

**Public Meeting of the Union County Workforce Development Board**  
**The Hill Tavern, 3 Golf Dr, Kenilworth, NJ 07033**  
**9:00AM Wednesday, February 7, 2024**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Board Members Present**

Dr. Kamran Tasharofi, Union County Healthcare Associates (Chair)  
Stan Robinson Jr., SHR Marketing, LLC (Vice Chair)  
Debbie Ann Anderson, Union County Department of Human Services (Melissa Lespinasse)  
James R. Brady, The Savor Group  
Curry Bucu, Trinitas Regional Medical Center  
Richard Capac, Crowne Property Management  
Juanito Chiluisa, NJ Department of Labor  
Jessica Cohen, Bristol-Myers Squibb  
Craig Coughlin, Kean University  
Melynda Disla, Gateway Family YMCA  
Gloria Dunham, Qunnection Management  
Bernadette Griswold, Community Access Unlimited (Allison Sanchez)  
Dr. Margaret McMenamin, Union College of Union County, NJ (Dr. Lisa Hiscano)  
Timothy McConway, Steamfitters Local 475  
Daryl Palmieri, Union County Schools K-12  
Erich Peter, Union County Economic Development Corp  
Gwen Ryan, Union County Vocational Technical School  
Morgan Thompson, Prevention Links (Dominique Garnett)  
Courtney Villani, Villani Bus  
Roshan White, UA Local 24 Plumbers

**Board Members Absent:**

Hilary McCarron, Port Authority (Secretary)  
Paul Belardo, KML Carpenters  
Jenny Davis-Toth, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey  
Edward Faver, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services  
Salvador Garcia, MAS Development Group  
Teresa Soto-Vega, PROCEED  
Alan Rutan, Rutan Mechanical LLC

**General Counsel:**

Kraig M. Dowd Esq., Weber Dowd Law, LLC

**County of Union:**

Ed Oatman, Union County Manager  
Amy Wagner, Department of Economic Development  
Sergio Granados, Union County Commissioner  
Antonio Rivera, Workforce Development Board  
Meredith Barracato, Workforce Development Board  
Gina Tuesta, Workforce Development Board  
Lisa Bonanno, Workforce Development Board  
Robert Croom, Union County American Job Center  
Perle Almeida, Union County American Job Center  
Nasrene Mondol, Union County American Job Center  
Stephanie Hodges Johnson, Union County Division of Social Services  
Amedio DiCosmo, Union County Division of Social Services

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Arvind Arneja, Union County Division of Social Services  
Jeffrey Jackson, Union County Department of Human Services

**Guests:**

Isaias Rivera, Union College of Union County, NJ  
Ana Marie McNamara, Union County Vocational Technical School  
Tony Staynings, Edison Job Corps  
Patricia Robertson, New Jersey Department of Labor  
Raul Ludizaca, New Jersey Department of Labor  
Carolina Sarria, New Jersey Department of Labor  
Sabrina Sullivan, New Jersey Department of Labor  
Damaris Cruz, New Jersey Department of Labor  
Anthea Williams, New Jersey Department of Labor  
Ingrid Macias, New Jersey Department of Labor  
Julienne Cherry, United Way of Greater Union County  
Harry Jones, InRoads to Opportunities  
Sarah Antonelli, Plainfield Public Library  
Julio Sabater, Workforce Advantage

**I. Call to Order & Welcome**

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Kamran Tasharofi, Chairman Workforce Development Board, at 9:10 AM.

**II. Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America was recited.

**III. Open Public Meetings Act**

Lisa Bonanno read the Open Public Meetings Act Statement below into the record:

PURSUANT TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF N.J.S.A. 10:4-10 OF THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT, ADEQUATE NOTICE OF THIS MEETING OF THE UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD HAS BEEN GIVEN BY MAILING THE YEAR 2024 ANNUAL MEETING SCHEDULE TO THE NEWSPAPERS CIRCULATING WITHIN THE COUNTY OF UNION AND DESIGNATED TO RECEIVE SUCH NOTICE, AND BY POSTING THE YEAR 2024 ANNUAL MEETING SCHEDULE IN THE COUNTY COURT HOUSE, THE UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD WEBSITE, AND BY FILING THE YEAR 2024 ANNUAL MEETING SCHEDULE WITH THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK.

