fairs, Sheriff's Sales and the highlight of each year, Celebrate the Season (Skate with Santa) event with the UC Parks Department and the UC Office of Persons with Disabilities and Special Needs Skate with Santa event.
- **Trailside Nature and Science Center** (Mountainside)

| <b>Educational Programs Conducted by Staff</b>   | <b># of Programs</b> | <b># of Participants</b> |
|--|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Schools  | 71                   | 4,314                    |
| Group Programs                                   | 100                  | 2,745                    |
| Outreach   | 72                   | 644                      |
| Children Workshops                               | 31                   | 643                      |
| Family Workshops                                 | 16                   | 285                      |
| Teacher Training                                 | 1                    | 19                       |
| Senior Nature Walks                              | 24                   | 231                      |
| Summer Camps - ages 6 to12                       | 38                   | 516                      |
| People with Special Needs                        | 31                   | 332                      |
| Feb. Festivities / Space Week / Talks / Matinees | 15                   | 1,276                    |
| <b>Totals:</b>                                   | <b>399</b>           | <b>11,005</b>            |

2023 NaCO Award Recipient – Union County’s “Trash to Treasure Recycled Art”

- This upcycled art project was designed to inspire and facilitate new attitudes and behaviors towards littering and recycling. Every hour people throw away 2.5 million plastic bottles that can take 500 years to biodegrade.
- The goal was to actively engage people of all ages and abilities, while demonstrating how trash can be reused and transformed into beautiful art.
- Twelve wildlife art sculptures were created using over 4,000 painted water bottles.
- This multi-dimensional art exhibit includes an educational sign for each sculpture, highlighting key statistics about litter and recycling along with facts about wildlife.
- For two years, the project was successful in reaching over 15,000 people during events in diverse communities throughout Union County.

#### 2023 Excellence in Education Award – New Jersey Clean Communities Council

- Trailside is the recipient of the 2023 Single Use Plastics Excellence in Education Award from the New Jersey Clean Communities Council (NJCCC).
- Honored at the “Sustainability in Motion” conference in Atlantic City for achieving measurable results in reducing litter through education.
- Project was inspired during the pandemic; twelve recycled wildlife art pieces were created and paired with educational signs to explain the harm pollution causes the environment.
- Artwork displayed along the Sensory Trail as an “outdoor educational walk” for park-goers. The initiative became a traveling exhibit reaching thousands of people.

#### Redesigned Trailside Website

- Redesigned website with to create a user-friendly format to easily navigate.
- Information, programs and resources separated into eight categories with new photos: *Welcome, Visitors, Programs, Camp & Workshops, Trails, Media, Events & Learn*
- New nature videos created by Trailside staff highlighting plants and wildlife in UC Parks.
  - *Autumn Nature Walk in Warinanco Park*
  - *Winter Waterfowl in Union County Parks*
  - *Winter Walk in Conant Park*

#### New Programming for World Space Week – Oct. 7 - 14

- World Space Week is an international celebration of science and technology.
- Trailside offered Solar Eclipse presentations, Solar System Trail walks, children's programs, senior program, themed crafts and giveaways.

#### Improvements to Entrance of Facility

- LCD digital sign installed to display information, videos and promote events.
- Pathway lighting - electricians installed LED bollards.
- Pavers – masons installed beautiful pavers at the entrance to the building.
- Walkway installed at fire exit to provide safe access to sidewalk.

#### Exhibit Improvements to Children's Discovery Room

- New sensory, interactive texture wall offering many different tactile sensations.
- Activity table added with brightly colored seating and rugs.
- Museum quality fluorescent mineral exhibit lighting installed.

#### Linden Public Schools

- This fall, 444 fifth graders from eight different Linden schools participated in a 2 hour-long "Living Systems" program. There was a total of seven visits to Trailside.
- The students begin with a brief PowerPoint about ecosystems, then divide into smaller groups that rotate through four outdoor stations: food webs, plant producers, animal adaptations and habitats/wildlife populations.

#### Popular Summer Camp

- Thirty-eight camps were offered to ages 6-12 for seven consecutive weeks.
- On the first day of registration in March, 75% of the spaces filled for a total of 385 spots.

#### 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Wild Earth Fest Event

- Held indoors due to heavy rain - 1,586 in attendance
- Educational family event to promote conservation and ways to help the environment.
- Food trucks, music, live animals, demonstrators, table displays, children's activities

- New participants - NJ Electric Vehicle Association & Bash the Trash Performers.
- Wildlife Photography Contest – a 2024 calendar was created with the winners.
- **Watchung Stable (Mountainside):** Watchung Stable (Mountainside) affords hundreds of residents, ages 9 through adulthood, the opportunity to learn and actively participate in lifetime equestrian sports and horse related activities. Additionally, it affords local residents who own their own horses the opportunity to house them close to home, and take advantage of the miles of bridle trails through the Watchung Reservation. Residents who simply want to experience riding a horse are welcome to do so through public and private trail rides, and of course, the barn is open to the public on a regular schedule to simply walk through.
  - **Equines**
    - Regular equine health and care included monthly assessment of horses and their capability of working in the program including their nutritional, exercise and veterinary needs. Vaccination, dental, and de-worming program continues with high success rate with boarder and school horses together making a safer and healthier environment for horses.
    - Three horses were able to receive necessary dental work making them happier and healthier to work in the program.
    - Four new school horses were added to the program, to replace horses in the program that are aging out.
    - “Autumn” was retired this year after 10 years of service to our program.
    - All horses received new feed buckets and new blankets.
    - Boarder end was full by summer 2024 with a current waitlist.
  - **Facility:** A lot of small but necessary in-house upgrades were made to the facility this year:
    - Added address signage to top of driveway.
    - Replaced all the cracked picnic tables tops and seats with wood.
    - Rebuilt/painted the front of the announcers stand that was rotted.
    - Regraded and filled in the path to the manure shed and down to the rings that wash dangerously washed out.
    - Closed the last riding ring due to safety concerns.
    - Fixed the water run off problem next to the lower rings.
    - Converted the back “office area” to a conference room/ lunch room.
    - Fixed all broken and dangerous fencing.
    - Removed large dead tree in the front loop area.

- Replaced assembly room door that was rotting.
- Removed an old wagon from property that was broken down and not used.
- Fixed the manure shed area by pouring new concrete and asphalt to make the loading dock safer and cleaner.
- **Staff**
- A second part time position was filled leaving only one part time position open. Five instructors were lost this year due to job changes and furthering education. This put a strain on programming causing waitlists for private lessons and trail rides.
- **Programming**
- Programming was average this year. Classes were modified in the fall due to a ring closure and a very wet fall on the weekends causing many trail rides to be cancelled.

### **Division of Park Maintenance/Bureau of Park Grounds**

Preserves, maintains, and improves County parks and facilities. Staff provides operational support to all recreational programs and events. Day-to-day tasks include grass cutting, athletic field maintenance, tree pruning/removal/planting, leaf pick-up, plowing, janitorial services, event set-up/break-down, and more.

- **Park Safety:** Groomed all our artificial turf fields every quarter as needed; continued our playground inspections by our Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI) and are certifying additional employees to become Certified Playground Inspectors; implemented a formal monthly Park Inspection process through Cart-e-Graph, dead ash trees and other hazardous trees were marked out for a removal project, first completed in October was the Route 22 park in Scotch Plains. This project has now moved to Warinanco park in Elizabeth.
- **Ponds:** A new aesthetically pleasing pond aerator was purchased at Rahway Park to help with getting oxygen into the pond to avoid buildup of duckweed algae.
- **Wheeler Spray Park (Linden):** originally opened in 2019; this state-of-the-art facility welcomed 48,295 visitors this past summer. Union County's largest spray area experienced upgrades that feature slides, sprayers, sprinklers, and a dumping bucket, along with a pirate ship and giant water sea serpent, in the spring to improve the overall family experience; a new playground and synthetic turf on the exterior gave the facility a more appealing look; newly painted surfaces, repaired spray features, new bathrooms, and improvements to the pump room ensured an enjoyable summer experience.



- **Ulrich Pool (Rahway):** This Olympic-size pool boasts a zero-entry walk-in with a spray area plus a separate spray pad and playground. Ulrich pool had 45,888 visitors coming in to cool off this summer, boasting 19 days of 98-plus-degree weather.
- **Playground Maintenance:** Monitored, inspected, and assessed playgrounds for replacement parts and repairs as required.
- **Path Maintenance:** Overlaid over 107,506 square footage of blacktop pavement at Warinanco Park & Rahway River Park pathways.
- **Oak Ridge Park:** At the very popular Disc Golf Course, concrete tee pads were built and installed.
- **Cedar Park:** A tennis court project was started with a complete demolition of the old courts and brand-new hybrid tennis courts with new asphalt, fencing and now featuring new tennis court markings along with pickle ball mark outs. (Finishing touches on these courts including new lighting will be completed in the Spring of 24')
- **Wheeler Park:** A brand-new Pickle Ball court featuring four new courts was started and completed.
- **Phil Rizzuto Park:** Trotters Creek park river embankment restoration project in Elizabeth's Rizzuto park was started and completed. New embankment installed with rip rock, stream riffles and rain ponds, along with new plantings of close to 50 trees.
- **Routine Maintenance:** All lakes, ponds, and waterways were treated for invasive species, overgrowth, and water quality; all athletic ballfields were cut, lined, and dragged regularly; all bathroom facilities were serviced daily, including on weekends; all special events were set up and broken down by Park Maintenance staff; fencing replacements and repairs were made on an ongoing basis; continued tree trimming and removal for safety.

## **Division of Park Environmental Services**

### **Wildlife Management**

- USDA Wildlife Services continued to provide services to manage Canada goose populations in Union County parks.
- Harassment methods were used on 467 occasions to disperse 38,547 Canada geese from park property and avert the dropping of 19 tons of feces on County property.
- An additional 1,538 geese were sighted but not harassed from parks.
- USDA-WS staff searched 34 sites for goose nests and eggs, located 26 nests and treated 126 eggs to inhibit reproduction in 11 Union County parks.

- Because of the success of the nest and egg treatments, only 14 geese were found that could be removed during the annual summer molt-period roundup.
- Through a shared services program, USDA-WS staff continued to assist the Township of Westfield, Linden Municipal Airport, Conoco Phillips 66 Bayway Refinery, City of Linden, and Suburban Golf Course with goose management activities on their properties.
- USDA Wildlife Services staff also aided in dealing with woodchucks that were impacting the Henry S. Chatfield Memorial Garden in Warinanco Park, as well as coyotes that were causing concern at the Watchung Stable.
- Raritan Valley Community College again conducted an aerial survey of deer in the Watchung Reservation from an infrared camera-equipped drone. However, due to calendar conflicts, only half of the park was surveyed.

### **Habitat Management**

- The Watchung Reservation Invasive Plant (WRIP) Strike Team volunteers continued to work bi-monthly, identifying, reporting and eradicating thousands of invasive plants in several areas of the park. Over the course of 14 work sessions, volunteers showed up 77 times and worked at least 200 man-hours.
- Eradication efforts at the Watchung Reservation Butterfly Meadow continued into 2023, with special focus on removal or treatment of invasive wisteria, aralia, Chinese lespedeza and mugwort.
- The New Jersey Department of Agriculture again awarded the County a grant to help fight the spread of the Spotted lanternfly, which was expected to be devastating to agriculture throughout the State. Thankfully, weather and other conditions curtailed the reproduction and spread of this insect pest.
- Division Director Dan Bernier participated in the numerous meetings of the 120-member New Jersey Forest Health Task Force, which looked at major issues affecting the health of New Jersey's woodlands and proposed legislation to protect or improve them. Director Bernier recommended two legislative revisions to help facilitate deer management programs.

### **Aquatic Management**

- This program strives to maintain control of nuisance macrophytes and algae within the 29 lakes, ponds and lagoons in the 34 parks and two golf courses of the Union County Park System
- The control of submergent, emergent and floating vegetation, and algae (both filamentous and unicellular), is addressed on a per-treatment basis, since the density, distribution and persistence of these plants can vary widely from year to year, as water chemistry, weather, and the makeup of the aquatic plant

community change. A total of 83 treatments were performed at Union County waterbodies by a contracted vendor in 2023.

- Division staff made routine application of slow-release probiotic pellets to deliver essential bio-stimulants and indigenous bacteria to directly target the muck layer at the bottom of lakes and ponds and to prevent shoreline algal growth. Clean Flo inversion oxygenation and biological augmentation systems, which were previously installed at Briant Pond and Rahway River Park Lake, were activated in April, 2023. Division staff assisted Clean-Flo representatives with routine system checks, and strainer and filter cleaning.
- A contracted vendor was used to install, maintain, repair and remove 6 aeration fountains from 5 lakes in 2023. These fountains are designed to provide our ponds and lakes with high-performance aeration, circulation, and destratification, while improving aesthetics and enhancing the public park experience. Division staff experimented with various filters and screening to prevent clogging of the aerator pumps by pithophora (horse-hair algae).
- Division staff manually cleared dams and culverts of obstructions and debris as needed, to ensure proper water flow and public enjoyment. Shorelines and waterways were cleaned in preparation for County-hosted events.
- Staff initiated the routine removal of monofilament fishing line castoffs from the Reel In and Recycle bins that were erected at numerous lakes.
- Division staff obtained training and equipment from the Union County Police to improve safety while working in lakes and waterways.

### **Volunteer Programs**

- The Adopt-A-Park Program was even busier in 2023 than in 2022. At least 1,184 volunteers spent 2,930 hours on 72 Adopt-A-Park projects (56 groups and 16 individuals) throughout the Union County Park System. Volunteers collected 580 bags of litter and 58 bags of recyclables, as well as other trash and debris. They also weeded and mulched gardens, pruned and planted bushes, and erected fencing. There was great collaboration with staff of the Bureau of Recycling, who coordinate litter cleanups in our parks under the aegis of the New Jersey Clean Communities Program.
- An Adopt-A-Trail Program annual meeting and orientation was held in February, the first since before the pandemic. Thirty-five people attended, and close to 20 new Trail Stewards adopted segments of trail to care for. Trail Stewards work individually or in pairs, maintaining trail beds, controlling erosion, picking up litter and branches, and clearing drainage structures in the Watchung Reservation and other parks.

- Meeting on the first Saturday of each month, at least 137 volunteers contributed 411 hours of service in the Watchung Reservation through the Saturday Trail Work program. They cleaned drainage ditches, built rolling grade dips, removed invasive plants from trail edges, repaired challenging sections of trail damaged by storms, and cleared fallen trees from the Deserted Village cemetery.
- The Adopt-A-Trail Chainsaw Crew removed 97 trees that fell across trails in the Watchung Reservation and 2 in Rahway River Parkway in Winfield.
- An unprecedented number of Eagle Scout and Gold Award service projects were underway in 2023. Nine projects were completed, including:
  - Installation of 12 Reel In & Recycle monofilament fishing line recycling stations and development of a related public service announcement.
  - Construction of woodsheds with tool racks at the four campsites in the Scout Camping Area in the Watchung Reservation to improve fire safety and facilitate lawn maintenance.
  - Reconstruction of a bird viewing blind at Lenape Park, with the addition of a handicapped accessibility ramp.
  - Cleaning and organizing of a hardware and fasteners closet in the Tool Room utilized by the Trails Crew and Adopt-A-Park projects.
  - Landscaping improvements at the Deserted Village of Feltville, including creation of a wildflower garden and planting of shrubs to improve aesthetics or hide modern intrusions.
  - Removal of invasive plants from the ecologically unique Red Hill section of Ash Brook Reservation and creation of a website explaining the significance of the area.
  - Construction and installation of four bat houses, as well as creation of signs, a video, a website and a public program to explain the importance of supporting bat populations.
  - Reconstruction of a rock wall and a cedar post and board rail fence along the circa-1882 cattle road that connects the Deserted Village of Feltville to the Blue Brook valley and former mill site.
  - Restoration of two WPA-era concrete and stone picnic tables located within sight of the Lake Surprise dam, as well as clearing of vegetation to improve dam safety and the viewshed, and creation of a stepping stone path across a stream.
- Three additional Eagle Scout service projects are currently in the implementation stage, with completion of all three expected in Spring, 2024.

## **Trail Maintenance**

- The 2-man Trails Crew continued work throughout 2023 to rebuild bridle trails, hiking trails and stream crossings in the 100-mile trail network of the Watchung Reservation.
- The Trails Crew removed 140 trees that fell across trails in the Watchung Reservation.
- A new Ventrac 4250 tractor obtained in 2023 for use by the Trails Crew will greatly expand their abilities and effectiveness. The tractor includes attachments for loading and moving bulk materials like crushed stone and topsoil, trimming vegetative growth along trail edges and mowing down thick brambles of invasive plants.

### **Environmental Programming**

- The Division of Environmental Services again conducted a drive-through Plant Swap & Shop, where residents could drop off invasive plants pulled from their yards and receive native plants to use instead. Seventy-three people registered for the Plant Swap and several others came just to shop for native plants from a vendor. The event was staffed by County Parks staff. Members of the Master Gardeners of Union County opened their demonstration garden for the evening and conducted tours.
- The annual Woodcock Talk & Walk, led by expert birder Pete Axelrod in the Deserted Village of Feltville in March, drew 17 attendees.
- Eleven residents attended a program in May at the Trailside Nature & Science Center, where Pete Axelrod spoke on Who is That at My Feeder?
- Also in May, the New York City Parks Department conducted a Native Seed Propagation Workshop for 7 County staff.
- Fifteen residents turned out in November for a Bring Back the Bats program at Trailside. The program was conceived by Gold Award Girl Scout Lila Keller of New Providence, who chronicled her work in constructing and erecting 4 bat houses in the Watchung Reservation and Lenape Park.

### **Deserted Village of Feltville**

- Maskers Barn in the Deserted Village of Feltville continues to be a popular choice for weddings, birthday parties, bridal and baby showers, fundraisers, art shows, high school graduations and proms, bar and bat mitzvahs and more. The rustic venue also hosts nature programs, County staff meetings, Four Centuries in a Weekend presentations, and the annual Adopt-A-Park Volunteers Recognition Dinner, and is the base of operations for the Haunted Hayrides. In 2023, Maskers Barn was in use for 114 days, hosting 88 events attended by nearly 10,000 people. The facility collected over \$32,000 in revenue.

- In spite of rain on one of the two days, over 1,100 visitors participated in the Four Centuries in a Weekend event at the Deserted Village in October, coming from as far away as Sharon Springs, New York and Wilmington, Delaware. The event included hayrides, apple cider pressing, quill pen writing, a staff-assisted photo spot, an archaeological box dig, old-fashioned children's games, and a campfire. Visitors also watched a woman in period costume carding and spinning wood, and met six costumed characters from the Feltville and Glenside Park eras of Deserted Village history. The general store was open for visitors to buy cider, cookies, gourds and pumpkins, and nostalgic children's games and toys, and to view photos and artifacts that explain the Deserted Village's significance as an agricultural community, a mill town, a summer resort, and a county park.
- During the Four Centuries weekend, historian Priscilla Hayes gave a presentation in Masker's Barn about several people who were instrumental in opening and managing the Glenside Park summer resort. In collaboration with Parks Department staff, Hayes posts stories monthly at [www.FeltvilleFeatures.com](http://www.FeltvilleFeatures.com) that relate segments of the multi-faceted history of the Deserted Village.
- Haunted Hayrides were offered again over the course of three nights in October at the Deserted Village of Feltville. This incredibly popular program provides historic interpretation of the site in a fun and memorable way. The 900 available tickets were sold out in ten days. More than half of the 80-member cast and crew are volunteers.
- Preservation New Jersey, a statewide member-supported non-profit organization that promotes historic preservation through advocacy and public education, held its annual awards dinner in Masker's Barn in November. Division Director Dan Bernier was presented the Sarah P. Fiske Legacy & Leadership award for lifetime achievement in historic preservation, primarily for his work in the restoration of the Deserted Village of Feltville.

### **Encroachments**

- In collaboration with County Counsel, Division staff investigated 32 cases reported by the New Jersey Green Acres Program where park neighbors were encroaching onto park property. At least 22 of those encroachments have been resolved. The others have a plan or schedule in place for remediating the encroachments.
- Numerous other encroachments have been discovered or reported, and are being or have been handled by Division staff.

- Division staff now have an established protocol for investigating suspected encroachments, and working with County Counsel staff to communicate with the offending party and achieve removal of the encroachment.

## **Horticulture**

- Flower beds in the Henry S. Chatfield Memorial Garden in Warinanco Park were enhanced with additional plantings. A landscaping consultant who provides horticultural care for the Chatfield Garden recruited and supervised volunteers who transplanted and divided plants, and weeded, mulched, and straightened flower beds. Her volunteer group grew from 3 individuals to 8.

