

**Public Meeting of the Union County Workforce Development Board**  
**The Hill Tavern, 3 Golf Dr, Kenilworth, NJ 07033**  
**9:00AM Wednesday, April 17, 2024**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Board Members Present**

Dr. Kamran Tasharofi, Union County Healthcare Associates (Chair)  
Stan Robinson Jr., SHR Marketing, LLC (Vice Chair)  
Hilary McCarron, Port Authority (Secretary)  
Debbie Ann Anderson, Union County Department of Human Services  
James R. Brady, The Savor Group  
Juanito Chiluisa, NJ Department of Labor  
Craig Coughlin, Kean University  
Melynda Disla, Gateway Family YMCA  
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  
Gwen Ryan, Union County Vocational Technical School (Janet Behrman)  
Morgan Thompson, Prevention Links (Emily Newton)  
Teresa Soto-Vega, PROCEED  
Roshan White, UA Local 24 Plumbers

**Board Members Absent:**

Paul Belardo, KML Carpenters  
Curry Bucu, Trinitas Regional Medical Center  
Richard Capac, Crowne Property Management  
Jessica Cohen, Bristol-Myers Squibb  
Jenny Davis-Toth, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey  
Gloria Dunham, Qunnection Management  
Erich Peter, Union County Economic Development Corp  
Patricia Williams, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services  
Salvador Garcia, MAS Development Group  
Alan Rutan, Rutan Mechanical LLC  
Courtney Villani, Villani Bus

**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  
Nasrene Mondol, Union County American Job Center  
Lillian Roman, Union County American Job Center  
Carolina Marin, Union County American Job Center  
Latoya Bennet, Union County Division of Youth and Children Services

**Public Meeting of the Union County Workforce Development Board**  
**The Hill Tavern, 3 Golf Dr, Kenilworth, NJ 07033**  
**9:00AM Wednesday, April 17, 2024**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

Hawa Bonds, Union County Division of Youth and Children Services  
Melissa Lepinasse, Union County Department of Human Services  
Jeffrey Jackson, Union County Department of Human Services  
Rhonda McClain, Union County Division of Social Services

**Guests:**

Isaias Rivera, Union College of Union County, NJ  
Ana Marie McNamara, Union County Vocational Technical School  
Raul Ludizaca, New Jersey Department of Labor  
Carolina Sarria, New Jersey Department of Labor  
Isabel Jimenez, New Jersey Department of Labor  
Oswaldo Arango, New Jersey Department of Labor  
Anthea Williams, New Jersey Department of Labor  
Ingrid Macias, New Jersey Department of Labor  
Juanita Vargas, United Way of Greater Union County  
Patricia Banks, Plainfield Public Library  
Scott Kuchinsky, Plainfield Public Library  
Julio Sabater, Workforce Advantage  
Esther Lavarin, NJ Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired  
Dr. Reinaldo Santiago- Herreno, Arc of Union County  
Carla Donegan, New Jersey Higher Education Student Assistance Authority

**I. Call to Order & Welcome**

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Kamran Tasharofi, Chairman Workforce Development Board, at 9:05 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**

Meredith Barracato 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

**Public Meeting of the Union County Workforce Development Board**

**The Hill Tavern, 3 Golf Dr, Kenilworth, NJ 07033**

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

**MEETING MINUTES**

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.

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

**IV. Roll Call**

Meredith Barracato 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 February 7, 2024 meeting were presented for a vote.

**BOARD  
ACTION**

**Stan Robinson Jr.** made a motion to approve the meeting minutes for February 7, 2024. **James Brady** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**VI. UCWDB Report**

Director Rivera began his presentation by discussing the concept of the Learning and Employment Record, emphasizing its emergence as a digital wallet for resumes, which is gaining traction in both the public and private sectors. This new trend aims to consolidate all educational and skill-based training information securely, potentially using blockchain technology to ensure data integrity and verifiability. Director Rivera highlighted the shift towards a skills-based economy, influenced by AI and large companies like Google and Microsoft offering their own credentialing programs. He stressed the importance of adapting to this change, noting that traditional college enrollment is declining.

Director Rivera then moved on to the Stronger Workforce for America Act, which reauthorizes the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Passed by the US House of Representatives and currently under Senate consideration, this act mandates that 50% of workforce funding be allocated to individual training accounts and upskilling. The reauthorization includes a Critical Industry Skills Fund for emerging local needs and emphasizes accountability and transparency in workforce training. Director Rivera noted the renaming of 'out-of-school youth' to 'Opportunity Youth' and a greater focus on work-based learning and apprenticeships, especially in coordination with unions.