FURTHERMORE, ADEQUATE NOTICE OF THE LOCATION OF THIS MEETING HAS BEEN GIVEN BY PROVIDING AT LEAST FORTY-EIGHT HOUR NOTICE TO THE NEWSPAPERS CIRCULATING WITHIN THE COUNTY OF UNION AND DESIGNATED TO RECEIVE SUCH NOTICE AND BY POSTING THE SAID NOTICE AT LEAST FORTY-EIGHT HOURS PRIOR TO THIS MEETING IN THE COURT HOUSE, THE UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD WEBSITE, AND BY FILING THE NOTICE AT LEAST FORTY-EIGHT HOURS IN ADVANCE OF THIS MEETING WITH OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK.

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THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT STATEMENT SHALL BE ENTERED IN FULL IN THE MINUTES OF THIS MEETING.

**IV. Roll Call**

Lisa Bonanno conducted the roll-call of the Union County Workforce Development Board members in attendance. Union County employees present and guests were acknowledged on the record, as reflected on page one of these minutes.

**V. Approval of the Minutes**

The minutes of the September 27, 2023 meeting were presented for a vote.

**BOARD  
ACTION**

**Erich Peter** made a motion to approve the meeting minutes for September 27, 2023. **James Brady** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**VI. UCWDB Report**

Director Rivera's presentation provided an overview of the requirements for Workforce Development Board certification in accordance with New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission guidelines. He emphasized aspects such as board membership, budget compliance, and transparency, advocating for thorough review and appointment of board members to various committees within the Union County Workforce Development Board. The significance of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among key stakeholders was stressed, outlining the operational framework and joint funding arrangements for American Job Centers. Additionally, preparations for the upcoming Annual Fiscal Review by the New Jersey Department of Labor & Workforce Development Office of Internal Audit were outlined, emphasizing the need for meticulous financial reporting and adherence to audit recommendations, particularly regarding timesheets, employee allocation, and inventory control. In terms of budget updates, Director Rivera highlighted the current status of program years 22 and 23 budgets, noting that approximately 19% of the program year 23 funding had been spent as of December 31, 2023. He also discussed the risk of unexpended funds from program year 22, which had to be spent by June 30, 2024, to avoid returning them to the New Jersey Department of Labor. Detailed UCWDB report attached to meeting minutes.

Chairman Tasharofi inquired about plans to allocate the remaining funds, to which Director Rivera explained that recommendations for budget allocation include career service opportunities through the American Job Center.

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Melissa Lespinasse added that unexpended funds include encumbrances for active contracts and training, emphasizing the ongoing efforts to utilize program year 22 funds before they expire.

Director Rivera stressed the importance of transparency and accountability, noting that reported encumbrances may not accurately reflect actual expenditures, which could lead to funds being returned unexpectedly.

Chairman Tasharofi suggested presenting data comparisons at every meeting to track spending progress leading up to June 30, 2024.

Richard Capac proposed disclosing ongoing negotiations and potential expenditures to keep the board informed, which Director Rivera provided examples of agreements with partners such as the United Way of Greater Union County and Union County Vocational Technical School which will be presented during the resolution discussion.

Sergio Granados emphasized the need to include already allocated funds in the reports to provide a clearer picture of actual spending, which Melissa Lespinasse acknowledged, stating that the current unobligated amount is \$722,000 as of the meeting date.

Director Rivera reiterated the role of the operator in reporting budget allocations and recommendations, listing various service options available for those in need in Union County, including adult education and literacy in partnership with Union College, customized training, entrepreneur training, apprenticeship training, partnership with Job Corps, youth work experience and supportive services, career counseling and guidance. These services comprised a menu of options that could be explored by the operator and the Department of Human Services to aid those in need in Union County.