## **Office of Cultural and Heritage Affairs (OCHA)**

- The office (OCHA) presented programs including the Teen Arts Festival, a comprehensive event held in and around Trailside over two days in May, with over 1,500 students participating each day in performances, critiques and wide-ranging hands-on workshops. The festival was held primarily outdoors, and was extremely well-received by teachers as well as students.
- An increase in funds awarded from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts enabled our office to re-grant \$270,000 to 40 organizations for general operating support and arts programming in various artistic disciplines. Funding support from the New Jersey Historical Commission also increased, and through the re-grant program, \$55,000 was provided to 19 organizations for general operating support and history projects.
- “Four Centuries in a Weekend” was a great success in October, with over 31 historic sites open to the public, offering docent-led tours, special exhibits and unique activities. Participation exceeded pre-pandemic numbers.
- Renewed funding from the UC Division on Aging enabled the continuation of the Care for Caregiver Respite Art Program.
- The Union County Senior Citizen Art Exhibit was excellent, with 133 artists exhibiting original artwork — both professional and non-pro. The new Scotch Plains campus of Union College of Union County was the venue for the 6-week art show and our closing reception. The entire exhibit was also posted online.
- The office managed the Commissioners' Initiative, the HEART Grant (History, Education, Arts Reaching Thousands) program. Overall funding increased to \$150,000, enabling us to support diverse projects by 65 grantees.
- Attendance at our Technical Assistance workshops has increased dramatically since going virtual. Two online workshops were presented: 78 people attended

our June workshop presented by Dr. Brea Heidelberg, covering DEI issues and challenges, titled “Building Community”;  
for our October workshop, “Build Your Audience Using Social Media” presented by Jessica Maarek, 69 people attended live, and the recording enabled others to view on demand.

- In celebration of Black History Month, we offered a very special free event at Hamilton Stage, hosted and presented by WQXR evening radio host Terrance Mc Knight. *Langston & Beethoven: Black & Proud* included poetry and live music exploring the life and times of the poet, social activist, novelist, playwright, and columnist Langston Hughes.
- Our Women's History program in March featured Jen Maxfield, reporter and anchor of NBC Universal New York, and author of a new book, *More After the Break*. Maxfield shared memorable stories from her career as a TV news reporter. Held in March on the Cranford campus of Union College of Union County, the event drew in college students interested in this presentation by a highly successful journalist.
- In April, National Poetry Month, OCHA presented “Where do Journalism and Poetry Meet?” by reporter and poet Tina Kelley, at the Kuran Cultural Arts Center Carriage House in Fanwood.
- To celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, the office presented a Family Fun Day at Warinanco Park, with numerous performers and cultural organizations on hand.
- Also, for Hispanic Heritage Month, Marelyn Rivera, Executive Director of the New Jersey Center for Hispanic Policy, Research and Development in the Department of State, lectured at Union College in Cranford. Rivera participated in a meet-and-greet for students and student leaders at the college, then shared a presentation, followed by a Q&A session.
- Commemorating Veterans Day, the office presented a lecture about World War I memorials by Erik Burro, public history advocate and photographer. Burro’s lecture featured memorials in Union County and highlighted some of the most extraordinary monuments throughout New Jersey.
- The office applied for and was approved to receive \$191,000 from the New Jersey Historic Trust to continue important restoration work on House #4 in the historic Deserted Village of Feltville / Glenside Park.
- The Long Range plan for OCHA was completed.
- The office continues to display Union County artists’ works at the Commissioner’s Gallery on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor of the Administration Building

## 2024 Initiatives



**Special Events:**

Union County Department of Parks and Recreation Department offers many unique programs and events designed to meet the needs of our constituents throughout the County. We strive to provide quality and well-rounded programs using Union County's beautiful parks and facilities to meet the diverse demographics of our population.

In our effort to provide quality recreation opportunities we also try to maintain or raise revenue to help balance the increasing costs associated with providing these activities. While many residents find their financial resources limited, they look to the County to fulfill their recreational needs, while being close to home and affordable.

Going forward we will continue to market our programs in an effort to generate new customers and increase public awareness about the many parks, facilities, events and activities offered by Union County. We will bring our movies and concerts to a variety of venues throughout the County and add an additional day to the popular "Celebrate the Season" event held at Warinanco Sports Center. We will continue to grow our popular Rhythm and Blues by the Brook festival by adding a vendor marketplace and expanding children's activities.

**Watchung Stable:**

The facility plans to continue to increase program awareness, use and revenue by building on programs currently in place, exploring new ideas and improve upon facility needs including staff, grounds and horses.

The facility renovations plan includes, renovation of two/four employee bathrooms, planning for renovation of fourth riding ring, a therapeutic riding arena and to fix the indoor drainage. There is also a need to raise the sides of the manure shed to better contain its contents. An engineer and team were out to assess the project and this is moving ahead.

There is a need to secure funds to regrade and add footing to the main riding arena. Equine health and care plans include increasing the purchase of quality horses for our fully operational program, additional funds for 2024 are secured due to the cost of horses tripling since 2019.

Hire more instructors, seek out therapeutic instructors and fill last part time position or combine 2 part time positions to one full time position.

Program plans for Watchung Stable include:

- Riding program for people with disabilities. The program has received a \$30,000.00 donation toward the purchase of horses and equipment and two employees have been certified.
- Add more dates and times for trail rides for the public.
- Include the Veterans program into our normal routine of classes in spring and fall. A fee schedule will be set for this program.

## **Trailside Nature & Science Center**

### **Future Planetarium Project Initiative**

- Build a state-of-the-art Planetarium Dome as part of the Trailside Nature & Science Center. This new resource will educate the public and increase revenue and park use year-round. Each program sponsored by the Union County Board of County Commissioners will provide an exhilarating and inspiring educational experience using the latest video productions and projection technology.
- Space stations, returning to the moon and exploring Mars are in the news daily. A modern planetarium will provide a permanent, entertaining and educational visitor destination in Union County's largest park, the Watchung Reservation. There are no planetariums within 25 miles of Trailside and the new dome building can offer naming opportunities.
- This project will be a new source of revenue by charging with general admission. Costs for a planetarium show can run between \$15-\$30 per person. The advanced technology will require 2-3 staff to conduct the programs. A large meeting room included in the build can offer rental opportunities for corporate functions, special events, parties, etc.

### **Special programming before the Great North American Solar Eclipse**

- Book a family presentation at the end of March about the solar eclipse on April 8, 2024.
- Presenter Paul Cirilo is a member of the NJ Astronomical Association, which operates the largest public observatory in NJ. His easy style of speaking allows diverse audiences to understand the wonders of the universe.
- Offer themed children, senior and family workshops.
- Give solar viewing glasses to the public for watching eclipse.

### **Sensory Trail boardwalk project to address erosion**

- The Union County Sensory Trail was built in 2018.

- Areas on this popular, universal trail are severely eroded due to storms and rainwater.
- For four years, staff and volunteers replaced and tamped stone dust numerous times.
- Despite repeated efforts to control the issue, the trail continues to erode with each storm.
- The damage causes uneven walking surfaces and tripping hazards.
- A boardwalk trail, installed a foot over the eroded section, will provide a safe walking surface for people of all abilities and allow rainwater to flow underneath the structure.

#### Professional Art Show

- Host a professional art show and reception in the spring with watercolor artist James Fiorentino.
- James' photo-realism in watercolor has helped him become a nationally-known wildlife & portrait artist.
- His work has won numerous awards and can be seen nationally in books & magazines.

#### Improvements to the Trailside Facility

- Repave the driveway and circle in front of facility – last paved in 2006.
- Schedule a vendor to paint the classrooms, lobby, hallways, railings and staff area.
- Exhibit refurbishing - three floors of exhibits professionally cleaned, dusted and wiped down. The last time the exhibits were professionally cleaned was in 2019.

### **Division of Park Maintenance/Bureau of Park Grounds**

Preserves, maintains, and improves County parks and facilities. Staff provides operational support to all recreational programs and events. Day-to-day tasks include grass cutting, athletic field maintenance, tree pruning/removal/planting, leaf pick-up, plowing, janitorial services, event set-up/break-down, and more.

#### Park Safety

- Continue to replace water bottle filling fountains throughout our Union County Parks System and recreation building.

- A locker room conversion to bathrooms at the Wheeler Park spray park building. This will allow for public access use while attending or watching a soccer game at the turf field or at the playground.

#### Playground Surfacing

- New surfacing at Cedarbrook Park across the street from the turf field.

#### Pathways Blacktop Overlay Project at the following locations

- Oak Ridge Park, Clark
- Meisel Avenue Park, Springfield
- Cedarbrook Park, Plainfield
- Echo Lake Park, Mountainside
- Nomahegan Park, Cranford

### **Division of Park Environmental Services**

#### **Wildlife Management**

- After three years of having Raritan Valley Community College conduct an aerial infrared drone survey of deer in the Watchung Reservation, that service will be expanded to include a survey of other parkland, such as Ash Brook Reservation in Clark, Elizabeth River Park in Hillside, or the Cushing Road area in Plainfield.

#### **Habitat Management**

- Although the anticipated proliferation of the invasive spotted lanternfly did not occur in 2023 as expected, the Watchung Reservation Invasive Plant (WRIP) Strike Team will work to remove smaller specimens of the invasive ailanthus trees from County parks and roads, leaving the larger trees for now to attract the insects to this preferred host tree, where they can be targeted with the systemic pesticide.
- Up to 200 Scouts and leaders, with support from the WRIP team, Trail Stewards and Division staff, will gather for a 3-hour work session in early April to remove invasive Japanese barberry and multiflora rosa bushes from the Watchung Reservation at a time when they are easily identifiable.
- This Division will support the Berkeley Heights Environmental Commission as they utilize a Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative grant to plant almost 100 trees in a barren area of the Watchung Reservation, with provisions for watering and protection from deer browsing.

- With administrative support from the non-profit Resource Conservation and Development group, the United States Department of Agriculture will provide funding and technical support to fight the incursion of invasive plants in various areas of the Watchung Reservation, starting with the globally-significant Trap Rock Glades Natural Heritage Area.

### **Aquatic Management**

- A contractor will be utilized more frequently to ensure the continued operation and maintenance of aerator fountains in County lakes and ponds.
- Division staff will study the benefits of acquiring a Weedoo Workboat to facilitate maintenance operations by County staff of lakes and ponds, including the removal of vegetative waste and trimming or removal of trees and tree limbs.

### **Volunteer Programs**

- A follow-up Adopt-A-Trail Program orientation meeting will be held in January to enhance training for existing Trail Stewards and recruit new Stewards, to get better coverage of the 100 miles of hiking and bridle trails in the Watchung Reservation, as well trails in Lenape Park, Passaic River Park, Ash Brook Reservation and elsewhere. Trail Stewards will be offered several tools for making their work easier in picking up litter and branches, cutting back vegetation, preventing erosion, and reporting downed trees on their adopted trails.
- Three Eagle Scout service projects that are currently underway are expected to be completed in Spring, 2024. At least 6 other Eagle Scout projects are expected to be initiated and completed in 2024.
- Work will begin on replacing the Division's step-van, affectionately known as "the Bread Truck". This vehicle is indispensable to transporting and safely securing tools and materials for Adopt-A-Park and Eagle Scout or Gold Award projects.
- The Volunteer Recognition Event will be held again in March, perhaps with some private sponsorship. This event honors volunteers in the Adopt-A-Park, Adopt-A-Trail, Watchung Reservation Invasive Plants Strike Team, and Eagle Scout and Gold Awards Programs.

### **Trail Maintenance**

- Additional attachments will be purchased for the recently-acquired Ventrac 4250 tractor, to expand the capabilities of the trail maintenance crew. Additionally, a dump trailer will be purchased to facilitate moving the

Ventrac to project sites. The trailer can double as a vehicle for transporting bulk materials like crushed stone, topsoil and mulch.

- The Trails Crew will complete reconstruction of the heavily-utilized Orange Trail in the Watchung Reservation, which once was a Colonial-period road but has been badly damaged by erosion.

### **Environmental Programming**

- Plans will be advanced, per recommendations from the Strategic Plan for the Deserted Village, for improvement or construction of parking areas to serve
- The popular Woodcock Talk and Walk will be repeated in March. Participants will learn about and then watch for this peculiar bird.
- The Native Plant Swap & Shop will be offered again in June, but will be more widely advertised to include new participants.
- Additional public programming related to trail maintenance, invasive plant management and wildlife management will be developed and offered.

### **Deserted Village of Feltville**

- Plans will be advanced, per recommendations from the Strategic Plan for the Deserted Village, for improvement or construction of parking areas to serve the more than 100,000 people who visit that historic site annually. That includes construction of a parking area specifically for Masker's Barn, which hosts more than 100 events each year.
- The cedar shake roofs on at least two Deserted Village cottages will be replaced to protect the historic buildings. Plans will be developed to replace four other roofs.
- Planning will begin for fabrication and installation of professional-grade exhibits in the Deserted Village Visitor Center in the Church/Store Building. The exhibits will use photographs, maps, artifacts and videos to explain the many periods of significance in the Village's history that spans four centuries.
- The 140-year old wood flooring in Masker's Barn is deteriorating from powder post beetle infestation. Plans will be drawn in 2024 to replace the flooring, as well as to address the need for ceiling fans or exhaust fans to make the rental hall more comfortable for guests on days of high temperatures.
- Emergency generators will be installed at Masker's Barn and the Church/Store Building, as well as the caretaker's residence, to ensure uninterrupted operation of public utilities and life safety systems during increasingly frequent power outages.

## **Encroachments**

- The County will acquire a drone, equipped with a camera, to assist in the investigation of encroachments by park neighbors onto County park land. The drone will also be useful in surveying condition on lakes and waterways.
- A Division staff member will be trained and licensed to operate the drone.

## **Horticulture**

- Kiosks have been built at the Henry S. Chatfield Memorial Garden in Warinanco Park and the Rhododendron Garden in the Loop Area of the Watchung Reservation. These kiosks provide an opportunity for people to memorialize loved ones through donations that get recognized with plaques. In 2024, the memorial program will be publicized, and expansion and improvement of the Rhododendron Garden will continue utilizing those donations.
- A landscaping contractor will be engaged to provide care for the hundreds of new plantings in the Azalea Garden in Warinanco Park.

## **Office of Cultural and Heritage Affairs (OCHA)**

- OCHA plans continued expansion of the popular “Four Centuries in a Weekend” Program, and will continue meeting with historic sites to brainstorm on developing promotions, activities, volunteers and new site plans. Planning will include the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the American Revolution, to be celebrated in 2026.
- The office will create a logo for the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the American Revolution.
- Recommendations from the Long-Range Plan will be implemented.
- The office plans to apply again to the NJ Historic Trust for Capital Grants to continue the rehabilitation of the Deserted Village.
- With increased funding from the NJ State Council on the Arts for 2024, the office plans to re-grant additional funds to arts organizations.
- The office will continue to work with other County offices, agencies, and the business community to ensure that cultural resources fully contribute to sustainable economic growth.
- The office plans to bring back the Employee Art Show in September 2024.
- **Galloping Hill Golf Course:** In 2024, Galloping Hill golf course will once again host the IMG and Hurricane junior golf tournaments continuing to

establish the property for the true growth of the game. In addition, the facility will continue to participate in Folds of Honor, raising funds for wounded and deceased veterans' families for secondary education. The property is expected to host 68,000 rounds of golf in 2024.

- **The Learning Center at Galloping Hill:** With junior camps and clinics to have a continued focus for the Learning Center, we are also looking to add range technology to our Learning Center facility, which will increase participation for both the avid golfer and the recreational player. We will be adding technology to our programming, allowing visitors to order food from the Hill Tavern with their mobile devices.
- **Ash Brook Golf Course:** An Engineering firm has been awarded to address the drainage issues at Ash Brook golf course, and we hope to share their plan and findings in the 2024 season. Ash Brook will execute necessary irrigation repairs to extend the current system's life. The Ash Brook Golf Course will relaunch the Tavern at Ash Brook once facility repairs are complete.
- **Shady Rest Golf Course:** This property will continue to host mini-golf birthday parties to drive community traffic to that experience. Shady Rest will continue developing creative programs to drive resident traffic, including adding additional golf leagues to our weekly calendar. This will not only increase rounds and revenue, but interest in the property.
- **Warinanco Sports Center:** We will focus on increasing the turf rental programming and events. The focus will be to create internal programs that partner with local coaches and teams but provide an approachable price point to the local community. Baseball, soccer, and lacrosse will be the leading sports.



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# **Department of Public Safety**

**Emergency Management**

**Medical Examiner**

**Police**

**Weights and Measures**

**Office of Health Management**

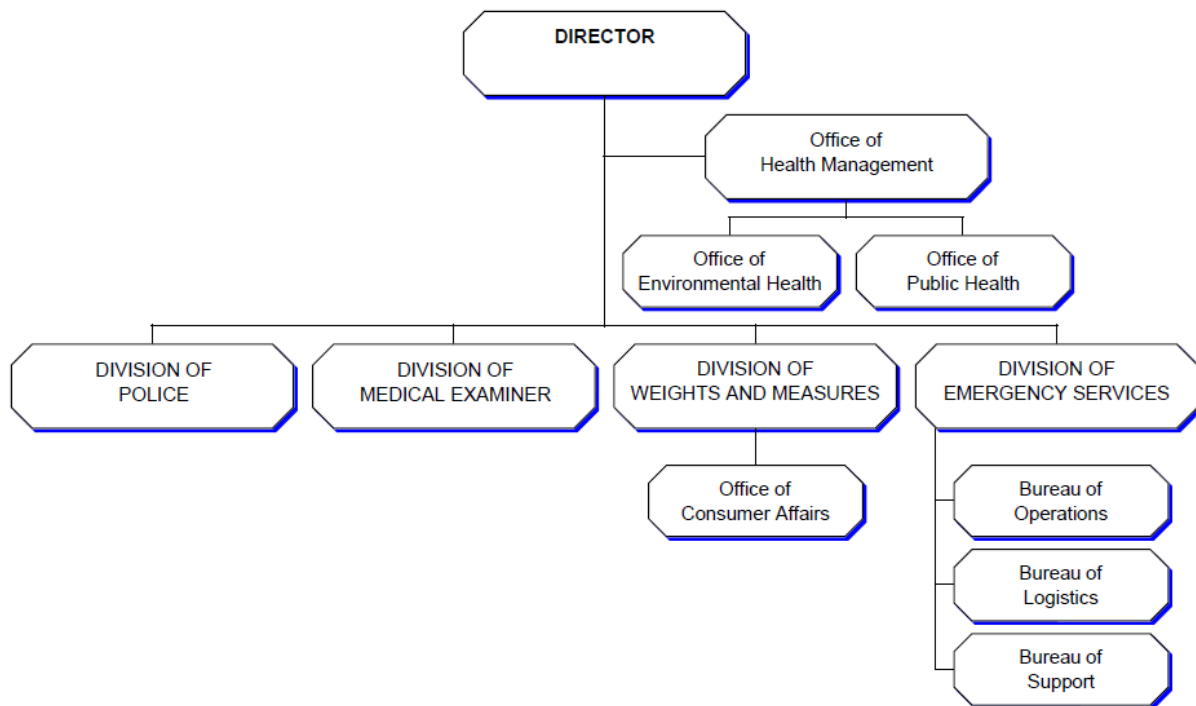
**Office of Consumer Affairs**

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# Organizational Chart

## Department of Public Safety





# DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

## Mission

The mission of the Department of Public Safety is to protect the residents of Union County through the effective and cost-efficient provision of both primary and ancillary public safety services. The six divisions of the Department of Public Safety include the County Police, Emergency Management, Health Department, Medical Examiner, Weights and Measures and Consumer Affairs. Each of these departments is dedicated to protect the residents of Union County in such diverse areas as criminal investigation, emergency response, health education and surveillance, seat belt education and consumer protection.

## Programs & Services

**Consumer Affairs:** Aids consumers in making better purchasing decisions and facilitating the protection and assertion of consumer rights by staying actively involved in getting regulations enforced to protect Union County residents. This office educates senior citizens and young people, who are a large number of the spending/buying population. Retailers are made aware of New Jersey State Regulations governing the quality of service to consumers.

**Emergency Services:** Provides incident management support at local and county scenes to assist local governments in maintaining their National Incident Management Systems (NIMS) requirements. Emergency Services responds to and plans for emergencies through three bureaus:

Bureau of Operations: Includes three units -- Hazardous Materials (Hazmat), Emergency Medical Services (EMS), and Emergency Management (OEM).

Hazmat is a Type 1 Regional Hazardous Materials Response Team, as defined by the Department of Homeland Security Typing System. It coordinates and implements all necessary response, assistance, training and related services for the identification of hazardous materials; also provides cleanup and disposal of hazardous materials.

EMS responds to medical emergencies throughout Union County to provide quality pre-hospital care. EMS is staffed by certified emergency medical technicians and maintains professionalism and expertise in the field of basic life support.

OEM mitigates, preparing for, responds to and aids recovery from manmade or natural disasters according to federal, state, and county guidelines.

Bureau of Logistics: Coordinates, manages and supervises multidiscipline all-hazards preparedness projects and initiatives; enhances the preparedness levels of first responders through equipment, regionalized planning and training; ensures the County's compliance with rules and regulations of the National Incident Management System; researches, applies for, administers and manages the State and Federal Preparedness Grants; and coordinates preparedness drills; is also the lead agency in the County's participation in the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI). The Northern NJ UASI is comprised of the core cities of Newark and Jersey City, and the surrounding response counties to include Union. It the State's only UASI region which, since its inception in 2003, has received \$97 million in specialized Homeland Security Grant Funds.

Bureau of Support: Includes Technical Services Unit and Fire Academy.

The Technical Services Unit maintains radio infrastructures for Union County agencies including County Police, Prosecutor, Sheriff, Emergency Services, and Public Works. It also maintains countywide radio infrastructure supporting EMS Dispatch, mutual aid and fire mutual aid, and works with municipalities to coordinate NJ Interoperability Communications System.

The Union County Fire Academy began in 1997, partnering Emergency Services with the Union County Fire Chiefs' Association to enrich firefighter education. The combined resources enhance training for career and volunteer firefighters, with high standards to foster pride and professionalism. The Academy operates at the Linden facility as a professional training ground, and provides outreach programs to municipal fire departments at other locations

**Health Management:** Plans and manages health related aspects of community response as a vital component of the countywide emergency preparedness and response system. Includes the Bureau of Environmental Health and the Bureau of Public Health working in close collaboration.

Bureau of Environmental Health: Assures compliance with environmental health regulations, coordinates public employee occupational safety and health mandates, and implements the State Right-to-Know programs. Responsible for ensuring compliance with the County Environmental Health Act (CEHA) as regulated by the

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The CEHA work program includes compliance and enforcement in areas such as hazardous materials, air, solid waste, water, noise and underground storage tanks.

**Bureau of Public Health:** Responsible for managing the Local Information Network Communications System (LINCS) to enhance and integrate local public health agencies' preparedness for, response to, and recovery from acts of terrorism and other public health emergencies. LINCS is responsible for managing the regionalized and coordinated public health assessment, disease identification, and rapid response and containment of incidents that threaten public health. LINCS coordinates an e-information system supporting reporting, health data analysis and dissemination of information between the Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control, local health departments, health care providers and emergency responders. The Bureau also provides contracted shared service with the townships of Berkeley Heights, Hillside, Scotch Plains, and the Borough of Roselle for full or partial Health Officer responsibilities

**Division of the Medical Examiner:** This office conducts death investigations and scene visitations. A major responsibility of the Medical Examiner Office is to perform autopsies and external examinations when required. If an autopsy is not necessary to determine the cause, manner and mechanism of death, an external examination is conducted. The Medical Examiner investigates all deaths reported under the County's jurisdiction as mandated by New Jersey State statute. It also provides surveillance to detect "serial" crimes, natural epidemics and biological or chemical terrorism at the earliest stages.

Forensic Pathologists serve as expert witnesses for the prosecution in criminal cases and consult with family members to answer questions regarding the death of loved ones.

**County Police:** Provides efficient, cost-effective, and professional delivery of law enforcement and protection services on all County-owned properties, parks and facilities, using a variety of enforcement and crime prevention strategies. The County Police Department is an essential law enforcement support agency for Union County's homeland security defense. It provides specialized and unique law enforcement shared service programs and services benefiting local police agencies; it is State of New Jersey medium for managing and coordinating Emergency 9-1-1 activities for all municipalities in Union County and Kean University; fulfills requests for public safety awareness, information and education presenters by senior citizen groups, educational institutions, civic organizations, scouting groups, and

public information mediums; and manages crucial law enforcement programs that directly contribute to the protection, safety and welfare of families and citizens throughout Union County. The Traffic Enforcement Unit, including the Weigh Team, safeguards the integrity of Union County's bridges and roadways, and produces significant County revenue through fines.

**Weights & Measures:** Provides cost-effective weights and measures enforcement protection and services to businesses, government agencies and consumers. Reduces or eliminates fraud and unfair business practices against consumers; monitors and enforces proper use of measuring and weighing devices, such as gasoline meters, oil truck delivery meters and scales used in commercial establishments, through testing and inspection.

The Division audits for accuracy consumer packages offered for sale and Universal Product Code scanners for accurate pricing and labeling. Staff investigates consumer complaints regarding weighing and measuring violations; prepares summonses and prosecutes violators.

## **2023 Accomplishments**

**Consumer Affairs:** Received and responded to 239 complaints filed, both electronically and telephonically, saving consumers \$67,639 in cash refunds and \$61,021 in additional value; Continued to monitor businesses for price gouging to make sure, they followed State laws.

**Emergency Services:** Continued to provide countywide EMS mutual aid coverage throughout Union County. Increased student enrollment in-service training program at the Union County Fire/EMS Academy by over 50%. Supported our Fire Mutual Aid program and work with all 21 fire departments to ensure firefighter safety. Managed improvements to the new Fire/EMS Academy to support additional training needs for fire and EMS providers. Continued to maintain a stockpile of PPE to support COVID operations. Upgraded the resources of the Union County Hazardous Materials Unit by enhancing technology and detection capabilities.

**Health Management/Public Health:** Continued to provide local health services as per shared service agreements with Berkeley Heights, Hillside, Roselle, and Scotch Plains. Provided mobile flu and vaccination clinics for Union County residents. Participated in a cooperative effort between the Union County Department of

Human Services, Trinitas Regional Medical Center and Legacy Pharmacy Group to provide pharmacy assistance for eligible residents.

**UCOHM/LINCS:** Continued to represent county-level public health and Local Information Network Communications Systems (LINCS) in the Healthcare & Public Health Coalition Advisory Panel to assist in the coordination of efforts in the event of an emergency to share information and resources that will be necessary during public health emergencies. Other entities include members from county and state-wide workgroups such as the New Jersey Department of Health, New Jersey State Police - Office of Office of Emergency Management (OEM), New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services, New Jersey Hospital Association (Third-Party Fiduciary), Healthcare Association of New Jersey, Home Care and Hospice Association of New Jersey, and more.

**UCOHM/CEHA:** Enforced environmental regulations as documented by the annual audit performed by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) in accordance with the County's grant agreements. Conducted compliance and enforcement investigations and inspections including: Air Pollution Program; Solid Waste Program; Pesticides Program; Noise Program; DEP Right to Know Program; and the Water Program.

**Medical Examiner:** This office continues its close liaison with the State Medical Examiner Office in an effort to provide improved service to the citizens of Union County and New Jersey.

Dr. Shaikh has been assigned the responsibilities as the County Medical Director to authorize Covid-19 testing and approve CDC Covid-19 Standing Orders for administration of vaccines.

The UCMEO Standard Operating Procedures has been updated and is available for review.

A presentation regarding the Medical Examiner's role in death investigation and the interaction of law enforcement was discussed with police recruits at the Stamler Police Academy.

This office has fully investigated 1146 deaths and performed 329 autopsies and 65 external examinations from January 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31, 2023. The UCMEO has investigated and autopsied 17 homicides.



**County Police:** Entered into agreements with local law enforcement agencies to provide additional assistance with specialized training in handling an active shooter situation, suspicious package recognition and assisting with using less lethal devices when confronting Emotionally Disturbed Persons. The office is upgrading its IT infrastructure to protect against specialized threats, and to aid in the enhancement of protections and efficiency for expanding the Regional Dispatch Center.

**Weights & Measures:** Continued to monitor commercial businesses and tested in excess of 10,000 devices for accuracy. During this testing we inspected over 1,000 businesses and performed more than 25,000 scanner and commodity audits to ensure compliance with state and federal regulations.

## **2024 Initiatives**

**Consumer Affairs:** Will continue to partner with retailers to increase customer service to consumers by providing them with more information about products and services; inform retailers of their responsibilities under laws spelled out in the N.J. Consumer Fraud Act; continue to implement new policies and inform businesses about the Notice of Investigation Findings, especially those using unfair business practices.

**Emergency Services:** Enter into a shared service agreement with the City of Plainfield to provide continuous EMS ambulatory services. Increase the staffing of our EMS unit to satisfy the growing needs of pre-hospital care throughout Union County. Finalize the upgrade of the Public Safety Radio System to increase coverage and capacity. Complete the purchase and rollout of public safety mobile radios for Union County first responder staff. Implementation of a Basic EMT training program at the academy. Complete a multi-year flood mitigation strategy for the Ralph Froehlich Public Safety Building.

**Health Management:** Continue to provide local health services to Roselle, Hillside, Scotch Plains and Berkeley Heights. Provide well child physical examinations for uninsured or underinsured infants and pre-school aged children as part of local health services agreements. Implement an internal shared service with the Union County Department of Human Services to provide extended clinic services for eligible residents. Continue to work with the NJDOH on Emergency Support Function #8 for Union County on emergency public health matters. Update Emergency Support Function #6 for Union County on Mass Care which also includes emergency assistance, medical needs shelter, temporary housing, human

services coordination and county animal rescue. Continue to work with the eight local health departments (representing all 21 Union County municipalities) to identify health areas of improvement and assist their capacity to respond. Continue to provide monthly blood pressure screening clinics in Roselle and Scotch Plains, and as requested in the community. Continue to assist local health departments in contact tracing/disease investigation, testing and vaccination efforts.

Continue to provide programs via the Chronic Disease Coalition by implementing evidence-based strategies and instituting Policy, Environmental, and System change strategies that support and reinforce healthful behaviors and lower the risk for chronic diseases. Continue to conduct inspections of retail food establishments located within county owned facilities, including temporary ones at events. Continue to expand the Union County Health Alert Network (HAN) to provide rapid distribution of public health information. This network is continuously maintained and updated to provide accurate information to appropriate recipients.

**Medical Examiner:** Continue process of obtaining provisional accreditation with the International Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners; continue to maintain the nationwide average of true turnaround time, which for most forensic cases, is within three months; continue mass disaster training exercises and drills for investigators provided by the state; continue to provide bereaved families appropriate interaction and assistance towards achieving closure.

**County Police:** Complete the expansion project for the Regional Dispatch System and create a secure Public Safety Network to minimize cyber-attacks and sustain 24/7 operability. Onboard and provide contracted dispatch services for the Borough of New Providence and the Township of Springfield; continue to share services with local and regional law enforcement agencies to assist in policing, traffic enforcement, and specialized investigations, including additional training programs protecting officers responding to the mentally ill and combative individuals.

**Weights & Measures:** Continue to conduct inspections on commercial businesses to ensure accuracy of the devices. Will conduct scanner and commodity audits to make certain consumers are being treated fairly, businesses are compliant with state and federal regulations, and all required protocols are being met.

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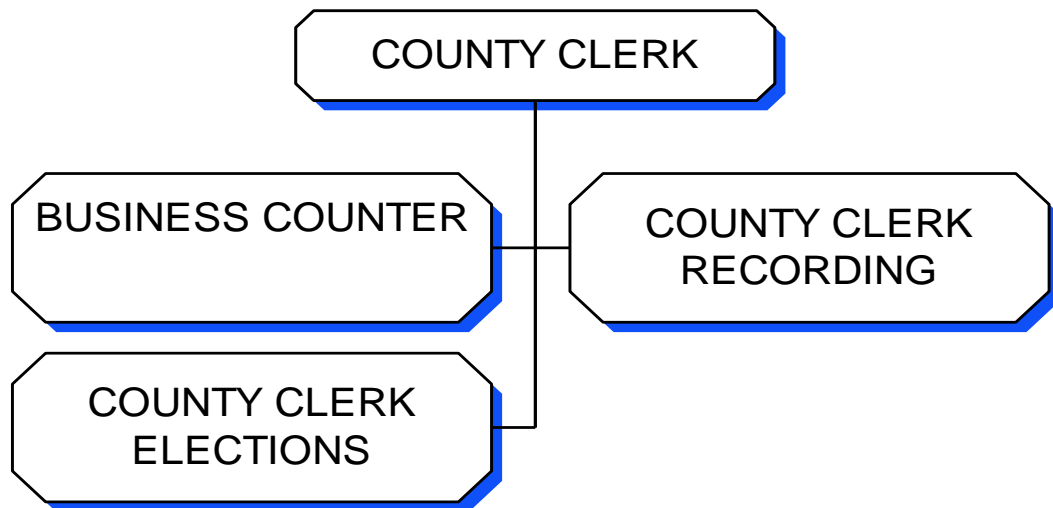
# Office of County Clerk

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# Organizational Chart

## Office of the County Clerk





# OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK

## Mission

The mission of the Office of the County Clerk is to provide the most efficient and expeditious delivery of services to our constituents in the areas of land recordings, elections, passports and business.

## Programs & Services

**Recording Division:** Provides same day recording of all Union County land documents as well as verification, indexing and scanning of these documents for public viewing on the Union County Clerk property search site. Responsibilities include the review of documents to confirm statutory requirements, comprehensive accounting duties of each document for taxes and fees as well as compilation of fees and transfer to the County Department of Finance and the State of New Jersey.

**Business Division:** Provides oaths to State commissioned public notaries; acts as authorized Federal Passport Agents for the United States Department of State; records business names; issues Clerk Certificates for Union County Notaries Public; issues Veteran I.D. Cards and Gold Star Parents I.D. Cards; assists with applications for Veteran Peddler Licenses with the State of New Jersey; registers Church Corporations; maintains Naturalization Records; issues Firemen exemptions and oaths of offices; Records Physician Liens and Physicians Licenses, files Inheritance Tax Waivers, Construction Liens, and Notices of Unpaid Balances.

**Election Division:** Accepts nomination petitions for school boards, county offices as well as all independent candidates. Designs and oversees printing of all ballots, receives and processes Vote-by-Mail applications, and issues ballots, certifies election results, issues Certificates of Election for county, municipal and school board candidates and coordinates and conducts recounts.

## 2023 Accomplishments

**Recording Division:** As the county and state recovered from the pandemic the Recording Division maintained its operation on a daily basis, ensuring its legal

statutory responsibility to record within two days of receipt. The office urged submitters to file their documents through its two electronic submitter companies in order to alleviate delays with USPS.

Currently, deeds, mortgages, releases, postponements, Notices of Settlement, UCC's discharge and assignment documents are received through e-filing. The system eliminates paper, saves staff time and adds to the greening of the county. The client base for e-filed submissions in 2023 was approximately 35,000, a slight decrease from 2022. All recording staff are trained on e-filing and are able to handle the influx of documents, completing their input in one day.

The increase in mortgage interest rates has slightly dampened the real estate market although deed and mortgage filing stayed robust. The county property revenue portion is estimated to remain stable at \$10 million, which is the third highest revenue for the office in its history.

The preservation effort for older books continued in 2023 to re-canvass 30 book binders in the Record Room while new recordings continued to be digitized and uploaded to the property website.

A major construction and renovation project began early in 2021 designed in five phases. To date, phases 1 through 4 have been completed including a men and a women's room with disabled accessibility, a new Map Room adjacent to the Public Record Room, a new passport area and lastly a new elections area.

**Business Division:** The on-line appointment system continued in 2023 with great success in Elizabeth and Westfield. Services including customer visits for passport processing notaries, business names and related services increased significantly as more people traveled as the pandemic waned. Revenue for the office is estimated at \$785,000, the highest revenue in the office's history.

In August, two innovations were made: a new electronic certification form was initiated for online processing which created greater efficiency for staff and a new electronic notary access database was started eliminating the need to scan.

Two Notary Seminars were hosted by the Clerk in May and October with 50 people attending each seminar. The seminars were well received especially in light of new mandates for notaries regarding education and the absence of education by the state.

**Election Division:** A staffed voting office continued in Westfield for the Primary, General and School Board Elections, one month prior to each election, to assist voters with applications and ballots. The main office in Elizabeth continued to assist voters with extended hours of business.

A Primary, General and Westfield School Board Election and a Springfield School Board referendum were held during the year. In addition, a Hillside Run-Off election was held in December. A Federal consent order was initiated between Union County, the Board of Elections and County Clerk offices. As of 2023 all election materials must be printed in Spanish and English.

There were three challenges in the School Board elections in Hillside, Roselle Park and Plainfield. The Plainfield challenge was withdrawn. The Hillside challenge was dismissed and the Clerk made a determination on the Roselle Park candidate's petition.

The updated, customized yellow Vote-by-Mail ballot envelopes were used for all elections and decreased the need for two voter labels, improving the ability and time needed to scan and validate voter information, therefore making the process more efficient and facilitated tracking.

New legislation was passed in 2022 mandating tallies by district starting in the General Election. A new software program was used to accomplish this. The Clerk initiated a new Primary Ballot to include County Committee elections. Additional legislation was passed mandating consecutive periodic tally tables to be posted from the day of the election to just before the certification date.

Early Voting, initiated last year, continued in the Primary and General Election. The Clerk also produced an informational step-by-step video, in English and Spanish, on how to vote using a Vote-by-Mail ballot. In both offices the Primary and General elections staff assisted voters with Ballots on Demand, thus eliminating the need for 864 different paper ballots for the Primary and 432 paper ballots for the General. Additionally, the Clerk spoke to community, senior and church groups on Vote-by-Mail voting. An ad campaign for the free Union County votes App was also conducted.

The Primary and General Election Ballots were collated in-house by staff, a massive labor-intensive process, necessitated by security and concern for accuracy. A 2023 Election Calendar celebrating Union County Inventors was published



including election dates and deadlines. The Annual Election Date Brochure was also published and distributed widely. All materials are in Spanish and English.

## **2024 Initiatives**

**Recording Division:** The major construction and renovation project begun in 2021, designed in five phases will be completed. The recording division will be renovated, as well as a new break room and conference room in this last phase. The client base for e-filed submissions in 2023 was approximately 36,000, a slight decrease from 2022. All recording staff are trained on e-filing and are able to handle the influx of documents, completing their input in one day. The book preservation project will continue in 2024, re-canvassing 60 book binders. It is expected that a third e-filing vendor will be added, fostering a growth in the client base.

A new, computerized database of Union County veteran burials starting in the Civil War will be initiated. The database will be an integral tool for families, genealogists and historians.

**Business Division:** The Clerk will continue to offer two free Notary Seminars in 2024

**Election Division:** The 2023 Election Calendar honoring Presidents who have visited Union County was distributed throughout the county. A Vote-by-Mail application form as well as information and deadline dates for all elections was included. The 2024 Election Dates Brochure also will be distributed.

To date there is a Special Cranford School Referendum Election scheduled for January; a Westfield School Board Election for April, and the Presidential Primary and General Election for June and November.

Vote-by-Mail ballots will continue to be collated in the Union County Jail which offers greater security, storage and areas to work.

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# **Office of the Prosecutor**

**Major Crimes Division**

**Investigative Division**

**Trial Division**

**Pre-Indictment Division**

**John H. Stamler Police Academy**

**Forensic Laboratory**

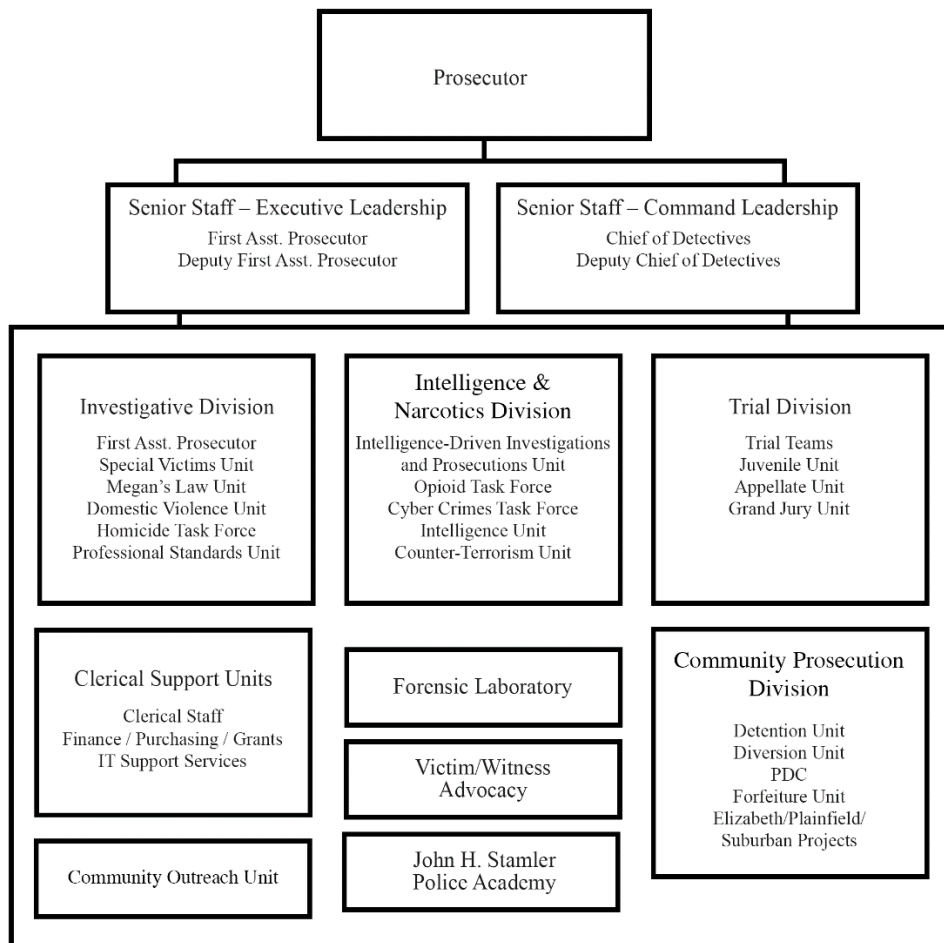
**Victim Witness Advocacy**

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# Organizational Chart

## Office of the Union County Prosecutor



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# **OFFICE OF THE UNION COUNTY PROSECUTOR**

## **Mission**

It is the mission of the Union County Prosecutor's Office to allow the people of this County to live their lives without fear that their lives will be diminished by the acts of individuals who would betray the laws of a civilized society; to ensure that everyone in our society is free to live their life without becoming a victim of violence; to safeguard the liberty of each of our people; and to bring to justice those would cause harm to our people, our families, and our communities.