Emphasizing the pivotal role of the operator within Union County's workforce development framework, Director Rivera clarified that, under the law, his role as the workforce development director precluded direct program operation. Instead, the selected one-stop career center assumed this responsibility. The operator's duty entailed overseeing all services, ensuring seamless integration among partners, and adhering to state and strategic plans. Director Rivera stressed the importance of active management between meetings and advocated for constant communication among partners without direct involvement from the board or his office. He recommended the creation of a 2024 meeting schedule to satisfy state monitoring requirements. Ultimately, he reiterated that the operator bore the primary responsibility for service delivery, with the board providing technical assistance when requested but refraining

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from direct involvement in operational functions. Melissa Lespinasse noted that under the Department of Human Services out of the office of the director, they would coordinate integrated service delivery in collaboration with all partners and affiliates.

Director Rivera discussed the WorkFirst New Jersey Work Participation Rate through December of 2023, highlighting Union County's low participation rate. He mentioned ongoing discussions with the Department of Human Services to address communication gaps and data transmission issues. He emphasized the need for corrective action to ensure compliance with state and federal laws regarding service provision for benefit recipients. Melissa Lespinasse acknowledged their collaborative efforts in improving access to social services and addressing system entry challenges for program participants. She asked Jeffrey Jackson to elaborate on the Work First New Jersey (WFNJ) side of the discussion.

Jeffrey Jackson mentioned the low participation rates are due to the state's removal of social services sanctions for non-participation. He highlighted the need for corrective action and explained the systems used to track participation. Jeffrey Jackson explained that through retirements, quiet exits, after COVID, they have lost a lot of knowledge and with the state giving waivers they cannot sanction people. Additionally, Jeffrey Jackson discussed issues with the E-time sheet system and mentioned a plan to retrain staff and regain access.

Jessica Cohen inquired about the existence of a metric delineating tasks to be completed within two months, thereby establishing a trajectory aligned with expected outcomes. She emphasized the importance of a data-driven approach to ensure that fluctuations in progress could be understood based on metrics and actions taken. Jeffrey Jackson confirmed a 30, 60, and 90-day plan but stressed it is not a quick fix and addressed the gradual nature of improvements. Jeffrey Jackson noted clients needed to participate in an evaluation comprised of approximately 60 pages. It typically took around two hours to conduct an evaluation per person. Last week, they sent 49 letters, with 38 or 39 individuals responding for interviews to undergo reassessment.

Melissa Lespinasse mentioned ongoing sanctions on the general assistance side have shown improvements in the participation rate. Jessica questioned the correlation between sanctions and participation, to which Jeffrey affirmed a positive correlation.

Chairman Tasharofi pointed out that the challenges they faced were likely experienced by other counties as well. He questioned whether they knew what Hudson did differently since their participation rate was significantly higher at

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14% than theirs. Jeffrey Jackson admitted his lack of knowledge about the strategies employed by other counties, emphasizing that they had been focused on analyzing and improving their own system.

Melissa Lespinasse noted the variability in county structures and operations, highlighting that while some counties implemented incentives, larger and more urban counties tended to follow similar trends. She mentioned the importance of addressing these disparities and possibly standardizing certain aspects of the system.

Gloria Dunham asked about streamlining the evaluation process, to which Jeffrey explained that clients engaged in the system for over a year undergo a more comprehensive evaluation to identify barriers to participation in various activities such as job readiness programs. Jeffrey mentioned clients cannot participate in different activities at the American Job Center, which has occupational training and you have to be job ready. He emphasized the need to assess barriers like housing or mental health issues, noting that some clients might not disclose all relevant information upfront.

Courtney Villani observed a high success rate in reaching individuals, with 38 out of 50 letters resulting in contact. She recognized the challenges of supporting and regrouping individuals amidst complexities. Melissa Lespinasse praised staff efforts in reaching out to a vulnerable population, despite unpredictable outcomes. She also noted ongoing efforts to rebuild teams within the American Job Center (AJC) and social services due to retirements or resignations. Courtney Villani acknowledged the achievement, considering the rapid changes in contact information.

Richard Capac commended the initiative to organize activities over 30, 60, and 90 days, recognizing the constraints on reaching out to other counties due to time and resources. He emphasized the collective goal of improving outcomes and suggested seeking ideas from other counties to avoid lagging behind. Richard Capac acknowledged the potential for misunderstanding metrics and highlighted the importance of clarity in their assessment of performance.