## **Programs & Services**

### **Intelligence and Narcotics Division**

The Intelligence and Narcotics Division focuses on using modern investigative and intelligence-driven techniques to both investigate and prevent the most serious crimes plaguing our communities. The Division is comprised of the Intelligence Unit, which uses specialized intelligence gathering and sharing to investigate illegal gang activity, criminal enterprises, violent crime, and pattern crimes; the Narcotics Task Force, which investigates individuals involved in the illegal distribution of narcotics; the Cyber Crime Task Force, which focuses on the intersection of crime and modern technology and provides computer forensic services to police departments countywide; and the Counter-Terrorism Unit, which is the county's primary investigating unit in terrorism related matters.

### **Investigative Division**

The Investigative Division comprises several units made up of assistant prosecutors and detectives who work together to investigate and prosecute complex and serious crimes. Included within the Investigative Division are the Special Prosecutions Unit, which investigates complex financial crime, public corruption, elder abuse, the unauthorized practice of law and medicine, animal cruelty, arson, and other complex crimes requiring lengthy investigations; the Special Victims Unit, which investigates and prosecutes sexual offenses and the abuse of children; the Domestic Violence Unit, which works to break the cycle of violence endured by those victimized by those closest to them; and the Homicide Task Force, which investigates every homicide offense committed in the County.

### **Trial Division**

The Trial Division partners with the police departments of each of our municipalities, as well as the Union County Police Department, the Union County Sheriff's Office, and the Kean University Police Department, to bring the cases investigated by those departments to trial. The Division includes six trial teams composed of experienced trial attorneys who handle all stages of litigation, and a detective staff which partners with and continues the work of the various investigative agencies to ensure that all cases are trial-ready. Also housed within the Trial Division are the Juvenile Unit, which prosecutes juvenile justice matters; the Appellate Unit, which litigates all appellate matters arising out of the Office's activities; and the Grand Jury Unit, which ensures that the Grand Jury operates smoothly and efficiently.

### **Community Prosecution Division**

The Pre-Indictment Division is home to the many units that specialize in guiding newly charged cases through the initial phases of prosecution and to the many diversionary programs administered by the Office. Attorneys within the Division litigate motions regarding the detention of dangerous offenders, represent the State's interests in programs such as Drug Court, Mental Health Diversion, and Veteran's Diversion, and specialize in the litigation of matters involving defendants suffering from mental illness. The Division also provides experienced assistant prosecutors to assist local police departments with investigative needs, such as obtaining search warrants or grand jury subpoenas, and to help municipal detectives make legally sound investigative decisions.

### **Community Outreach Unit**

The Community Outreach Unit focuses on relationship building between members of law enforcement and members of the community. The Community Outreach Unit consists of members from the detective, assistant prosecutor and clerical staff. The Community Outreach Unit attends a broad range of community related events throughout the state, such as: National Night Out, and Safe Place Initiative, and various cultural and community related events such as Hispanic Heritage Month and Black History Month celebrations. The unit also conducts cyber-bullying presentations to school districts throughout the county, ranging from elementary to high school. They also engage in monthly liaison meetings with the Office of the Attorney General's Community Affairs Unit in an effort to discuss upcoming events, seek out new ideas, and collaborate with other community outreach organizations.

### **Forensic Laboratory**

The Forensic Laboratory is a fully accredited laboratory that provides forensic analysis for all cases investigated by the Office, as well as any police agency in the County. Forensic scientists at the Laboratory use state-of-the-art equipment and techniques to process evidence collected during the course of criminal investigations – for instance, analyzing and comparing DNA samples and identifying controlled dangerous substances.

### **Victim Witness Advocacy**

Victim witness advocates specialize in caring for the needs of the victims of crime, and help witnesses deal with the stresses of the trial process. The Unit provides comprehensive services to help crime victims deal with the financial, psychological, and physical effects of crime, and assists with the relocation of victims and witnesses whose safety is compromised by criminal actors.

### **The John H. Stamler Police Academy**

The Academy provides a comprehensive and accredited course of instruction for new police recruits, ensuring that they are able to serve our community safely, effectively, and respectfully. The Academy also provides continuing education services for our many active officers, offering a wide range of courses on topics from computer forensics to interview techniques.

## **2023 Accomplishments**

### **Public Safety:**

In partnership with the Union County Sheriff's Department and the Union County Board of Commissioners, the "SAFE PLACE" Initiative, was implemented by all 21 municipalities in Union County, the Union County Police Department and Kean University. The Union County Safe Place Program is designed to assist all victims of hate, bullying, and bias offenses that include, but are not limited to, race, color, religion, gender, disability, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, national origin, or ethnicity. Any individual who sees a Safe Place logo will know that the establishment displaying the decal will provide a 'safe place' where victims of these offenses can seek refuge while the police are notified and arrive to assist them. Participation and cooperation by these agencies makes Union County, New Jersey, the first in the nation to have all law enforcement agencies qualified to adopt the program. This Office was selected a recipient of the New Jersey Attorney General's 2022 Excellence in Policing Award for making the Safe Place program a reality in Union County.

In an effort to combat an increase in stolen vehicles, residential burglaries, motor vehicle burglaries and catalytic converter thefts, the Office formed a county-wide Municipal Task Force. The mission of the task force is to use real-time intelligence and increased manpower to deter criminal activity occurring throughout the County. The task force will be deployed when the Intelligence Unit identifies a spike or specific trend with the aforementioned crimes. Officers and detectives assigned to the task force will use intelligence and technology to deter and investigate the criminal activity.

To combat the overwhelming presence of the dangerous opioid Fentanyl, which was found to be present in 92% of the 142 overdose victims in Union County in 2022, the Narcotics Task Force and Intelligence Unit took steps to remove it from our streets, and help those individuals that are suffering from addiction. The Task Force participated in investigations that lead to the seizure of approximately 16,600 grams of Fentanyl. This amount of Fentanyl is enough to kill the entire population of Union County. In addition, the Unit executed 37 search warrants, made 68 arrests and seized approximately; 44,300 individual folds of heroin, 34,813 grams of cocaine, 200 pills, \$91,002 in cash and 61 firearms. Many other investigations conducted in partnership with federal, state and local agencies resulted in the seizure of additional illegal narcotics and firearms.

In an effort to further investigations conducted by other units within the Prosecutor's Office, as well as the local police departments, the Cyber Crime Task Force conducted 208 forensic examinations of digital evidence and collected video evidence from 215 locations. The unit also installed 11 covert cameras and 6 GPS trackers for investigations conducted by the Intelligence Unit and Narcotics Task Force. Additionally, the Internet Crimes Against Children Unit investigated 450 Cyber Tip line reports.

To further address public safety, the Office's Counter Terrorism Unit conducted 60 security assessments and site visits at houses of worship, schools, hospitals and other critical infrastructure sites throughout the County. The unit also investigated 200 Suspicious Activity Reports (SARs) in partnership with the New Jersey Department of Homeland Security and Preparedness and Counter-Terrorism Watch.

In an effort to improve responses in emergency situations or mass casualty incidents, the Counter-Terrorism Unit continued the expansion of the Collaborative



Response Graphics Program, which maps schools and other critical infrastructure sites. To date, every high school in Union County has been mapped, and five towns in the county have all the schools in their district mapped. The program also mapped an additional 16 critical infrastructure sites.

In an effort to prevent school violence, the Office implemented the Behavioral Threat Analysis Program in pilot school districts in the county. The multi-disciplinary approach to threat assessment combines law enforcement, educators, school administrators and medical professionals, and trains them to work together to prevent school violence. Training for the program began in 2023, and will continue in 2024.

To encourage interest in law enforcement careers, ensure ample continued police presence throughout our communities, and to recruit more diverse candidates, the Office, with the support of the Union County Board of Commissioners and Kean University, co-hosted a Law Enforcement Jobs Fair at Kean University in 2023. More than 50 different federal, state, County, and local law enforcement agencies, together with numerous diverse community organizations, actively participated in this event. Over 500 potential applicants attended the recruitment fair. Based upon the extraordinary success of this program in recruiting qualified diverse candidates to law enforcement careers, another Law Enforcement Job Fair is being planned for 2024.

The Office began implementation of an Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) program, which includes building a network of ALPR's that were strategically installed throughout the County. To date, ten ALPR's have been installed throughout the County, with more scheduled to be installed in 2024. This initiative assists local law enforcement by building an ALPR network that uses overt cameras as a public safety tool, which mirror those routinely being installed in numerous towns, cities, counties, and states throughout the country. These cameras have the capability of capturing video images of activity occurring in the area of public safety hazards as well as public streets and highways. This program will help provide better public safety, and further safeguard local communities from violence, as well as enhance the quality of life for those individuals who reside or visit those areas.

#### **Increased Resources for Crime Victims and Victims of Addiction:**

The Union County Prosecutor's Office implemented a Non-Fatal Domestic Violence Strangulation, Smothering and Suffocation Program whereby forensic

nurse examiners will respond 24/7 to incidents of non-fatal strangulation, suffocation and smothering to better serve the victims and prosecute these acts of domestic violence and to address the lethality of intimate partner strangulation. Forensic nurses meet victims of non-fatal strangulation, suffocation, and smothering at participating medical facilities to conduct forensic examinations and provide referral services. To that end, a Directive has been issued with input from our local law enforcement and medical provider partners; pamphlets and educational materials have been provided to local police departments for officer use upon encountering victims of such assaults; training videos have been shared; memoranda of agreements have been secured from all participating medical facilities within the County and forensic nurses have been appropriately trained.

In partnership with recovery specialists, the Office continued the Operation Helping Hand 24-7-365 Program, which made Union County the first county in New Jersey to ensure that all suspects arrested for low-level possessory offenses involving heroin or other opioids would be offered face-to-face access to rehabilitative services at the time of arrest, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Throughout the year the Office also incorporated pop-up tent events, and conducted several arrest-based operations, wherein individuals suffering from addiction could seek recovery services from our on-site recovery specialist partners at Prevention Links. Through these efforts, a total of 104 people were offered rehabilitative services this year. Additionally, the Task Force conducted multiple Operation Helping Hand pop-up tent events, where Fentanyl test strips and Narcan kits were distributed to people that visited the tents. Further, Union County law enforcement officers administered Narcan to 288 individuals, saving their lives from a fatal overdose.

The Office continued additional efforts to combat the opioid epidemic by hosting two drug take back days in collaboration with the DEA. During these events, members of the community were able to drop off unwanted prescription drugs for destruction at the Prosecutor's Office in Elizabeth. A total of 544 pounds of prescription drugs were turned in at these events, and later destroyed.

In conjunction with the Elizabeth Police Department, the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) program was started in Union County. LEAD gives law enforcement officers discretion to divert individuals who commit low-level offenses that are driven by substance use, mental illness, and/or poverty, from arrest to services. As an alternative to being arrested, individuals are referred to a LEAD case manager. The case manager and team members will work with the

individual to set up services addressing the individual's needs. Working groups, with law enforcement collaboration, follow the progress of individuals that are diverted from arrest.

### **Continuing Efforts to Enhance Police Training and Working with Members of the Community with Special Needs:**

The Union County Prosecutor's Office partnered with the County Commissioners to start the Blue Envelope Program in Union County. The Blue Envelope Program is geared towards fostering inclusivity and promoting safer interactions between law enforcement officers and individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The Program introduces a simple yet effective tool that contains essential information for drivers with Autism Spectrum Disorder. This includes a copy of their driver's license, vehicle registration, insurance details, and an emergency contact card. Additionally, the envelope provides clear instructions to drivers on how to navigate a traffic stop and interact with law enforcement officers in a manner that promotes clarity and safety.

Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) trainings expanded classes to ensure that any law enforcement mental health and first responder candidates who did not receive training previously were given the opportunity to be added to class rosters. CIT training is an invaluable training which provides law enforcement and their mental health partners the de-escalation tools necessary when interacting with persons undergoing a mental health crisis. In 2023, the CIT training was expanded by adding advanced and refresher courses and a training specifically designed to address the rising trend in law enforcement interaction with juveniles presenting with mental health crises.

Law Enforcement Officers from Union County attended the Veteran Response Team (VRT) training. This training, which is new to New Jersey, addresses how to peacefully resolve incidents involving Veterans in crisis and get them connected with support services designed to improve their health and well-being. Officers learned how veterans' military background and police training can help deescalate intense situations and prevent violence. Officers work with the Veterans to provide them with crisis intervention, housing, counseling support and health care. In 2024, the Prosecutor's Office will look to expand this training to additional law enforcement officers.

In conjunction with municipal law enforcement agencies and Trinitas Medical Center's Behavioral Health Division, the Alternative Responses to Reduce

Instances of Violence and Escalation (Arrive) Program was expanded to all municipalities in Union County. This program partners Crisis Intervention Team certified law enforcement officers with a certified mental health screener. These individuals respond to calls involving individuals suffering from a mental health crisis. The program is intended to assist those having a mental health crisis by obtaining access to care and treatment in a manner which reduces the risk of violence or use of force during interactions with law enforcement. When team members are not responding to calls, the Arrive team performs follow-up management and proactively visits individuals in the community who would benefit from an outreach program.

### **Continuing to Building Public Trust and Increase Public Relations Between Law Enforcement and Members of the Community:**

In 2022, the Union County Prosecutor's Office began a year-long process to be considered for accreditation by the New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police (NJSACOP). The Association, which is designated as an, "Independent Credentialing Body" by the United States Department of Justice, administers a rigorous process in order to pass accreditation standards. The accreditation program assists law enforcement agencies with self-assessment, and ultimately improves their overall performance. Accreditation is grounded in the adoption of standards and overall professional objectives. In October 2023, the Union County Prosecutor's Office passed accreditation standards and was issued accreditation by the NJSACOP.

In conjunction with the Hillside Police and Recreation Departments, the Union County Prosecutor's Office launched the Kids' Court Program. This program educates children ages 8-12 on the criminal justice system. Assistant Prosecutors, Defense Attorneys and Judges will provide kids with an overview of the criminal court system and the steps in a criminal trial. Kids will be assigned a role and participate in a mock criminal trial. The goal of the program is to educate children how the criminal justice system works and expose them to possible future career opportunities.

To continue to address the potential for increased domestic violence during the pandemic and beyond, the Prosecutor's Office jointly hosted a Domestic Violence Symposium with the YWCA of Union County. The symposium brought together local experts to discuss the impact COVID-19 had on domestic violence, and highlighted how service providers can best support survivors of domestic violence

during the ongoing public health crisis. The symposium further addressed the rising trends in non-fatal strangulation, suffocation and smothering cases as well as the use of firearms in partner abuse.

The Community Outreach Unit partnered with the Office of the Attorney General, the County of Union, local law enforcement agencies, and members of the community to host and attend approximately 30 events in 2023. The unit also presented approximately 40 cyber-bullying school presentations. During National Night Out, law enforcement's largest annual event, the Community Outreach Unit represented the Union County Prosecutor's Office in 14 of the 21 municipalities in the county. The Outreach Unit also appeared at numerous public events to promote new initiatives of the Prosecutor's Office, such as the Arrive Together Program and Safe Place Initiative.

Several members of the UCPO legal and investigative staff participated in the "Kids Spreading Kindness" campaign. This presentation defines cyberbullying, bias crimes, traditional bullying, and the ramifications participation in these harmful discourses may have on a student's future. This presentation is offered to elementary through high school students.

Local schools visited the Prosecutor's Office to observe sentencing days in court. Every Friday, the County court system sentences previously convicted offenders. This opportunity allows students to see, first-hand, the consequences of breaking the law and the justice system in action. In addition to watching the sentencings, the students are given an opportunity to ask questions of their law enforcement guide, the judge, assistant prosecutors, public defenders, and probation officers.

High school and college students were given tours of the Union County Prosecutor's Office Forensic Laboratory. Staff explained the lab's role in criminal investigations and talked about careers in forensic science. During the tours students are given the opportunity to see the Controlled Substance and Biology Sections of the lab, as well as use a microscope to analyze samples.

## **2024 Initiatives**

### **Initiatives the Union County Prosecutor's Office will be pursuing throughout 2024 include:**

Develop a Special Needs registry, where county residents with special needs, can provide law enforcement with information regarding their physical or mental

needs, so emergency first responders will be better equipped to serve registrants in the event of a law enforcement response involving the individual or their address. Critical information such as sensory sensitivities or verbal and cognitive abilities can be included in order to alert police and enhance the quality of interaction with the law enforcement and first responders.

Expansion of our Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) program, which will include installing 36 additional ALPR's throughout the County. For this program, we will also be partnering with PSE&G, who has agreed to allow the installation of ALPR's on their utility poles, which will give us and local law enforcement more locations to install the cameras. The expected outcome is to provide better public safety, and further safeguard local communities from violence, as well as enhance the quality of life for those individuals who reside in or visit those areas.

The Union County Prosecutor's Office in conjunction with the Union County Police Chiefs Association and Office of Emergency Management, will be conducting table top exercises with municipal law enforcement agencies designed to test local law enforcement agencies' preparedness in the event of a mass casualty incident. These exercises focus on an agency's ability to respond to a mass casualty incident as well as coordinate with the various entities that respond to mass casualty situations. In 2024, all Union County law enforcement agencies will have participated in this exercise and received feedback in areas that can be improved, so all agencies can enhance their abilities to respond to a mass casualty situation.

Provide Senior Safety seminars which address issues specific to seniors in the Community. These seminars will include teaching seniors how to better protect their personal and financial information. Additionally, programs will be designed to educate law enforcement officers and retail loss prevention officers on interacting with those who have Alzheimer's and Dementia.

The Prosecutor's Office will participate in the Building Stronger Communities presentation. This meet and greet with law enforcement and members of the Muslim community is designed to educate the community on law enforcements interaction with the Muslim community and strengthen the bond between these two groups.

In 2024, the Union County Prosecutor's Office will seek to hold multi-agency gun buy back and turn-in events. Previously, this program resulted in the successful

surrender of numerous firearms and ammunition. The safe collection and removal of firearms from the streets of this County continues the Office's commitment to the reduction of gun violence, as well as, accidental and mental health related tragedies.

The Union County Prosecutor's Office will seek to expand the Arrive program increasing the availability of team members to seven days a week. We will also seek to participate in a pilot program for non-law enforcement response teams for calls where police involvement is not required. The Office will continue to coordinate community engagement events to increase awareness of this program and other programs serving those mental health concerns and special needs and develop Union County Arrive with consideration of community needs and feedback.

Expansion of the Collaborative Response Graphics Program to improve responses to emergency situations or mass casualty incidents. The Counter-Terrorism Unit will continue to work with local school districts to get all the schools in Union County mapped. They will also work with our local law enforcement partners to identify additional critical infrastructure sites to be mapped.

Expansion of the Behavioral Threat Analysis Program to prevent school violence. The program combines law enforcement, educators school administrators, and medical professionals, and trains them to work together to prevent school violence. The Counter-Terrorism Unit will continue to work with our local school districts to implement the program at additional schools, and coordinate the necessary training for the program.

Continue to expand our efforts to address the unlawful drugs/opioid epidemic by focusing enforcement efforts on those profiting from this criminal activity, while making significant efforts to assist those suffering from addiction in getting the help they need through continued expansion of the Operation Helping Hand Program.

Continue to coordinate with our law enforcement and education partners throughout the County to provide mass casualty incident and all-hazards response coordination and enhanced protocols for the safety of our children and communities. These planning meetings, table-top exercises, simulations and trainings shall be ongoing and address both prevention and strategic response.

Continue community outreach efforts by having Office representatives engage with members of local civic, nonprofit, education, business, and religious organizations to speak publicly on a broad range of topics, including but not limited to bias crime prevention and awareness, youth engagement, cybercrimes, facility security, local crime trends, and substance abuse prevention and intervention.

Development of program offering mock traffic stops to individuals with special needs. Community members will be able to sign up with law enforcement to receive a traffic stop instructional overview culminating with the special needs individual and a family member being “pulled over” by police officers. This will allow for individuals with special needs to prepare for encounters with law enforcement so they know what to expect when stopped by law enforcement officers. This will also provide law enforcement officers training on how to most effectively deal with individuals with special needs.

Continued deployment and expansion of the county-wide Municipal Task Force with the mission of using real-time intelligence and increased manpower to deter criminal activity occurring throughout the County. The task force will continue to be deployed when the Intelligence Unit identifies a spike in specific crimes, such as stolen vehicles, vehicle burglaries, residential burglaries, or catalytic converter thefts, and can be expanded to address other types of criminal activity when trends are identified.