Director Rivera clarified that both federal and state requirements for the TANF population were set at 50%, indicating that half of those receiving benefits must engage in activities unless exempted. Director Rivera clarified that "Work ready" denoted readiness to participate in a work activity rather than readiness for employment. Participation in activities, such as job search, was mandated by federal law as part of benefit reception. Exemptions existed for things such as medical reasons albeit subject to negotiation. The Division of Social Services held authority over determining work readiness, not other entities like the American

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Job Center or Workforce Advantage. Director Rivera stressed the importance of retroactively inputting data to ensure compliance with the 60-month service delivery limit for TANF recipients, as failing to record participation could adversely affect clients.

Amy Wagner highlighted that being sanctioned meant losing benefits, a consequence individual aimed to avoid by responding.

Jessica Cohen suggested it might be better to explore what other counties are doing. She proposed asking questions to identify any obstacles hindering the return of people to work. Cohen emphasized the importance of understanding what other counties with similar demographics were implementing, suggesting that there might be beneficial practices worth adopting. She advocated for conducting surveys across various counties to gather insights and potentially streamline choices for effective support systems.

Nasrene Mondol mentioned one of their MIS experts reported that the total number of participants statewide was 186. She noted that despite being the lowest in terms of data reflection, it was a statewide issue under consideration.

Arvind Arneja mentioned that he used data to compile the denominator report, which was crucial in analyzing the data. Upon reviewing the data, he observed discrepancy, with 19 participants. Matching this data would credit 19 more participants. Additionally, there was an undocumented population that needed proper incorporation into the system, potentially increasing the participation rate to 9.7 percent, ranking seventh in the state rather than 21st. Additionally, including previously excluded activities would provide more information and increase in participation rate.

Director Rivera noted a central concern raised was how to avert a recurrence of the problem, particularly the loss of contact with clients over a two-year period. Emphasizing the need for both the board and partners to remain vigilant, it was underscored that losing contact with clients was unacceptable, especially considering the state's last ranking in client engagement. Despite acknowledging the challenges posed by COVID, the focus remained on addressing and preventing such issues in the future. Highlighted were the strategies to re-engage clients, enhance training opportunities, and foster collaboration among partners and clients to ensure awareness of the One Stop's services. Director Rivera stressed the urgent need for an operational plan to be devised by the American Job Center to address these critical issues going forward.

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Chairman Tasharofi commended the description provided by Arvind Arneja, indicating how it offered insight into data improvement prospects. He inquired about a potential timeline for the matching process. Arvind Arneja explained that matchings were already underway but would take approximately two months to reflect in the system. By April, improvements from data inputted in January should be noticeable, with full data matching expected by May. Arvind elaborated on the impact of certain initiatives such as the Mental Health Initiative (MHI) and the Substance Abuse Initiative (SAI), which significantly contribute to the overall figures. He outlined plans to check for health referrals and implement changes to ensure accuracy, emphasizing ongoing training efforts and the dedication of the team to maintain positive trends observed over the past two decades.

Robert Croom, mentioned that Debbie Ann Anderson, and the American Job Center and Department of Social Service team collaborated to devise a plan to prevent similar occurrences in the future. Numerous staff members underwent training to assist individuals in finding training opportunities or job placements. The disconnect between the American Job Center and Department of Social Service stemmed from the absence of sanctions, but over the last two months, they held meetings with the state and formulated an internal plan. This plan aims to ensure the continuity of services even after staff retirements.

**Resolutions of the UCWDB**

Meredith Barracato transitioned the conversation to the following resolutions that need approval.

**Resolution No. 2024-01:**

**RESOLUTION OF THE UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD CONCURRING WITH THE DECISION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TO APPROVE THE 2024 COST ALLOCATION PLAN.**

Meredith Barracato highlighted that the purpose of the cost allocation plan is to identify shared goods and services, explain allocation methods, and ensure equitable distribution of funds.