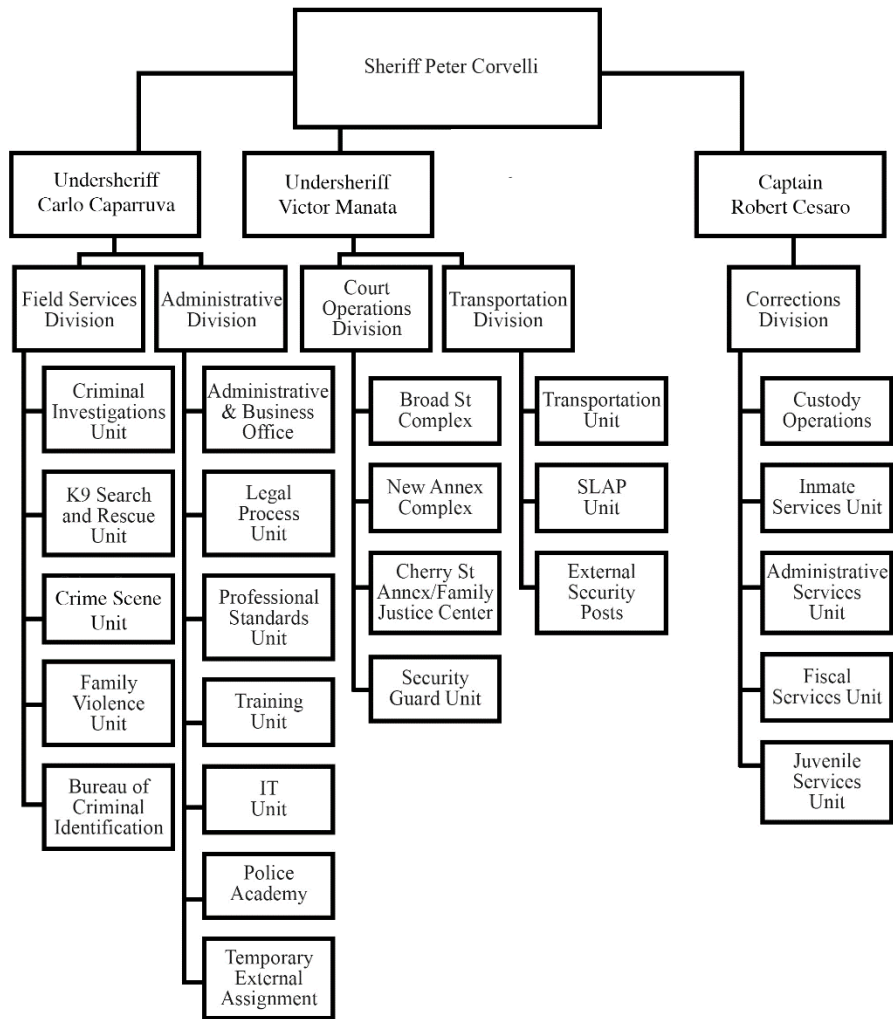
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# Office of the Sheriff

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# Organizational Chart

## Office of the Sheriff





# **OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF**

## **Mission**

The Office of the Sheriff is established by the State Constitution. The Sheriff's law enforcement functions are varied, but the primary objective is to provide coordinated services to the Union County Trial Court System that insures a safe County Courthouse environment and an uninterrupted judicial calendar. The advent of shared services has expanded this role to encompass the provision of specialized support services to other law enforcement agencies. The absorption of the Corrections Division and Juvenile Detention functions have added the responsibility of oversight of the corrections regionalization with Essex and Hudson Counties to the Sheriff's Office.

## **Programs & Services**

- Court Complex and Building Security.
- Transportation of inmates.
- Service of civil and criminal process.
- Execution of domestic, juvenile and criminal warrants.
- Maintenance of criminal identification records.
- Enforcement of domestic violence orders issued by superior courts.
- Provision of search and rescue support services.
- Community education programs.
- Maintenance and responsibility of the Union County Pistol Range.
- Re-routing of non-violent offenders into S.L.A.P. (Sheriff's Labor Assistance Program).
- Provision of emergency medical response services within the Union County complex in Elizabeth.
- Support services to local, state and federal law enforcement agencies upon request.

## **2023 Accomplishments**

**UCSO:**

- Successful transition to Enforsys records management system;
- Utilized Body Worn Camera program to identify training deficiencies;
- Bolstered Field Training program to ensure new officers are proficient;
- Conducted thorough agency policy/ procedure review. Updated/corrected current policies to comport with AG Guidelines;
- Continued increase in physical and operational security enhancements at courthouse complex and satellite posts;
- Continued successful partnership with Essex and Hudson counties to provide for secure confinement and intensive drug & alcohol rehabilitation for in-custody union county offenders.

**Corrections:**

- Earned a 100% compliance rating on the NJ State Audit. 9th year in a row;
- Maintained National Accreditation on Medical Services with the National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC);
- Earned 100% compliance on the US Department of Justice PREA Standards;
- Expanded the Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation programs

**Juvenile Detention:**

- Maintained regionalization of juvenile operations with Essex County savings Union County taxpayers;
- Operated the Alternative to Incarceration program with Electronic Monitoring (GPS) without incident.

## **2024 Initiatives**

### **UCSO:**

- Enhance the Union County Sheriff's Office's operational security through technology advancements;
- Bolster relationships and trust within the community through positive interaction and office outreach;
- Work with Local, State, and Federal agencies to assist with providing necessary public safety services and address problems of crime and disorder;
- Maintain consistent review of office policy and procedure to ensure comportment with AG Guidelines and directives;
- Maintain a safe and secure environment at the Courthouse complex as well as satellite offices located throughout the county.

### **Corrections:**

- Increase opportunities for offenders to engage in intensive drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs;
- Expand the Medical Assistance Treatment (MAT) program;
- Expand our Re-Entry program services;
- Maintain oversight of the regionalization with Essex & Hudson County;
- Expand Video Conferencing capability for Court;
- Continue to provide gold standard correctional services at a cost savings to Union County residents.

### **Juvenile Detention:**

- Continued safe care and confinement of juvenile offenders in Union County through agreements with Essex, Bergen, and Morris Counties;
- Increase offender participation in the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative to provide non-custodial supervision while awaiting Court disposition.

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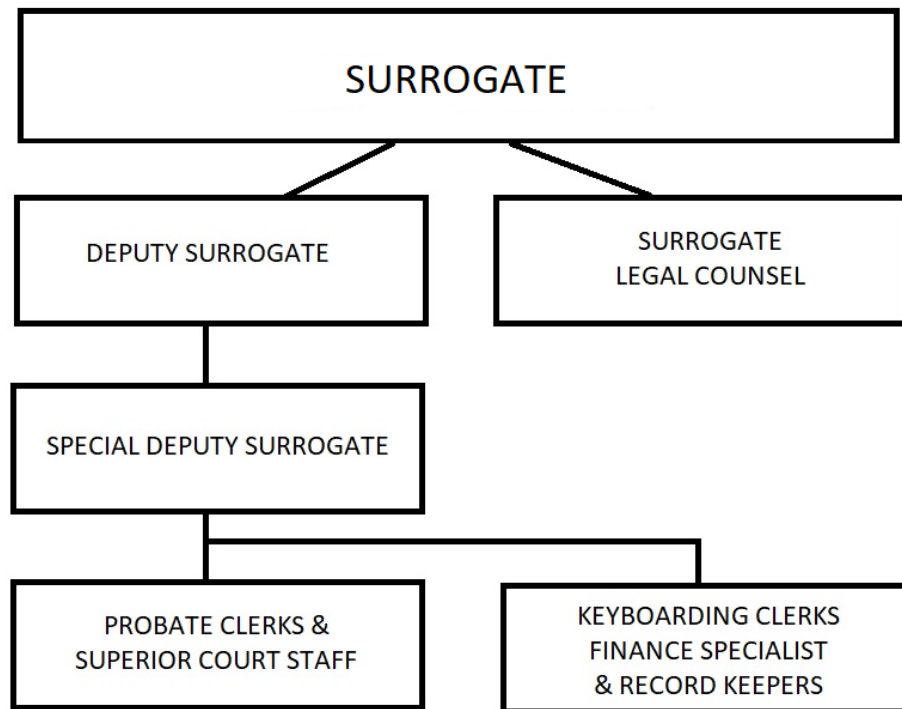
# Office of the Surrogate

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# Organizational Chart

## Office of the Surrogate







# **OFFICE OF THE SURROGATE**

## **Mission**

The Surrogate is a New Jersey Constitutional Officer serving in the dual role of Judge of Probate Court and Deputy Clerk of the Superior Court of Chancery Division, Probate Part. The mission of the Office of the Surrogate is to comply with the mandates of N.J.S.A 2:5-1 et seq. and 3B:1 et seq. as they relate to Wills, Administrations, Guardianships etc.; to be receptive to the needs of the people while serving them in the most compassionate, accessible, cost-effective and efficient manner; to provide outreach programs on a voluntary basis; and to educate the public with regard to the services of the office.

## **Programs & Services**

- Administration: appointment of administrators for estates without wills, issuance Letters of Administration and permanent depository for related documents.
- Adoptions: responsible for all necessary procedural supporting paperwork pursuant to New Jersey Statutes and court rules, as well as the filing, review, and scheduling of all Superior Court Hearings in regard to adoption matters.
- Chancery Division, Probate Part: the Surrogate is Deputy Clerk of the Chancery Division, Probate Part and Surrogate's Court is the filing court for Probate Part actions, including actions to appoint a guardian, contested wills, and disputed administrations.
- Guardianships: appoint guardians of minors, issue Letters of Guardianship.
- Incapacity: Appoint guardians for incapacitated persons including children who have reached the age of majority (18) and need to have a guardian, usually a parent appointed. It is also the responsibility of the Surrogate to monitor and accept the annual reports of guardians in these cases.
- Surrogate's Intermingled Trust Fund (SITF): The Surrogate maintains and hold secure funds received by minors resulting from inheritance and lawsuits; monitors and invests funds until reaching the age of 18; periodic transfer of funds to minors as per court orders.
- Wills: Probate, issue Letters Testamentary, issue Letters Trusteeship, permanent depository for Probate related documents.

## **2023 Accomplishments**

2023 was a year of change and innovation for the Office of the Union County Surrogate, including the launch of a streamlined website with an appointment reservations system. The chart below indicates the Surrogate’s office served more than approximately 10,000 residents and non-residents in regard to certified documentation and probate matters.

|                   |        |                      |       |
|-------------------|--------|----------------------|-------|
| Adoptions         | 73     | Minor Accounts Est.  | 148   |
| Certificates      | 12,206 | Probate Matters      | 4,989 |
| Court Appearances | 502    | Release of Funds     | 239   |
| Guardianships     | 147    | Searches             | 523   |
| Incapacities      | 171    | Speaking Engagements | 14    |

Additionally, the Court began testing an “e-Probate” system that will permit residents and attorneys to take initial filing steps from the comfort of their homes. Under the leadership of Surrogate Hudak, the staff is reaching out to members of the community to educate the public about the workings of the Surrogate’s Court and the valuable services it offers.

### **Online Appointments**

Beginning in February 2023, customers were able to schedule appointments via phone or the Surrogate’s website, greatly decreasing wait times and increasing transaction completion rates. In 2023, clients scheduled 2,630 appointments.

### **Adoption Day**

The Union County Vicinage celebrated the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual National Adoption Day celebration on Friday, Nov. 17, 2023. This year’s event saw five children adopted in Union County. The Surrogate’s Office coordinated logistics for the event, hosted a breakfast for participating families, and supported the court proceedings.

### **Community Outreach**

- In 2023 the Surrogate launched a speaking series entitled “Setting Your Intentions.” Residents receive vital information during this presentation to make informative decisions for their future—topics range from estate planning to adult guardianships.
- In partnership with the Union County Office for Persons with Disabilities and Special Needs, hosted a webinar on guardianship focused on parents of minors with developmental disabilities aging into adulthood.
- Increased participation in community events, including events for families of individuals with development disabilities.

- Participated in the Union County Senior Fraud workshop held in November 2023.

### **D.A.R.M. Participation**

Each year the state of NJ requires reporting in regard to document imaging and archiving.

### **Record Digitization**

In an attempt to modernize record keeping, the office has been dedicating in-house resources to convert decades old microfiche into digitized records to help with research and preservation.

### **Surrogate's Intermingled Trust Fund**

The Surrogate's Court currently safeguards over \$16 million in funds for minors until they reach adulthood. In 2023, the Surrogate conducted a request for proposals and secured new agreements with four Union County financial institutions, in accordance to Court guidelines. These new agreements will secure record high interest rates for SITF beneficiaries.

## **2024 Initiatives**

### **E-Probate (Electronic File Submission)**

Union County will begin to receive electronic file submissions from applicants and attorneys for Probate and Administration matters.

### **Westfield Office**

In January 2024, the Surrogate's Court opened a satellite office in the Union County Colleen Fraser Building in Westfield. Clients will be able to schedule weekly appointments for in-person service.

### **Record Digitization**

Continued conversion and archiving microfiche records dating back to approximately 1971. Explore feasibility of conversion of pre-1971 records to digital format. Installation of self-service kiosks for certified record searchers.

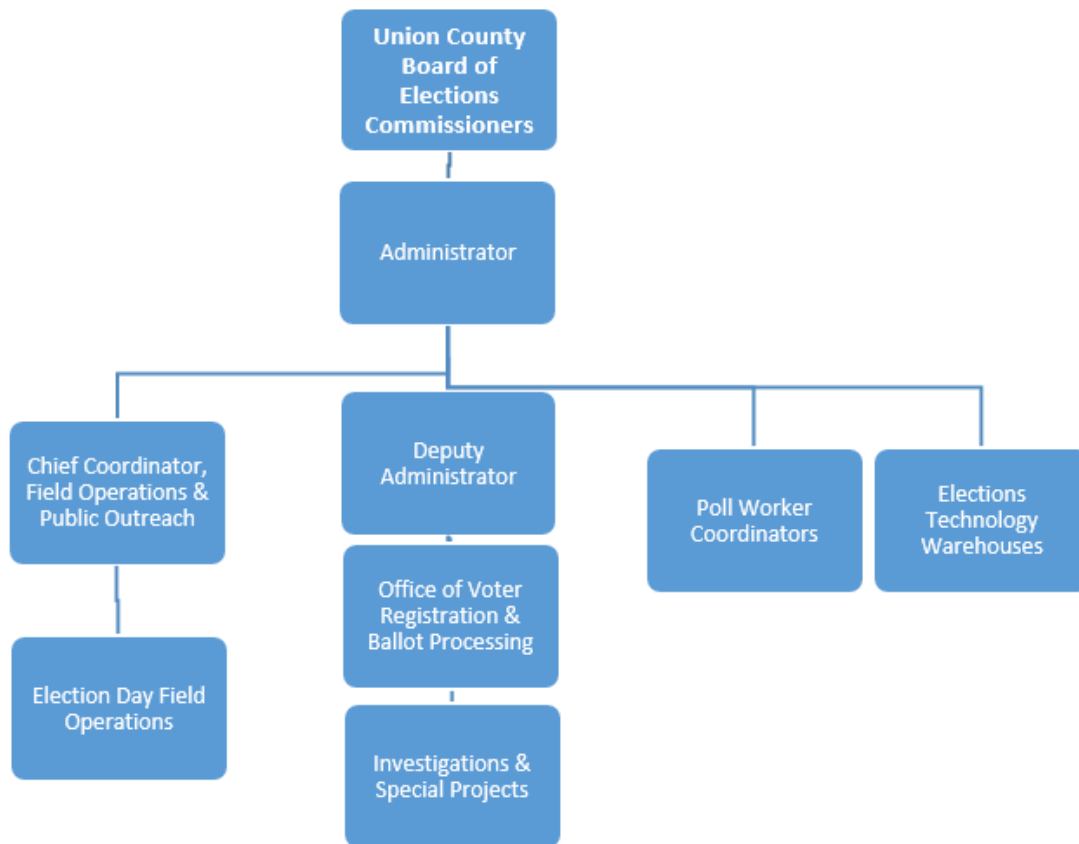
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# Board of Elections

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# Organizational Chart

## Board of Elections





# **BOARD OF ELECTIONS**

## **Mission**

The Union County Board of Elections (UCBOE) is comprised of six members appointed by the Governor to serve a two-year term. Their primary responsibility is to ensure that all elections are conducted within strict compliance with all state and federal mandates with accuracy, integrity, transparency and efficiency.

The Right of Suffrage is a Fundamental Right. This Board guarantees this right by maintaining an accurate and inclusive registry of eligible voters and ensuring the voters' rights are enforced prior to and on Election Day.

## **Programs & Services**

The Board provides election-related services to over 377,593 active and inactive voters registered in Union County, including:

- Election Administration
  - Administers fair and transparent Primary and General Elections, including effectuating early voting for each
  - Performs post-election audits as required by law
  - Administer runoff elections as required by law
  - Conducts recounts as required
- Voter Registration
  - Processes new registrations
  - Processes registration transfers both in and out of Union County
  - Maintains a digitized signature verification system for poll book creation, petition challenges and mail-in-ballot verification
  - Maintains a computerized system of all active and inactive voters in Union County
- Poll Worker Management
  - Hires, assigns, trains and pays approximately 1,800 district board workers for each election
  - Hires, assigns, trains and pay more than 50 election deputies to assist this office on Election Day



- Hires, assigns, trains and pay early voting super poll workers and poll workers
- Public Outreach
  - Provides, upon request, mock elections and demonstrations of the ExpressVote XL Voting Machines for students, civic groups, or any group requesting the same
- Election Technology Management
  - Maintains a fleet of 574 voting machines, 3 central vote tabulators and 1,034 electronic poll books
  - Programs each election profile for both electronic voting machines and electronic poll books

**Election Technology Maintenance:** As part of its responsibilities, the Board maintains, services, prepares, programs and coordinates the transportation of over 574 voting machines and 1,034 electronic poll books for each municipal election, primary election, general election, special school elections and run-off elections conducted within Union County, which includes early voting for both the primary election and general election.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance:** The Board cooperates with local, state, and federal agencies to ensure that the 161 polling sites throughout Union County are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

**Enforcement:** The Board conducts investigations relating to questionable registrations to prevent voter fraud (including on-site inspections).

The Board maintains a file of all current and former residents of Union County convicted of indictable offenses (forfeiture of suffrage).

The Board processes cancellations of registration for deceased residents of Union County.

The Board electronically transfers County registration information into a statewide registry file maintained by the New Jersey Office of the Secretary of State.

The Board maintains and upgrades all election maps for each municipality in Union County resulting from any district adjustments.

## 2023 Accomplishments

**ADA Compliance:** The Union County Election Board continues to ensure Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance at our polling places on Election Day.

While poll workers have received training on ADA compliance on Election Day, it is incumbent upon the municipality to ensure any temporary remedies required for compliance are in place on Election Day. Poll workers and master poll workers received revised, more in-depth training on the importance of ADA compliance on Election Day which included monitoring by the United States Department of Justice (USDOJ), checking to guarantee temporary measures are in place to ensure accessibility for disabled voters and their requirement to complete the necessary forms.

The Board moves polling places which were not ADA-compliant to accessible polling locations when necessary.

The Board continued to be proactive in advising voters of alternate, ADA-compliant entrances when the main entrance is not compliant, by adding the information to the polling place listing on the website and providing the information on Election Day post cards.

### **Community Outreach:**

*Public Outreach & Education:* The UCBOE worked in tandem with the state, the county's public information office, and municipal clerks to ensure voters of Union County were aware of changes affecting the 2023 elections specifically as it relates to changes in legislative district representation. Additionally, the Board added two election districts, one in New Providence and one in Springfield, to alleviate crowding at the polls. These affected voters were also notified of the change to their election district.

The UCBOE sent direct mail to 56,000+ registered voters announcing legislative district changes, election district changes and polling location changes.

The UCBOE embarked on a vigorous campaign to recruit to poll workers for both the Primary and General Elections.

The UCBOE announced Early Voting ahead of the primary and general elections.

The UCBOE also had a presence at many local events where residents are encouraged to register to vote, apply to become a poll worker and familiarize themselves with the new voting technology including the voting machines and electronic poll books. The UCBOE participated in the following events: Fiesta Latina in Summit; Hillside Health Fair; National Voter Registration Day Events at the Union Township Library, Plainfield Health Fair, Elizabeth Health Fair, Roselle Park Latina Festival, Rahway Hispanic Heritage Month event, Fanwood Fanny Wood Day, Ecuadorian Feast, League of Women Voters in Plainfield and Union College at Union County - Cranford, Elizabeth and Plainfield campuses; UC Concerts in the Park; Linden September to Remember; Puerto Rican Day Parade; and Family Fun & Flix, Warinanco.

The UCBOE administered the Winfield Housing Authority election.

*Public Outreach to the Schools:* In-person public outreach to schools recommenced and the UCBOE was invited to conduct election equipment demonstrations, mock elections and provide information on the voting process in New Jersey. The UCBOE hosted a mock election for the Hillside High School Student Council and Plainfield High School Student Council. The UCBOE attended civics engagement classes at Kean University to provide equipment demonstrations and information on the voting process.

The UCBOE communicated with all Union County high schools announcing National High School Voter Registration week prior to the close of registration for both the Primary and General elections.

*Public Outreach to Nursing Homes, Rehabilitation Centers and Assistive Living Facilities:* The UCBOE conducted outreach to nursing homes, rehabilitation centers and assistive living facilities to educate social workers and voters on the proper way to complete their vote by mail ballot to ensure voters are not disenfranchised due to errors made by those assisting them. Further, the UCBOE was invited to assist with voter registration at several assistive living facilities.