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2024-01**. **James Brady** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2024-01**. **Stan Robinson Jr.** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Resolution No. 2024-02:**

**RESOLUTION OF THE UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD CONCURRING WITH THE DECISION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TO AWARD A CONTRACT FOR THE PROVISION OF AN AFFILIATE AMERICAN JOB CENTER**

**BOARD ACTION**



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**PROVIDER FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH SERVICES PURSUANT TO THE WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT.**

Meredith Barracato recognized Union County Vocational Technical School's thorough proposal, highlighting the success of the Simon Youth Academy program. The evaluation committee selected them due to their experience with 14 program elements, alignment with board of education requirements, and understanding of out-of-school youth barriers and needs.

Gwen Ryan and Daryl Palmieri abstained from **Resolution No. 2024-02.**

**BOARD ACTION**

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2024-02. Stan Robinson Jr.** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2024-02. James Brady** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Resolution No. 2024-03:**

**RESOLUTION OF THE UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD CONCURRING WITH THE DECISION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TO AWARD A CONTRACT FOR THE PROVISION OF AN AFFILIATE AMERICAN JOB CENTER PROVIDER FOR IN-SCHOOL YOUTH SERVICES PURSUANT TO THE WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT.**

Meredith Barracato mentioned that the United Way of Greater Union County submitted a comprehensive proposal that focused on a holistic approach in providing services to in school youth by offering an 8-week program that focuses on educational support career development in addition to the various 14 youth elements.

**BOARD ACTION**

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2024-03. Erich Peter** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2024-03. Richard Capac** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Resolution No. 2024-04:**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD AWARDING A CONTRACT TO WEBBER DOWD LAW, LLC, FOR THE PROVISION OF GENERAL COUNSEL SERVICES.**

Meredith Barracato noted Weber Dowd Law submitted a thorough proposal that details their extensive experience previously working with the Union County Workforce Development Board in addition to various government agencies. Services offered by the legal team include federal and state guidance on implementing Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act regulations.

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**BOARD  
ACTION**

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2024-04**. **Stan Robinson** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2024-04**. **Erich Peter** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Resolution No. 2024-05:**

**RESOLUTION OF THE UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD  
AUTHORIZING PAYMENT FOR THE ANNUAL FUTUREWORKS BI SUBSCRIPTION.**

Meredith Barracato mentioned that every year the Union County Workforce Development Board receives funding from the New Jersey Department of Labor for the annual subscription fee for the FutureWorks software which is used to analyze and monitor Union County's performance measures.

**BOARD  
ACTION**

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve Resolution No. 2024-05. **James Brady** made a motion to approve Resolution No. 2024-05. **Melissa Lespinasse** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Resolution No. 2024-06:**

**RESOLUTION OF THE UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD  
AUTHORIZING PAYMENT TO THE GARDEN STATE EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
ASSOCIATION FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN COMPLIANCE WITH STATE  
MANDATES FOR PROGRAM YEAR 2023.**

Meredith Barracato noted that New Jersey Department of Labor requires the Workforce Development Board to allocate funding for professional development. Specifically, 1% of the PY23 funding should be provided to the Garden State Employment and Training Association which offers professional development opportunities to board members, staff and providers.

**BOARD  
ACTION**

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2024-06**. **Stan Robinson Jr.** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2024-06**. **Richard Capac** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

VII. **American Job Center Report**

Perle Almeida gave a presentation on the American Job Center. She began by discussing the number of CASAS tests administered, which were required for clients to proceed with services. 710 individuals attended orientation, 600 completed data work registrations, 150 took the CASAS tests, and 66 were deemed eligible for adult and dislocated worker services. Then, she provided a brief overview of counseling services in 2023, including 129 individual plans created and 60 stackable credentials completed. Additionally, she outlined in-demand training contracts in categories such as self-care, transportation,

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technology, cosmetology, and human resources. Job search and placement services were also highlighted.

Erich Peter asked if there were any resources for individuals who did not pass the CASAS testing. Perle mentioned that they provide remediation to bring clients up to the required level for successful training. They also offer alternatives like Workforce Learning Links to enhance digital literacy or on-the-job training opportunities. Perle emphasized the importance of sitting down with individuals to determine suitable options while preparing them for formal vocational training.