**Grant Awards:** The Union County Board of Elections was awarded over \$2.4 million dollars in grant funds to administer the Westfield Annual School Board election, 2023 Early Voting administration, fund the secure ballot drop box program, enhance physical security of the Election Board facilities and improve ADA compliance at polling locations.

**IT Infrastructure Upgrades:** The UCBOE upgraded its programming software as well as the firmware on the voting machines, electronic poll books and DS850 paper vote tabulators to ensure the equipment is running on the most current, secure and robust software and firmware available.

The UCBOE contracted with a company to provide a security seal tracking and election equipment inventory software package as well as a project management software suite. Seal security tracking is an important tool in monitoring election security in the field on Election Day. The inventory suite monitors whether or not the seals have been tampered with and allows staff to ensure the equipment was secure on Election Day.

**New Jersey Association of Election Officials:** The Union County Election Board continues to maintain its membership with the New Jersey Association of Election Officials (NJAEIO). The NJAEIO is a professional organization representing Election Boards and Superintendents of Election statewide. The advice from this organization is sought by legislators when drafting legislation and the Division of Elections when promulgating regulations. Additionally, this group is a resource for its members statewide to efficiently and effectively administer election laws.

In 2023, the Election Board Administrator, Nicole DiRado, was re-elected to the Executive Board of the NJAEIO, serving as the Recording Secretary. The Elections Technology Supervisor, Phil Powers, was re-elected to serve as a Regional Vice President representing Middlesex, Somerset & Union Counties in the organization. Representation from Union County is important in this organization when advice is sought to shape policy and regulations as they are being developed.

### **Registration, Elections and Audits**

*Voter Registration:* The UCBOE maintains an active list of 377,593 registered voters, including 16,835 new registrants in 2023. Maintaining the voter registration database is a very tedious task as it is an ever-changing list. Over 200,000 updates to our voters have been made this year which include new registrations, registration transfers, address changes, name changes, political party affiliation changes, deletions due to deaths, inactive confirmations, signature updates and disenfranchisements. Voter update statistics represent the number of times current voter registration profiles have been touched to ensure our voter registry and voter history is current and accurate.

*Union County Elections:* The UCBOE successfully administered the following elections in 2023: Springfield Special School Election in March; Westfield Annual

School Board Election in April; Primary Election in June; General Election in November; and the 2023 Hillside Ward 4 Runoff Election in December.

Early voting was offered for both the Primary Election and General Election.

- The turnout for the Springfield Special School Election was 13.72%, or 1,826 of 13,311 eligible voters.
- The turnout for the Westfield Annual School Board Election was 18.36%, or 4,655 of 25,335 eligible voters.
- The turnout for the Primary Election was 10.15% or 34,241 of 337,479 eligible voters.
- The General and School Board Elections experienced a turnout of 23.84% or 90,148 of the county's 378,173 registered voters, voting in November 7th election.

This year was a low turnout year all around, and so goes the number of vote by mail ballots processed. In the 2023 Primary Election, 12,102 vote by mail ballots were returned and processed. In 2023 General Election, 22,902 vote by mail ballots were received and processed.

Early voting turnout in the 2023 Primary Election was 1,539 voters and 6,930 voters in the 2023 General Election.

Following 2020 Executive Orders providing for an extended time frame for which ballots received through the mail can be counted, the legislature adopted laws which codified the time frame. Specifically, ballots received through the mail within 48 hours without a post mark may be counted and any ballots postmarked on or before Election Day and received within 6 days can be counted.

The county's 434 election districts were housed in 152 polling locations, employing over 1,800 poll workers. Additionally, the UCBOE successfully operated 7 early voting sites countywide over the course of 3 days in the Primary Election and 9 days in the General Election. Each early voting poll worker is required to attend training, specific to early voting.

*Union County Early Voting:* For the first time ever in the 2021 General Election, early voting was offered to voters in an effort to expand voting rights and accessibility to the ballot box in New Jersey.

In accordance with the statute, the UCBOE hosted 7 early voting sites countywide in the Primary Election (June 2 – 4) and the General Election (October 28 – November 5). The sites were located in Cranford, Elizabeth, New Providence, Plainfield, Rahway, Roselle, and Union. The administrator developed policies and procedures, crafted the security plan, purchased equipment and supplies, leased warehouse space and awarded service contracts in order to effectuate early voting in Union County. Fourteen super poll workers and over 150 poll workers were hired, assigned, trained and paid specifically for early voting.

Early voting grant funding was awarded by the state.

Early voting in Union County was a tremendous success. While turnout was low, the policies and procedures designed to facilitate voting in a safe and secure environment proved to be successful.

*Secure Ballot Drop Boxes:* Executive Orders issued in 2020 required the UCBOE to install 13 secure ballot drop boxes for voters' convenience in returning their vote by mail ballot. The UCBOE installed 24 secure ballot drop boxes throughout the county. There is a ballot drop box in each municipality. Additionally, drop boxes were installed on the Kean University campus in Union, the Union County College campus in Cranford and a drop box was installed in front of the UCBOE main office in Elizabeth. The ballot drop boxes are ADA accessible, under 24/7 camera surveillance and available to voters 24/7. The UCBOE picks up the drop boxes and processes containers in accordance with guidelines promulgated by the New Jersey Department of State, Division of Elections. The teams picking up the ballot drop boxes are escorted by officers in the Union County Police Department.

- The Springfield ballot drop box opened on February 17, 2023 for the Springfield Special School Election on March 14, 2023. Springfield voters deposited 218 ballots in the drop box.
- The Westfield drop boxes opened on April 6, 2023 for the Westfield Annual School Board Election on April 25, 2023. Westfield voters deposited 813 ballots in the drop box.
- All 24 ballot drop boxes opened on April 21, 2023 for the 2023 Primary Election. Voters deposited 3,619 ballots in drop boxes for the Primary Election.
- All 24 ballot drop boxes opened on September 22, 2023 for the General Election. Voters deposited 8,652 ballots in the drop boxes for the General Election.

- Finally, the Hillside Drop Box opened November 22, 2023 for the Hillside Ward 4 Runoff Election on December 5, 2023. Voters deposited 73 ballots in the drop box for the Hillside Ward 4 Runoff Election.

The vote by mail ballot drop boxes provided a safe and direct alternative to the postal system.

*Surveillance of the Secure Ballot Drop Boxes:* As previously mentioned, each box is required to be under 24/7 camera surveillance once they are opened and ready to accept ballots through the recount deadline. Further, with so many cameras in place, there needed to be one, consistent process to monitoring the ballot boxes. Post-election activities relative to the surveillance system include harvesting all the servers and downloading and archiving the video onto a secure server housed at the UCPD for a timeframe consistent with the state retention schedule.

*Union County Board of Elections Tally Center:* The UCBOE continued to maintain its tally center at the main office in Elizabeth. In the interest of continued transparency, a livestream feed which was started in 2020, was installed in Elizabeth.

*Post-Election Audits:* The Union County Election Board conducted its post-election audit of the general election pursuant to N.J.S.A. 19:61-9 and guidelines promulgated by the New Jersey Secretary of State. The purpose of a post-election audit is to prove the accuracy of the electronic tally equipment when compared to the voter verified paper audit trail. The voter verified paper audit trail is inherent with vote-by-mail ballots, provisional ballots and voting machines which generate a voter verified paper audit trail. The guidelines required a hand-eye audit of 2% of the batch units created for each legislative district. The contests audited include the State Senate, General Assembly, one countywide contest (Union County Sheriff), and either mayor or town council / township committee. The hand-eye audit was 100% consistent with the results tallied by the vote tabulators and voting machines thereby confirming the statistical accuracy of the election outcomes.

**Spanish Language Election Program:** The Union County Board of Elections and the United States Department of Justice entered into a Consent Decree in May 2023, solidifying a partnership to enhance the county's Spanish Language Election Program. The objective of the Union County Board of Election's Spanish Language Election Program is to ensure compliance with the United States Voters' Rights Act by implementing an effective minority language program for Spanish-speaking and limited English proficient voters. The UCBOE appointed a Spanish

Language Election Program Coordinator (SLEP-C) and an Advisory Board to assist with these efforts.

The Board is charged with increasing its bilingual poll worker workforce for every election in order to assist Spanish-speaking and limited English proficient voters and ensuring all information which is available in English is also available in Spanish. Accomplishments in 2023 include the following:

- Outreach efforts to local organizations including parent groups, teachers and churches, and posting notices for bilingual poll workers in Spanish-speaking establishments and a presence at local street fairs, flag raising events, outdoor concerts and movies and health fairs in locations where bilingual poll worker need is greatest.
- Press releases were issued regarding the need for bilingual poll workers which have been transmitted to Spanish media outlets.
- Reserved paid advertisements in the local Spanish newspaper circulating in the County for bilingual poll workers.
- Contacted county and local party chairs for assistance with hiring bilingual poll workers.
- Worked with the Secretary of State's office and received a commitment from the state to increase paid media on Spanish-speaking radio and television for the recruitment of bilingual poll workers.
- The SLEP-C has reviewed all supplies provided in the Election Day Supply Bag to ensure compliance at polling places on Election Day.
- The SLEP-C has completed an in-office inventory of all voter and resident correspondence templates to ensure compliance with constituent letters. Correspondence is provided in both English and Spanish.
- Published all legal advertisements required pursuant to election statutes in the Spanish newspaper circulating within the County of Union. Legal ads translated into Spanish continue to be posted on the UCBOE's official website.
- Conducted a surname analysis ahead of the 2023 Primary and General Elections to determine which election districts require a minimum number of bilingual poll workers. The day before Election Day, each election district was staffed pursuant to the requirements promulgated by the United States Department of Justice.
- Poll Worker interviews were conducted to ensure bilingual applicants are proficient in both English and Spanish.



- Captions on the virtual poll worker training program were translated into Spanish for bilingual poll workers.
- Paid advertisements include full color, half page ads in La Voz; Comcast commercial which ran from September 7, 2023 through November 5, 2023; Digital ads on NJ.com which ran from September 19, 2023 through November 5, 2023; ads on La Musica / La Mega radio stations.
- Designed, translated and distributed Poll Worker Needed posters and UCBOE Brochures.

**Union County's Vote by Mail Processing System:** UCBOE vote by mail ballot processing system has become more efficient with the redesign of the outer vote by mail envelope. The outer envelope of the vote by mail ballot has finally been redesigned to include a window envelope which allows the voter's identification number and bar code to be visible. The UCBOE purchased a camera and inventory system which attaches to the mail processing machine and captures each voter's bar code. All files and ballots are reconciled, then the file is uploaded into the SVRS. This process allows voters to see immediately on the Track by Ballot website, that their ballot has been received by our office.

Additional staff were trained on the equipment and ballot reconciliation process.

**Polling Locations:** The Union County Election Board continues to seek suitable polling locations which are accessible to voters, ADA compliant and can accommodate all the new voting equipment. Additionally, it is a priority of this Board to reduce the need to use schools as polling locations, and to urge school districts to close on Election Day, which is really the preferable solution.

In 2023, the Election Board was able to relocate three election districts from one school in Mountainside.

The UCBOE coordinates with 152 individual polling sites to administer accessible and convenient elections.

**Poll Workers & Training:** Following the difficulties in hiring poll workers experienced in 2021, the legislature and governor approved an increase in poll worker pay bringing the daily rate to \$300 in 2022; the first rate increase in over 20 years. This was a tremendous win for Election Boards statewide which had been struggling in recent years to retain seasoned poll workers and recruit new poll workers.

As part of the Spanish Language Election Program, the UCBOE conducted an outreach campaign to seek bilingual poll workers. Outreach included communication to the political parties, Union College of Union County, Kean University; distributing posters to local churches, supermarkets; municipal facilities, local businesses, and UC Parks facilities; and a significant paid advertising campaign including digital, cable and radio outreach. Hundreds of new poll workers were hired in 2023, all of whom needed to be trained in-person; as in-person training is required for first timers.

In 2021, the UCBOE developed an online training platform for poll workers. The platform allows poll workers to take the training at their convenience and is available 24/7. The videos capture the new Electronic Poll Books, the Voting Machine and the processes for each facet of administering Election Day. While in-person training is required for first time poll workers, the virtual platform is very popular for new poll workers seeking additional training prior to Election Day. Further, seasoned poll workers can take their biannually-required training remotely.

Poll workers were trained on the new process for issuing provisional ballots in advance of the Primary Election. The process was piloted in the 2023 Westfield Annual School Board Election. Voters are not required to mark their provisional ballot on the voting machine prior to insertion in the provisional ballot envelope. This change was made in the primary in anticipation of election night reporting legislation which would require the UCBOE to report the number of provisional ballots issued on election night. In order to comply with the legislation, the provisional ballot voter needs to be processed in the Electronic Poll Book.

The online training was also updated to include a second set of training courses which provide Spanish subtitles for bilingual poll workers. This program was grant funded by the state.

The Union County Election Board conducted 37 poll worker training classes including classes for first time poll workers, early voting poll workers, early voting super poll workers and Election Day master poll workers. Finally, the Board hosted 16 equipment open houses allowing poll workers hands-on experience with the voting machines and electronic poll books without having to attend a formal training session. The open houses are very popular and well attended.

**Election Legislation & Its Continued Impact:** Some new processes and guidelines put into effect to facilitate the election process during the global

pandemic have been codified into election statutes, which will remain part of our election landscape going forward.

*Early Voting:* For the first time in the 2021 General Election, the state introduced Early Voting, expanding voters' rights in New Jersey. The county opened seven early voting sites countywide, allowing any voter to go to any one of the sites and cast their vote on their specific ballot. Sites are staffed and equipped to manage expected turnout. As it continues to grow with popularity, early voting will become an essential part of our voting culture.

*Election Night Reporting:* New legislation signed in 2023 requires Election Boards to report the number of ballots counted and the number of ballots remaining to be counted from Election Day through certification. In anticipation of the legislation being signed, the UCBOE changed the process for administering provisional ballots so poll workers could be properly trained ahead of the last. The statute requires provisional ballots issued on Election Day to be reported by municipality. The statute also required vote by mail ballots which have been counted to be reported on Election Day, as well as the number of ballots remaining to be counted. This information must be updated daily from election night through certification.

*Secure Vote by Mail Ballot Drop Boxes:* The secure vote by mail drop boxes installed in 2020 will continue to be a part of our election process, available to voters as an alternative to mailing their ballots. Our process of secure transfer of ballots from the drop boxes to the office for processing will continue.

*Signature Cure Law:* For the first time in 2021, voters were able to cure signature deficiencies on their ballot. If a voter did not sign their certificate envelope or their signature did not match what is on file in the State Voter Registration System, the voter was provided an opportunity to cure their ballot. Voters have until 48 hours prior to certification to cure their ballot. The new law requires Board Members to meet regularly starting three weeks before Election Day. Finally, the Board is required to reach out to voters who did not respond to the letter with a phone call or email, if such information is available.

## **2024 Initiatives**

**ADA Compliance:** The Board will continue to work with our local election partners as well as Federal officials to ensure ADA compliance at all polling locations.

**Early Voting:** The UCBOE will continue to work with state and local partners to administer successful Early Voting periods in the primary and general elections. The UCBOE will open 8 early voting sites throughout the county in anticipation of a high turnout for the Presidential Elections.

**Elections:** The Board is prepared to execute the Cranford Special School Election on January 23, 2024, the Westfield Annual School Board Election on April 16, 2024, the 2024 Presidential Primary and General Elections, School Board Elections and any other special elections which may arise during the course of the year.

**Community Outreach:** The Union County Board of Elections will be aggressive in urging residents to register early for the upcoming elections and to confirm their intended party affiliation ahead of the presidential primary election.

The Board will also continue its outreach to rehabilitation centers, nursing homes and assistive living facilities in efforts to ensure residents are not disenfranchised. Outreach to schools will continue as an important lesson in government and civic participation.

The Board will continue its public outreach campaign with respect to the Spanish Language Election Program in order to enhance awareness of the elections process to Spanish speaking and limited-English proficient voters and to augment the bilingual poll worker workforce.

The Election Board will send notice to all Union County voters affected polling location changes.

**Grant Awards:** The Union County Election Board will continue to seek grant awards to enhance elections security and ensure ADA compliance at our polling locations, in addition to awards to fund early voting in order to offset the county's financial obligation.

**Legislative Compliance:** The UCBOE will continue to work with the New Jersey Association of Election Officials, legislative leaders and the New Jersey Division

of Elections as new election laws are being deliberated and ultimately become law to ensure compliance with all elections statutes.

**Outreach for the ExpressVote XL Voting Machines and Electronic Poll**

**Books:** The Union County Board of Elections will resume its voter outreach and poll worker education relative to the new ExpressVote XL Voting Machines and Electronic Poll Books. As the office responsible for the voting machines and executing a smooth election day, it is incumbent upon the Board to continue an aggressive voter education program.

**Poll Workers & Training:** The Board will continue to augment the poll worker workforce, increase bi-lingual poll workers, and seek to employ precinct captains for multi-district polling places to assist with the operation of the new voting equipment.

The UCBOE will continue to revise and improve the online training platform as well as offer in-person instruction to new poll workers.

Finally, the voting equipment open houses are very successful. It is anticipated that many open house opportunities will be available for the 2024 election cycles.

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# **Rutgers Cooperative Research and Extension of Union County**

**Agriculture and Natural Resources**

**Family and Community Health Sciences (FCHS)**

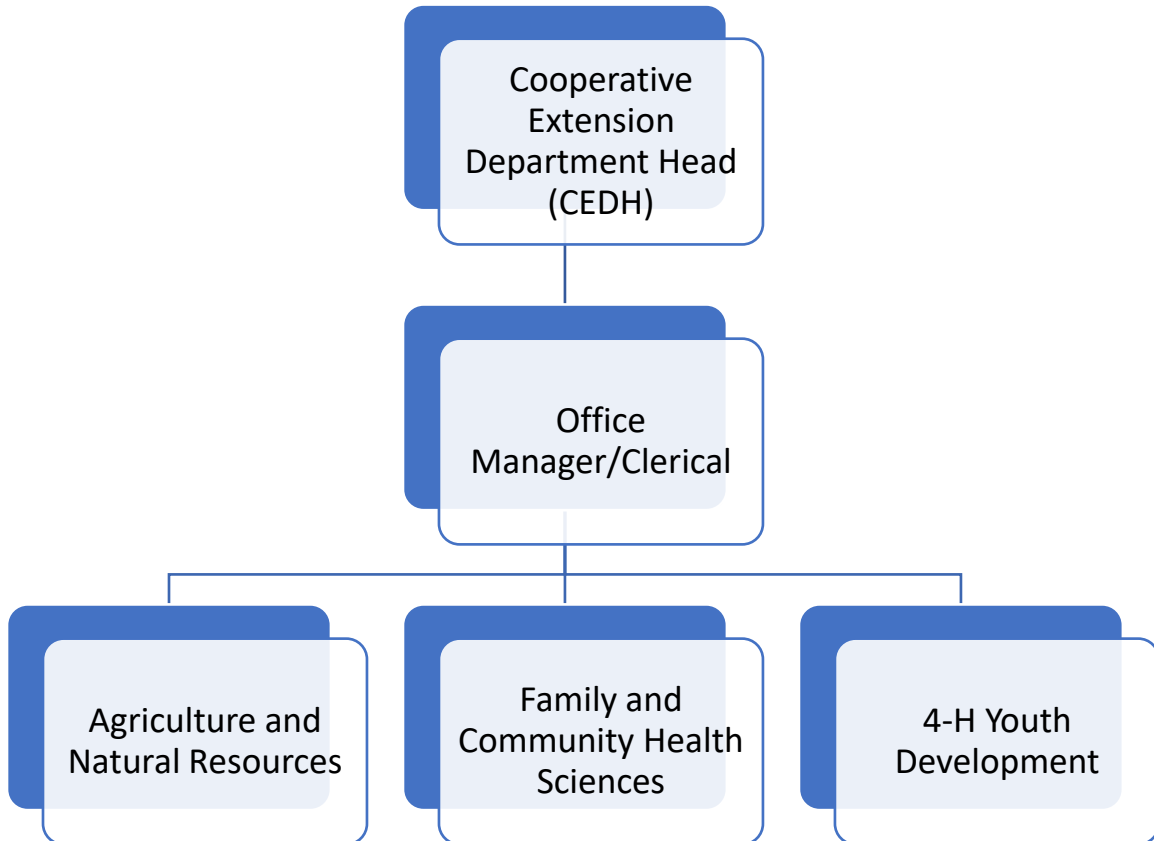
**4-H Youth Development**

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# Organizational Chart

## Rutgers Cooperative Extension







# **RUTGERS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION OF UNION COUNTY**

## **Mission**

The mission of NJAES Rutgers Cooperative Extension is to ensure healthy lifestyles; provide productive futures for youth, adults, and communities; enhance and protect environmental resources; ensure economic growth and agricultural sustainability; and improve food safety, nutrition and health by disseminating science-based knowledge through outreach programs.

## **Programs & Services**

### **Agricultural & Natural Resources Department**

Volunteer Master Gardeners and Environmental Stewards, trained by Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE), provide educational programs and services to residents of Union County.

Earth Day, Every Day Webinar Series continues to offer this free, public series in March, 2024. Recordings are now available online.

Invasive Species and Habitat Restoration initiative working with County Parks & Recreation to train volunteers to eradicate invasive plants as part of the WRIP Strike Force for the Watchung Reservation.