Courtney Villani asked what is the average age. Perle discussed the eligibility criteria for adults, mentioning that it starts at 18 years old. She explained that while they have been offering training services to individuals transitioning from youth programs, they mainly receive youth during the summertime after work experience programs. They offer alternative opportunities in fields like healthcare, providing pathways for career advancement such as Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), and Registered Nurse (RN) programs. However, she noted that their current focus is primarily on adult learners. Perle also agreed to provide a breakdown of their demographics next time.

Courtney Villani expressed concerns about individuals who have been out of school for a long time, suggesting that they might feel apprehensive about testing due to fear of failure. She highlighted the potential impact of failure on their willingness to pursue further education and courses.

Nasrene Mondol commented that many youths aspire to pursue college education rather than vocational training. She noted the distinction between youths opting for college experiences and adults returning to up-skill themselves for employment in in-demand fields. While adults primarily seek specific in-demand training programs, the youth generally desire a more traditional college experience. Sergio Granados asked Nasrene Mondol for clarification to which she elaborated on her statement.

Perle highlighted that their training typically spans from four to 12 months, with some programs like medical assisting or medical billing and coding lasting up to 24 months. The duration depends on the specific program, with transportation programs often lasting about four months due to delays in scheduling road tests. They've noticed a demand for project management training among dislocated workers and interest in hands-on fields like heating and air conditioning and construction, which they accommodate based on individual preferences. Robert added that they consider individual barriers such as childcare or

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homelessness that may arise during training, which could extend the timeframe for some clients. Perle mentioned that they are mandated to offer supportive services, including assistance with transportation, to help clients succeed in their training and job placement.

James Brady asked if there was a military component in this equation. Perle Almedia mentioned Veterans get priority of service and they work with the state of New Jersey who offer them a whole menu of services.

Sergio Granados mentioned that they recently awarded a contract with New Jersey Reentry, which serves both veterans and the homeless population, as well as individuals reentering society after being incarcerated. He highlighted the program's focus on assisting veterans and those seeking employment services. Sergio also acknowledged that it was Perle's last meeting before her retirement and wished her success.

Perle Almeida continued by presenting the current numbers for occupational training, indicating 63 dislocated workers and 41 adults were trained in 2022. Expenditures totaled \$219,256 for dislocated workers and \$126,151 for adults. For Program Year 2023, there were three transportation classes with eight dislocated workers and three adults. The projected charges were \$40,000 for dislocated workers and \$15,000 for adults, with two pending enrollments. The business development team organized nine job fairs, with 781 attendees and 70 employed individuals. They conducted an expungement clinic that expunged 62 records and held a business summit with 132 businesses in attendance. Six individuals were on job training with Union College, and plans for job fairs in 2024 were outlined. They also partnered with the New Jersey Reentry Corporation to assist reentry clients in transportation training. In partnership with Urban League, they opened a financial opportunity center with a dedicated financial coach at the Elizabeth location. Additionally, ongoing youth work programs and reports from various partners were discussed, including Employment Services, Title II programs, and individuals enrolled in various services.

Perle Almeida directed everyone to go to UCNJ.org under American Job Center tab for more information about job fairs. Robert Croom added job fair information will also be posted on the county's social media pages.

VIII. **Old Business**  
No Comments

IX. **New Business**  
Gloria Dunham shared updates on her endeavors and disclosed her role as the founder and executive director of a nonprofit called Sisters United Enterprise. The

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organization secured a federal a renewable energy initiative grant, which will be utilized for conducting workshops in various locations. These workshops will focus on solar and offshore wind turbine technologies, representing a new initiative in the state. Gloria assured that she would share further information and communicate details about the training sessions and workshops with the group.

X. **Public Comments**

Julienne Cherry, the President and CEO of the United Way for Union County, expressed gratitude for the funding received from the resolution. She acknowledged the organization's reliance on such funding to fulfill its mission and thanked the group for their support.

XI. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Dr. Kamran Tasharofi at 10:50 am.

**Meeting Schedule:**

**9:00 AM, Wednesday, April 17, 2024**

**Location:**

The Hill Tavern at Galloping Hill, 3 Golf Dr, Kenilworth, NJ 07033