RCE welcomes a new NJDEP AmeriCorps Watershed Ambassador who will plan and implement projects focused on educating the public on protecting water quality and local natural resources.

### **Programs for the County, Municipal and Turf & Landscape Professional Industries**

- *East Asian Longhorn Tick*: RCE continues to serve as a tick submission site for the NJ Department of Agriculture.
- *North Jersey Ornamental Horticulture Conference* provides turf and landscape professionals with research-based information to provide their customers with environmentally sound lawn and landscape services. It enhances professionals 'careers' by offering licensing recertification opportunities.

- *School IPM Coordinator Training:* Over 476 professionals participated in state-mandated School IPM Coordinator training, including representatives from the Union County Educational Services Commission and several county school districts.

### **Family & Community Health Sciences Department**

Health Equity, Diversity and Well-Being are the focus of the Family & Community Health Sciences (FCHS) Department. FCHS provides on-line and in-person workshops, publications, and learning opportunities combining research and practical advice including healthy meals to reduce the risk of chronic disease, improved awareness of environmental health issues and food waste, food safety, health literacy, health finance, and the importance of lifestyle changes for optimum wellness.

- FCHS *Get Moving, Get Healthy, NJ* educational on-line and *Wellness Wednesday* programs emphasize the need for behavior change to improve the health and quality of life of individuals and families.
- The *Small Steps to Health and Wealth*<sup>TM</sup> book, classes, newsletters and on-line programs emphasize health and financial management goals which is part of a nationwide program supported by NIFA/USDA. The book is being updated for a third edition in 2024.

The Union County Chronic Disease Committee of the North Jersey Health Collaborative works to provide on-line needs assessments, conferences and county-wide committees to address important issues of obesity and chronic disease prevention in Union County and New Jersey.

### **4-H Youth Development Department**

- The 4-H Program provides youth with the knowledge, skills, and motivation to function effectively in a global society.
- Youth develop positive attitudes, competencies, and skills through 4-H clubs that are critical for employment and effective citizenship.
- 4-H programs include: Leadership Development, the Master Tree Steward Program, the Summer Science Program, and Life Skill Development weekends, conferences, and camps.
- 4-H facilitates science and horticulture training for afterschool providers and provides programming for Union County Parks Department, and the Union County Shade Tree Department.

## **2023 Accomplishments**

## **Agriculture and Natural Resources**

### **The RCE North Jersey Ornamental Horticulture Conference-62nd Anniversary**

- Turf and landscape professionals, including Union County Parks and Public Works employees, joined colleagues from Bergen, Essex, Passaic, and Morris counties to participate in the return of the live conference at the County College of Morris featuring Rutgers Specialists and industry professionals. Ninety-nine percent (99%) of the 69 turf day participants indicated they will make more informed turf pest management decisions and 93% of 48 tree day participants noted they will make more informed tree management decisions as a result of attending the conference.
- The conference gives professionals an opportunity to learn about university-based research in their field that they can apply to their turf, tree, and landscape practices. Participants received DEP pesticide applicator license re-certification credits. Tree care professionals also received re-certification credits towards their arborist credentials.
- During the pandemic the conference was held virtually and on our 2023 program evaluation survey, we asked how they are using the information presented at the virtual conferences. Participants (33) noted that some practices they have adopted as a result of their attending the virtual sessions were: taking actions to protect water quality while applying fertilizers, (81%) wore protective equipment while applying pesticides, (84%) and calibrating pesticide equipment (90%). All of these actions protect the environment and personal safety of the turf industry professionals. Tree care professionals (19) noted that they could better manage Spotted Lanternfly (78%); use integrated pest management techniques for urban tree care (74%) and conduct risk assessments of trees (69%).

### **School IPM Coordinator Training**

- Madeline Flahive DiNardo is on the team of Rutgers, NJ DEP, and industry professionals who offer this free state-mandated program to all school districts in NJ. During the 22-23 school year, 618 school professionals including administrators, facility and grounds managers, and staff from Berkley Heights, Elizabeth, Fanwood, Plainfield, Scotch Plains, Springfield and Rahway attended the training.

### **Annie's Project NJ Goes Online: Risk Management at the Kitchen Table**

- Agent Madeline Flahive DiNardo was a Co-Principal Investigator for a \$27,521 grant from the USDA Risk Management Education Agency to develop a 6-week online training program for urban and traditional farmers. The evening series was held virtually and focused on minimizing business and personal risks that agricultural enterprises face, including market conditions and climate change. A cohort of 22 female farmers and family members participated in the program, representing a statewide mix of beginner farmers and young farmers transitioning into more management roles in their farm family business. The course, hosted on a Rutgers University Canvas Course site, includes learning objectives, recorded presentations and speaker handouts, resource materials, pre/post quizzes for self-study and assignments.

### **Rutgers Master Gardener Program**

- The Master Gardener volunteer training program was held as a hybrid virtual and in person course January – May 2023 with 24 Union County residents participating in the program.
- Twelve (12) Master Gardeners who completed the program between 2020-2023 achieved the status of Certified Master Gardener, each volunteering for over 60 hours on various projects.

### **Rutgers Master Gardener Service Projects in 2023**

- Eighty (80) Master Gardeners reported a 5,464 hours of volunteer service for calendar year 2023 as of November 2023. These efforts average to about 68 hours per volunteer reporting.
- The Master Gardeners continue to update their public website: <https://mastergardeners-uc.org/>
- The annual Spring Garden Fair was held at the Demonstration Garden at Trailside in May 2023. The fair was attended by 1,002 gardening enthusiasts!
- The Master Gardener Newsletter continues to be published on a monthly basis. Educational Master Gardener continuing education meetings have been held virtually.
- The Garden Helpline is up and running and we began training new volunteers for the helpline. Consumers were glad to consult with our volunteers on their home gardening endeavors!
- Master Gardeners recycled over 500 pounds of plastic through the TREX recycling program. As a result, a new bench made of recycled plastic has been received for the demonstration garden in Trailside.

- The “Introduction to Horticultural Therapy” committee was glad to be able to offer their “hands – on” horticulture classes again. In 2023, the program was offered for Garwood Seniors and Senior Spirit in Roselle.

### **Trailside Greenhouse and Demonstration Garden**

- The “Sharing Garden” committee donated over 1,350 pounds of fresh vegetables, small fruits and herbs to local food pantries. The agencies Master Gardeners partner and serve anywhere from 15 families to 200 individual clients. Some of the agencies distribute the fruits and vegetables, others provide mobile meals, still others cook on site for their clients.
- The “Gardening with Children” committee hosted a field trip for the Winfield Park School and offered weekly programs for the County Parks Summer Camp program.
- The Master Gardener Docents offered tours of the demonstration garden during Wild Earth Fest and to two Girl Scout groups studying pollinators. Community organizations are welcome to request guided tours of the demonstration gardens. A Rutgers Undergraduate student has created signs for the demonstration garden as an internship project. The county sign shop is making the signs for the garden.

### **Native Plant Propagation and Donation**

- Native plants support birds, bees, and are vital for local food webs and ecosystem services. Agent Bakacs continues to partner with Middlesex County Extension to propagate native plants that support pollinators and increase habitat for wildlife. Volunteers help grow plants from seed and local organizations can apply for donations for their habitat conservation projects. 225 plants were donated to organizations in Union County in 2023.
- Agent Bakacs helped Westfield library initiate a new native seed library where residents can have access to native seed to grow plants at home. On May 10th, over 30 Westfield residents attended a “Plant This, Not That” session to learn about native alternatives to invasive plants.
- Agent Bakacs co-authored a new fact sheet titled “Invasive Plants and Native Alternatives to Landscapes” available at <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/fs1353/>

### **Watchung Reservation Invasive Species Strike Force**

- Agent Bakacs continues to coordinate with Union County Parks on invasive species management in the Watchung Reservation

- In 2023, 15 volunteers spent a total of 500 hours removing invasive exotic plants along trails and meadows in the Reservation that are outcompeting native plants. These plants include invasive shrubs, trees, and vines such as Barberry, winged burning bush, Angelica tree, and Bittersweet which are overtaking the Reservation and threatening ecosystem health.

### **Rutgers Environmental Stewards Volunteer Program**

- The program was a hybrid of online and in-person learning focusing on enabling volunteers to take action to protect the environment in their communities. Over 80 Stewards participated in the program state-wide in 2023 contributing over 5,531 impact hours on environmental projects in their communities.

### **Rutgers Earth Day Every Day Webinar Series**

- Agent Bakacs and co-workers continued the popular “Earth Day, Every Day” weekly webinar series. The series focused on steps that everyone could take while at home to protect the environment.
- 2023 programming focused on climate change and included “All the small things with big environmental impacts” and “Renewable energies in the Garden State”. Close to 500 people participated in this programming. All the recordings are online at <https://envirostewards.rutgers.edu/Earth-Day.html>.
- The Earth Day, Every Day program received the 2023 Rutgers School of Environmental & Biological Sciences Team Excellence award.

### **NJDEP AmeriCorps Watershed Ambassador**

- RCE of Union County is the host organization for the NJDEP AmeriCorps Watershed Ambassador for the Arthur Kill watershed management area (known as WMA 7). This area includes the following watersheds: Rahway River/ Woodbridge Creek, Elizabeth River, Piles Creek/Morses Creek, and part of Newark Bay.
- The goal of this program is to promote watershed stewardship through education, direct community involvement and monitoring the health of our waterways through conducting stream assessments.
- Morgan Crouch, our September 2023-July 2024 Ambassador, is targeted to complete 1700 hours of service.
- Examples of her service include tabling with macroinvertebrates, educational materials, and the enviroscape at the Rahway River Fest with the Rahway River Watershed Association.
- ambassador assisted with a cleanup of Patriot Park and Laurel Park with the Springfield Environmental Commission and a cleanup of a part of the

Rahway River Tributary with the Garwood Green Team. She attended a walk of the Houdaille Quarry in Springfield. The ambassador presented the enviroscape to teach non-point source pollution to students at Unity Charter School and macroinvertebrates for the Westfield High School AP Environmental classes. She has attended multiple local environmental commission meetings to plan partnership projects.

## **Family & Community Health Sciences (FCHS) Department**

### **Wellness Wednesdays with FCHS**

- *Wellness on Wednesdays with FCHS* webinars offered on Zoom and WebEx programs will continue through Rutgers Cooperative Extension within the Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Sciences. Programs focus on a variety of topics related to food, nutrition, and healthy lifestyles. These 45-minute programs are presented on Wednesdays at 12:30 pm on Zoom and are free to the public. <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/online-event-series/wellness-wednesdays.php> Programs are archived so they can be viewed at any time.

### **Small Steps to Health and Wealth™**

Dr. Karen Ensle, FCHS Educator/Department Head and Dr. Barbara O'Neill, Financial Specialist, co-authors of Small Steps to Health & Wealth™ continue to provide health and finance messages that are updated monthly on the county website. During 2023 posters were presented at one state and one national online professional conferences.

The Small Steps program includes adult and youth curriculums, webinars, challenges, podcasts, a blog, tweet chats and was cited by USDA-NIFA as “a nationwide Extension Program with impact.” The Small Steps to Health & Wealth™ book is being updated and the 3rd edition will be available in the coming year.

### **Healthy Family Meals**

- Dinnertime is a time of respite from the business of everyday life. Sharing the day's activities is an important part of children's social and emotional development.
- Research has suggested family meals promote healthful dietary intake in youth and reduce obesity during childhood and adolescence. The Department of Family and Community Health Sciences is committed to

families sharing healthy meals. <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/family-meals>. The website offers: Easy, fast, meal ideas, recipes, Facebook live food videos, food safety tips, conversation starters, webinars, fact sheets, and resources.

### **Get Moving, Get Healthy NJ with FCHS**

- FCHS programs encourage healthier eating and improved physical activity for NJ families through multidisciplinary health promotion programs.
- The FCHS Educator provided zoom classes for Jewish Family Services, Provident Bank, Union, Mercer County and Westfield libraries and several Elizabeth agencies. *Visions* quarterly newsletters included reliable health-related topics including chronic disease and obesity prevention topics.
- Several free weekly “Healthy on the Job” and “Healthy at Home” newsletters are available from our FCHS Workforce Wellness and Get Moving, Get Healthy FCHS programs. For more information contact [kensle@njaes.rutgers.edu](mailto:kensle@njaes.rutgers.edu) .

### **Rutgers E-College On-line Classes**

- In 2023, the RCE Department Head taught 49 undergraduate juniors and seniors in the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences (SEBS) a three credit “Wellness Behavior” course to generate funding for statewide Cooperative Extension and to offer a certificate program in FCHS.
- Course evaluations ranged from 4.4 – 4.8 out of a 5.0 scale. This course continues to be taught twice a year and is part of the FCHS Department, 18-credit *Community Health Outreach* certificate program for undergraduate students at Rutgers.

### **Membership on Local Boards**

- RCE Department Head Dr. Karen Ensle is a member of the Union County Chronic Disease Committee of the North Jersey Health Collaborative; the Board of Trustees of Community Access Unlimited, Board of Directors and the Executive Committee of the Gateway Family YMCA, and a member of the Strengthening Families Initiative Stakeholders Committee. Meetings since the beginning of 2022 have been on either Zoom or in person. A full-day sponsored conference was offered on *Building Bridges: Putting Equity at the Center of Health* with Ensle presenting a session on the “MIND Diet for Improved Health”. Conference presentation evaluations were 4.8 out of 5.0 scale. Attendance at the conference was 103 allied health professionals and the public.

### **4-H Youth Development**



**4-H Science Ambassador Program** – *Bringing science education to youth for “out of school” time.*

- In 2023 4-H Offered science programming at the Union, Elizabeth, Plainfield, and Westfield libraries. Topics presented were robotics, engineering, and the scientific method. Programs were well attended with over 150 students participating.
- Assisting with the library programs were five 4-H teenage volunteers that are “4-H Science Ambassadors”. This year the Ambassadors were Sofia Dias and Marisa Duarte from Springfield, Sophia Cornejo from Scotch Plains and Nathaniel Gulland from Westfield.
- The ambassadors spent the week of July 10<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> at Rutgers University. They were trained to assist with outreach programs and explored current research being done at Rutgers.

**4-H from Home** – This program is offered through our website at: <https://nj4h.rutgers.edu/4h-from-home/virtual-step-club.html> and provides a wide variety of learning activities for youth.

**4-H Clubs** – *Developing life skills in youth through a nationally recognized youth development program. The program has been in existence since the early 1900’s and today has over 6 million members nationwide. The 4-Hers – stand for our pledge... I pledge my head to clearer thinking; my heart to greater loyalty; my hands to larger service and my health to better living for my club, community, country, and my world.*

- 120 Union County youth from grades 1 through 12 participated in twelve different 4-H clubs in 2023. Each club focused on a specific interest area such as sewing, cooking, and engineering. The majority of the clubs meet at the Colleen Fraser Building in Westfield. Three clubs met elsewhere including archery that continues to meet at the Union County Archery Range at Oak Ridge Park. The 4-H Outdoors Club meets at the Watchung Reservation along with the 4-H Gardening Club at the Master Gardener’s greenhouse, Trailside in the Watchung Reservation.
- 4-H Club members developed leadership and communication skills through participation in various activities, community service, and serving as club officers.
- 4-H Service activities for the year included: tree plantings at Oak Ridge Park, sandwich making for St. Josephs’ Social Service Center in

Elizabeth, grocery sorting at the NJ Foodbank in Hillside, and assisting with 4-H Public Presentation Night and 4-H Project Night at county locations.

- 4-H Adult Volunteer Leaders are screened and trained by the 4-Agent to facilitate the clubs. Volunteers are taught how to use a hobby to teach children team building, communication, and decision-making skills. There are currently 20 active Volunteer 4-H Club leaders in Union County.

**4-H Public Presentation Night 2023** – *Improving communication skills in youth.* This program was held at the Union County Magnet School on May 20<sup>th</sup>. Forty 4-H members participated and gained confidence in public speaking. Ten volunteer judges provided feedback to the youth.

**Union County 4-H Camp Programs** – *Helping youth develop life skills and outdoor education.*

Thirty-five Union County youth participated in programs held at the Lindley G. Cook 4-H Camp, Branchville, NJ. during 2023.

**Environmental Awareness and Protection** – *Educating youth about the community forests in Union County*

- Educating children about trees is the role of the 4-H Master Tree Stewards. Kudos to twenty adult Tree Steward volunteers for teaching over 1,800 children how to plant and take care of trees. The volunteers completed 20 hours of training, provided by 4-H, prior to teaching. The Tree Stewards also judged poems that had been entered into the Union County Commissioners' Arbor Day Poetry Contest. The Tree Stewards also helped to train students in tree planting and care as part of Union County Commissioners Arbor Day Tree Program.
- In 2023, the Tree Stewards visited classrooms in 19 municipalities and taught children about tree identification, biology, and ecology. Educating youth about trees is crucial to the future of our environment. An end-of-program evaluation showed that as a result of the Rutgers/4-H Class on Tree Appreciation: 71% of students said they were less likely to damage a tree, 90% said they were more likely to take better care of trees around their homes, 86% said they were more likely to take better care of the trees around their schools, 70% said they will observe trees more closely, 69% said they are more likely to plant a tree, 98% said they learned that

there are many different kinds of trees, 84% said they were more likely to stop others from damaging trees, 78% said they want to learn more about tree care and planting, 83% said they will tell someone about what they learned.

### **Union County Commissioners' Arbor Day Tree Program**

Working together, the 4-H volunteers and the Union County Shade Tree Advisory Board implemented the Union County Commissioners' Arbor Day Tree Program. The objective of this program is to increase youth's appreciation for trees by planting and caring for a tree. To this end the program provides free trees to schools to plant for Arbor Day. In 2023, one hundred trees (American Dogwoods) were distributed to public and private schools in Union County. Fifteen schools attended a training session on tree care planting. Trees were purchased with funds from the Union County Commissioners'.

### **Agriculture in the Classroom**

4-H provided tomato plants and strawberry plants to Winfield Public Schools and Union County Vocational and Technical Schools. Additionally, 4-H provided instruction on the planting and care of these plants. Twenty-five 4<sup>th</sup> graders and twenty 9<sup>th</sup> graders participated in the program. 4-H also provided materials and instruction for 4-H youth to grow potatoes in a 5-gallon plastic container.

### **4-H Summer Science Program – *Helping students from low-income areas thrive in school***

- 4-H Science Ambassadors taught at Elizabeth, Union, Rahway and Plainfield libraries during the summer of 2023. At each library they provided 10 hours of programming. They taught sessions about engineering including bridge making; ski jumps; balloon powered cars and gigantic bubbles. Twenty-five youth were taught at each site.

### **Union County 4-H Camp Programs – *Helping youth develop life skills and outdoor education.***

- Twenty youth from Union County attended our 4-H Summer Camp located in Branchville, NJ. Six of the youth received scholarships from the Union County Disc Golf Association.

## **2024 Initiatives**

## **Agriculture and Natural Resource Management**

### **Annie's Project**

- The “Annie Goes Online: Farm Management at your Kitchen Table” course is available to residents engaged in farming or interested in becoming a farmer. To access the course, contact Madeline Flahive DiNardo at [flahive@ucnj.org](mailto:flahive@ucnj.org). Madeline is the new state coordinator for the state-wide program and plans to do a needs assessment of local agencies, professional organizations and community gardeners and farmers to develop future programs that meet the production information and business management needs of farmers.

### **Community Gardening**

- RCE will continue working with schools and community organizations by providing information on establishing and maintaining community gardens.
- The Community Gardening curriculum will continue to be offered as on-line classes via the Rutgers NJAES website, [www.njaes.rutgers.edu](http://www.njaes.rutgers.edu).

### **Greenhouse Facility at Trailside Nature and Science Center**

- The greenhouse provides growing space for the “Sharing Garden” and other Master Gardener projects such as the flower bouquets for distribution at food pantries and horticultural therapy programs. The 4-H horticulture club also uses the greenhouse to learn how to grow houseplants, poinsettias and vegetables.
- The greenhouse will be used as a classroom for Master Gardener students, people with disabilities and the general public. Plans are underway in cooperation with the County Engineering and Parks Department to improve the garden site for accessibility. We look forward to expanding our programming efforts for people with disabilities.

### **Integrated Pest Management Education Programs**

- Integrated Pest Management (IPM) education programs for School IPM Coordinators, County public works, parks and golf course employees, and arborists, turf, landscape professionals will continue to be offered. These programs place an emphasis on the reduction of pesticide use on county, commercial and residential properties.
- The North Jersey Ornamental Horticulture Conference will be held as three full day in-person sessions at the County College of Morris in January 2024.

### **Rutgers Master Gardener Program**

- The Master Gardener Class of 2024 will begin in-person at the RCE office in mid-January and will also be available as an online course for people who are not available Tuesday mornings. There will be workshops in the Demonstration Garden in the spring.
- Master Gardener “Help liners” answer an average of 1,324 inquiries annually on the County’s Garden Helpline, (908) 654-9852 and email [mastergardeners@ucnj.org](mailto:mastergardeners@ucnj.org).
- The volunteer Master Gardener program under the direction of the Agricultural Agent DiNardo will offer educational services, such as gardening programs for people with disabilities and children’s programs in cooperation with the Union County Parks Department.
- Gardening lectures will be held at the demonstration gardens and greenhouse facility for the general public.
- “Docent Tours” of the demonstration garden will be offered to community organizations. Tours of the gardens will be led by trained Master Gardeners.

### **Environmental and Natural Resource Management Initiatives**

- Work with Cranford to implement their Eco-Friendly Yard program for residents in the Spring.
- Continue to manage the native plant nursery and donate plants to local organizations for habitat conservation projects.
- Rutgers Environmental Stewards program will again be offered online, in the evenings to attract more participation starting in late January and running till May.
- Earth Day, Every Day Webinar Series continue to be offered. This free, public series will be held in March, 2024. Recordings are available online.
- Invasive Species and Habitat Restoration initiative- continue to work with County Parks & Recreation to train volunteers to eradicate invasive plants as part of the WRIP Strike Force for the Watchung Reservation.
- NJDEP AmeriCorps Watershed Ambassador planned projects include a spotted lanternfly egg mass removal, multiple stream litter cleanups, and a potential tree planting. She has collaborated with local organizations and schools to conduct stream assessment trainings with students and girl scouts in 2024.

## **Family & Community Health Sciences (FCHS)**

### **Nutrition Education for Adults and Seniors**

The FCHS Educator Ensle will continue to support nutrition education sessions for adults and seniors through collaboration with Rutgers and Montclair State Dietetic Internships, College of St. Elizabeth, and Aramark students. Practical hands-on training is offered through local pantries, senior sites, and community groups.

### **Get Moving, Get Healthy NJ with FCHS Initiative**

*Health Equity, Diversity, and Well-Being in New Jersey*

FCHS continues to offer on-line Zoom or Webex workshops such as the “Blue Zone Diets”, “Mediterranean Diet”, “DASH Diet”, “Small Steps to Eating Well and Moving More”, “Improving Family Meals”. “NEW Dietary Guidelines for Americans”, “Physical Activity for Mature Adults”, “10 Tips for Healthy Eating at Home” “Functional Foods for Life” and chronic disease prevention classes.

### **NJ Empower to Prevent Diabetes Prevention Program**

A FREE, yearlong CDC FCHS diabetes prevention program is being offered through a virtual format on Zoom. Trained CDC Lifestyle Coaches help participants to adapt and maintain healthy eating, physical activity and coping with changes to prevent the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes. A total of 16 weeks of zoom classes and 10 bi-weekly monthly maintenance sessions keep participants on-track. If interested, contact Dr. Ensle [kensle@njaes.rutgers.edu](mailto:kensle@njaes.rutgers.edu) and she will assist you in getting enrolled. Classes to start in April 2024 and run continuously throughout the year on a grant from NJ Department of Health.

### **Balancing Health, Budget, and Lifestyle Education Programs**

Provide programs for consumers on “Eating a Balanced Diet on a Balanced Budget,” “Healthy Eating On-the-Run,” and “Small Steps to Health and Wealth” to assist consumers in making healthy financial and food choices for improved health, savings and debt reduction.

Provide food and nutrition for better health programs with emphasis on reducing food waste, food insecurity along with programs on mindful eating to build healthy habits and reduce stress.

### **Functional Foods for Life Educational Series**

Provide programs that emphasize the research and health benefits of consuming

foods and beverages high in phytochemicals such as tea, chocolate, mushrooms, coffee, berries and fruits/vegetables.

### **Health Equity and Well-Being**

- Provide continued support to agencies, schools, county and city governments for training and supporting local wellness policies to limit foods high in fat, salt and sugar.
- Provide training for developing wellness policies/programs for diverse groups that promote healthier food intake, physical activity and healthy lifestyles.
- Decrease high healthcare costs, and support food security in ending hunger through an emphasis on equity and building new partnerships.
- Continue to build diverse partnerships in the community to help encourage a culture of health and policy changes in Union County.

### **4-H Youth Development**

- The 4-H Master Tree Steward Program will reach 3,000 youth.
- The 4-H Summer Science Program will recruit 10 new teen volunteers and reach over 100 youth.
- The 4-H Club Program will add an additional First Grade Variety Club and continue to recruit new leaders as needed. 4-H will coordinate at least three countywide activities for all 4-H youth.
- Youth enrollment in the 4-H Club Program will increase by 10%.
- Public Presentation Night participation will increase by 5%.
- At least 45 Union County youth will attend 4-H Summer Camp.
- Continue regional teen conference for youth.
- Recruit 10 new Master Tree Steward volunteers.
- Involve 1,000 youth in tree planting.
- Provide guidance along with the Union County Shade Tree Advisory Board on offering the yearly poetry contest.
- Continue to work with other county and school groups to plan and implement Union County Arbor Day Tree Program sponsored by the Commissioners.
- Continue to search for an indoor location for the Union County 4-H Archery Club.

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# Superintendent of Schools

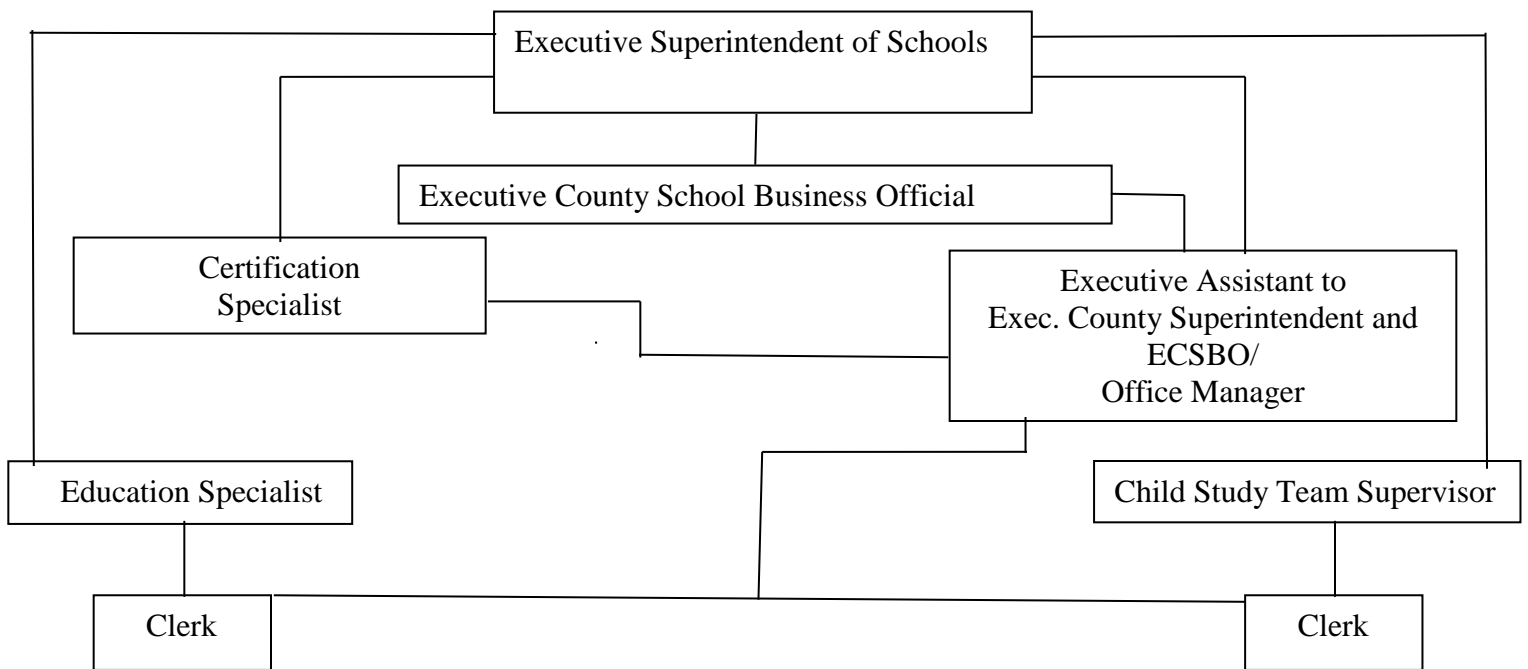
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# Organizational Chart

## Superintendent of Schools Union County Office of Education





# **UNION COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS**

## **The Office of the Executive County Superintendent Union County Office of Education**

### **Mission**

The County Office is led by an Executive County Superintendent and has a core staff, which includes an Executive County Business Official, a County Education Specialist and a County Child Study Supervisor, and county office support staff.

The County Offices of Education are the focal point of general support, oversight and routine communications between local districts and the NJ Department of Education central offices.

### **Programs & Services**

Perform onsite evaluations of school districts every three years in accordance with the NJ Quality Single Accountability Continuum (NJQSAC);  
review and approve district budgets;  
review and approve district administrative contracts;  
review and approve district transportation contracts;  
inspect school buildings to ensure compliance with health and safety codes  
issue county substitute certificates;  
conduct special education program reviews;  
provide technical assistance to school districts, boards of education and parents on a variety of topics; and support districts in responding to questions;  
respond to community, legislative and parental concerns;  
assist Department divisions in securing required data.

a. Review all school budgets of the school districts within the county, and may, pursuant to section 5 of P.L.1996, c. 138 ( C.18A:7F-5 ), disapprove a portion of a school district's proposed budget if he determines that the district has not implemented all potential efficiencies in the administrative operations of the district or if he determines that the budget includes excessive non-instructional expenses. If the executive county superintendent disapproves a portion of the school district's budget pursuant to this paragraph, the school district shall deduct the disapproved amounts from the budget prior to publication of the budget, and during the budget year the school district shall not transfer funds back into those accounts;

- b. Keep informed as to the management, methods of instruction and discipline and the courses of study and textbooks in use, the condition of the school libraries, and the condition of the real and personal property, particularly in respect to the construction, heating, ventilation and lighting of school buildings, in the local districts under his general supervision, and make recommendations in connection therewith;
- c. Advise with and counsel the boards of education of the local districts under his general supervision and of any other district of the county when so requested, in relation to the performance of their duties;
- d. Promote administrative and operational efficiencies and cost savings within the school districts in the county while ensuring that the districts provide a thorough and efficient system of education;
- e. Based on standards adopted by the commissioner, recommend to the commissioner, who is hereby granted the authority to effectuate those recommendations, that certain school districts be required to enter arrangements with one or more other school districts or educational services commissions for the consolidation of the district's administrative services;
- f. Recommend to the commissioner the elimination of laws the executive county superintendent determines to be unnecessary State education mandates, other than the categories of laws set forth in section 3 of P.L.1996, c. 24 ( C.52:13H-3 );
- g. Eliminate districts located in the county that are not operating schools on the effective date of P.L.2009, c. 78 (C.18A:8-43 et al.), in accordance with a plan and schedule included in the plan submitted to and approved by the commissioner;
- h. No later than three years following the effective date of sections 42 to 58 of P.L.2007, c. 63 ( C.18A:7-11 et al.), recommend to the commissioner a school district consolidation plan to eliminate all districts, other than county-based districts and other than preschool or kindergarten through grade 12 districts in the county, through the establishment or enlargement of regional school districts. After the approval of the plan by the commissioner, the executive county superintendent shall require each board of education covered by a proposal in the plan to conduct a special school election, at a time to be determined by the executive county superintendent, and submit there at the question whether or not the executive county superintendent's proposal for the regionalization of the school district shall be adopted. The question shall be deemed adopted if it receives a vote in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.18A:13-5 . If the question is adopted by the voters, then the regional district shall be established or enlarged in accordance with chapter 13 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes;
- i. Promote coordination and regionalization of pupil transportation services through means such as reviewing bus routes and schedules of school districts and nonpublic schools within the county;

- j. Review and approve, according to standards adopted by the commissioner, all employment contracts for superintendents of schools, assistant superintendents of schools, and school business administrators in school districts within the county, prior to the execution of those contracts;
- k. Request the commissioner to order a forensic audit and to select an auditor for any school district in the county upon the determination by the executive county superintendent, according to standards adopted by the commissioner, that the accounting practices in the district necessitate such an audit;
- l. Visit and examine all of the Union County schools, from time to time, under his general supervision and exercise general supervision over them in accordance with the rules prescribed from time to time by the State board;
- m. Permit a district to submit to the voters a separate proposal or proposals for additional funds pursuant to paragraph (9) of subsection d. of section 5 of P.L.1996, c. 138 ( C.18A:7F-5 ), only if: (1) the district provides the executive county superintendent with written documentation that the district has made efforts to enter into shared arrangements with other districts, municipalities, counties, and other units of local government for the provision of administrative, business, purchasing, public and nonpublic transportation, and other required school district services; (2) the district certifies and provides written documentation that the district participates in on-going shared arrangements; or (3) the district certifies and provides written documentation that entering such shared arrangements would not result in cost savings or would result in additional expenses for the district;
- n. Promote cooperative purchasing within the county of textbooks and other instructional materials;
- o. Coordinate with the Department of Education to maintain a real time Statewide and district-wide database that tracks the types and capacity of special education programs being implemented by each district and the number of students enrolled in each program to identify program availability and needs;
- p. Coordinate with the Department of Education to maintain a Statewide and district-wide list of all special education students served in out-of-district programs and a list of all public and private entities approved to receive special education students that includes pertinent information such as audit results and tuition charges;
- q. Serve as a referral source for districts that do not have appropriate in-district programs for special education students and provide those districts with information on placement options in other school districts;
- r. Conduct regional planning and identification of program needs for the development of in-district special education programs;
- s. Serve as a liaison to facilitate shared special education services within the county including, but not limited to direct services, personnel development, and

technical assistance;

- t. Work with districts to develop in-district special education programs and services including providing training in inclusive education, positive behavior supports, transition to adult life, and parent-professional collaboration;
- u. Provide assistance to districts in budgetary planning for resource realignment and reallocation to direct special education resources into the classroom;
- v. Report on a regular basis to the commissioner on progress in achieving the goal of increasing the number of special education students educated in appropriate programs with non-disabled students;
- w. Render a report to the commissioner annually on or before September 1, in the manner and form prescribed by him, of such matters relating to the schools under his jurisdiction as the commissioner shall require;
- x. Perform such other duties as shall be prescribed by law.

Any budgetary action of the executive county superintendent under this section may be appealed directly to the commissioner, who shall render a decision within 15 days of the receipt of the appeal. If the commissioner fails to issue a decision within 15 days of the filing of an appeal, the budgetary action of the executive county superintendent shall be deemed approved. The commissioner shall by regulation establish a procedure for such appeals.

Nothing in this section shall be construed or interpreted to contravene or modify the provisions of the "New Jersey Employer-Employee Relations Act," P.L.1941, c. 100 ( C.34:13A-1 et seq. ), or to limit or restrict the scope of negotiations as provided pursuant to law, or to require an employer to enter into a subcontracting agreement which affects the employment of any employee in a collective bargaining unit represented by a majority representative during the time that an existing collective bargaining agreement with the majority representative is in effect.

Each executive county superintendent shall, on or before December 1 of each year, furnish to the board of County Commissioners of the county a statement of the amounts estimated to be necessary to be appropriated for the ensuing year for:

- a. the compensation of his clerical assistants;
- b. the supplying of furniture, supplies and equipment for his office;
- c. printing;
- d. traveling and other expenses incident to the conduct and the performance of his official duties of his office incurred by him.

The Union County Board of County Commissioners shall fix and determine the amounts necessary to be appropriated for such purposes and shall appropriate the same accordingly.

The commissioners shall appoint an executive county business official to serve in the office of the executive county superintendent of schools for a term of three years. The executive county business official shall assist the executive county superintendent in the performance of the superintendent's duties pursuant to N.J.S.18A:7-8 , and perform such other duties as determined by the commissioner.

Based on criteria developed by the commissioner, the executive county business official shall be subject to a performance assessment at least once during the three-year term. The business official may be re-appointed on the basis of a satisfactory performance assessment.

A local school district may apply to the executive county superintendent of schools to have school district services including, but not limited to, transportation, personnel, purchasing, payroll, and accounting, assumed by the office of the superintendent. If the executive county superintendent determines to assume a service, a fee may be assessed the school district for the service. The executive county superintendent of schools may utilize county special services school districts, jointure commissions, and educational services commissions to provide services to local school boards.

## **2023 Accomplishments**

The Union County Office of Education has created an open-door policy with Union County districts to assist them in all aspects of education. Our open-door policy helps us work with our districts to ensure the long-term success of our students by assisting them in providing each child with educational equity and access to high quality education.

Our goal is to ensure every child succeeds in and out of school, we continue to make strides for education by offering support and leadership to our districts. Our team strives to strengthen teaching, leading and learning, and increase focus on educational equity for all students.

## **2024 Initiatives**

There are many successful changes to the New Jersey Department of Education; they are proven to be a successful part of the Education system. The Union County Office of Education continues to work with all districts within Union County making sure they are acting according to the Fiscal Accountability Regulations and

continues a full cycle of Quality Single Accountability Continuum. As always, we focus on the changes required to code and law.

The Union County Office of Education, along with the New Jersey Department of Education, works together to support our schools, educators and districts to ensure our students have equitable access to high quality education and achieve academic excellence.



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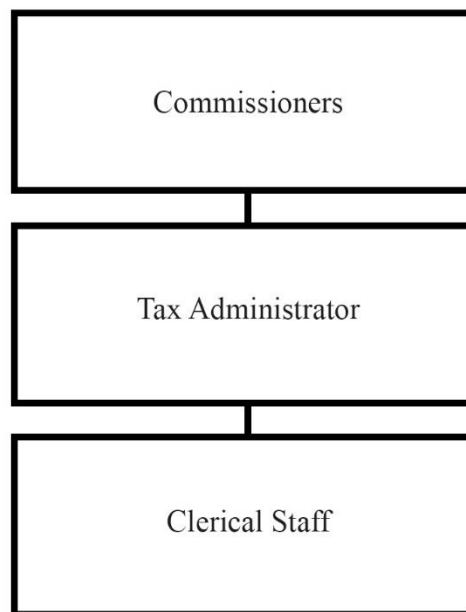
# Board of Taxation

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# Organizational Chart

## Board of Taxation





# **BOARD OF TAXATION**

## **Mission**

The Mission of the Tax Board is to secure the taxable value of all property in the County as prescribed by law in order that all property shall bear its full and just share of taxes.

The Union County Board of Taxation, a state agency with countywide jurisdiction, serves as an agent for the Director of the Division of Taxation; is the first line supervisor of the municipal assessor; is the custodian of the tax lists and other official records; and is the first formal level of appeal from the municipal assessor.

## **Programs & Services**

### **Mandated**

Supervise municipal assessors; equalize municipal assessments for apportionment of County Taxes; calculate municipal tax rates; certify Added & Omitted Assessments; publishes County Abstract of Ratables, Provide SR1-A data and other mandated reports to the Division of Taxation; hear and determine property tax appeals from regular and added assessments.

Prepare public records and make them available to the public, including tax lists; SR1-A sales ratio study.

### **Non-Mandated**

Provide assistance to municipalities, in cooperation with the Department of Administrative Services and by then-Freeholder Resolution in 1986.

Provide on-line computer capability to all 21 municipal assessors' offices at no charge, including the printing of all tax lists, extended tax duplicates, tax bills, assessment notices, senior citizen post-tax year statements, tenant rebate notices, and various other lists or reports as required.

## **2023 Accomplishments**

In 2023 the Union County Board of Taxation received 1,084 tax appeals. This was a decrease of 116 appeals from 2022. The number of appeals decreased

in 2023 as a result of an ever-appreciating real estate market. The number of appeals filed electronically continues to consistently hover around 70%. The Board also received 33 added assessment appeals which it heard and adjudicated. Once again, the Tax Board was able to successfully conduct all of its tax appeal hearings virtually for our 21 municipalities, providing a safe and convenient way for tax payers to be heard.

Also in 2023, the Tax Board, along with the State Division of Taxation, continued to monitor the ongoing revaluation program in the City of Elizabeth. It is anticipated, as ordered by the State of New Jersey, that Elizabeth's revaluation will be officially placed on the books effective for 2024. The Tax Board is expecting a significant increase in tax appeals as a result.

In anticipation of the City of Elizabeth's revaluation, the Board updated its website by repositioning its most used features and simplifying its interface.

Additionally, the Board of Taxation also participated in facilitating several of the Chairman's property tax relief programs for seniors and veterans in 2023.

Lastly, the Tax Board processed 9,414 deeds in 2023. This was a decrease of about 22% from 2022 and the recent height of real estate transactions. With increasing interest rates sales have slowed as this number reflects.

## **2024 Initiatives**

In 2024, the Union County Board of Taxation anticipates a significant increase in the number of tax appeals filed as a result of the implementation of the City of Elizabeth's revaluation program.

Spurn out of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Tax Board has successfully continued conducting tax appeal hearings virtually. This process has allowed a safe and convenient way for tax payers to be heard, while still providing a thorough and complete review of assessments. This option will prove significantly important, given the anticipated increase in appeal volume.

The Board also worked with its online appeal vendor to make several improvements to the appeal filing system, thereby making it easier to navigate and more user-friendly.

As always, the Board will continue to review assessments in all municipalities and order revaluations when required.

Lastly, the Tax Board is always striving to improve upon its technology infrastructure and work processes in order to meet its statutory obligations to provide fair assessments and service to the residents of Union County.