Director Rivera addressed the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 and its impact on SNAP and TANF programs. The age limit for General Assistance recipients

**Public Meeting of the Union County Workforce Development Board**  
**The Hill Tavern, 3 Golf Dr, Kenilworth, NJ 07033**  
**9:00AM Wednesday, April 17, 2024**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

required to participate in work activities was raised to 54, and the emphasis shifted towards skills and employment training outcomes. Director Rivera expressed concerns about budget projections for the new fiscal year, highlighting proposed funding cuts and the challenges posed by the state's delay in budget approvals. He explained the efforts to address these issues through resolutions and strategic spending to ensure compliance and continued support for the TANF and General Assistance populations. Director Rivera pointed out that, despite having an 18-month contract, they were being judged based on a five-month performance, which had been significantly delayed due to the state's efforts. Director Rivera noted that on May 1st, the Workforce Development Board would not have any money, and no vendor would have funds for any services moving forward.

Tim McConway asked what will the Workforce Development Board do after May 1<sup>st</sup> deadline. Director Rivera explained that his task after the meeting was to draft a letter to the NJ Department of Labor detailing their current situation. He stated that without additional funding, they would be unable to provide services through their partners. Director Rivera mentioned that internal discussions included talking to Debbie Ann Anderson, director of the Department of Human Services, and they agreed that the American Job Center would have to take on the burden of support. However, he acknowledged that there were limits to what could be done and emphasized the need to be realistic about the circumstances. Ideally, he hoped to receive a letter from the state the following week confirming additional funding, as their lack of funds was a result of the state's actions.

Stan Robinson Jr. asked how did the other counties compare to Union County in regards to the budget cuts. Director Rivera highlighted significant challenges related to federal mandates requiring benefit recipients to participate in work activities, such as job searches or community service, which were suspended during the pandemic but reinstated on April 1st. He emphasized that this reinstatement caused an influx of participants while local funding was being reduced, leading to widespread frustration and systemic issues across New Jersey. Director Rivera expressed concern that the state had not adequately addressed these challenges, risking the collapse of the entire system due to unrealistic demands being passed down from federal to state and local levels. Debbie Ann Anderson noted that the federal government was pressuring the state because New Jersey ranked in the bottom 10 for performance under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). She explained that the entitlement programs, such as TANF, are not meant to last indefinitely, with a five-year limit for recipients to achieve self-sufficiency. The state was urged to reevaluate its approach to moving people towards self-sufficiency using the funds allocated for workforce development.

**Public Meeting of the Union County Workforce Development Board**  
**The Hill Tavern, 3 Golf Dr, Kenilworth, NJ 07033**  
**9:00AM Wednesday, April 17, 2024**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

Chairman Tasharofi raised a concern about individuals abusing the system for general assistance by obtaining medical exemptions without valid proof. He highlighted that some people claim unverifiable ailments like back pain to avoid participating in mandatory programs. Chairman Tasharofi suggested that the current process, which allows exemptions based on medical documentation, might be too lenient and easily manipulated. He questioned how this issue could be addressed to prevent abuse.

Rhonda McClain responded by explaining that their division relies heavily on medical professionals' assessments and does not have the expertise to judge medical validity independently. However, she assured that any suspected fraud is thoroughly investigated by a fraud investigation unit, which involves legal actions and potential prosecution. Rhonda McClain acknowledged the high cost of these investigations and suggested that the form for medical exemptions could be made more stringent to deter fraudulent claims. She mentioned that they could propose these changes to the state, as the current forms and policies are mandated by state and federal guidelines.

Tim McConway raised concerns about medical practitioners involved in fraudulent activities, similar to the issue of doctors prescribing unnecessary medications. He suggested creating a system to flag practitioners proven to be fraudulent, thus requiring patients to seek a second opinion. Tim McConway believed this approach would reduce paperwork and prevent repeated offenses by these practitioners, ultimately protecting insurance plans and reducing fraudulent claims impacting the membership.

Chairman Tasharofi responded by noting that policing such activities was beyond their scope, as state authorities and the FBI handle licensing and investigations of inappropriate medical practices. He agreed, however, with the idea of requiring a second opinion and adding a statement to forms to hold doctors more accountable. Chairman Tasharofi acknowledged that fraudulent approvals by certain doctors could significantly impact self-funded insurance plans and emphasized the need for due diligence, second opinions, and thorough investigations to address such issues effectively.

**Resolutions of the UCWDB**

Meredith Barracato transitioned the conversation to the following resolutions that need approval. Kraig Dowd, General Counsel, spoke briefly about resolutions 2024-07, 2024-08, and 2024-09, highlighting that each resolution authorized the execution of agreements between the board and the county. He reminded the attendees that last year, the board awarded three separate contracts for AJC-related services: operator, adult dislocated workers, and

**Public Meeting of the Union County Workforce Development Board  
The Hill Tavern, 3 Golf Dr, Kenilworth, NJ 07033  
9:00AM Wednesday, April 17, 2024  
MEETING MINUTES**

youth workers. This change from a single contract to three separate ones was due to new regulatory requirements. Kraig Dowd, along with County Counsel, thoroughly reviewed and reformed the contracts to ensure they were comprehensive, fair, and included appropriate checks and balances to address past implementation issues.

**Resolution No. 2024-07:**

**RESOLUTION OF THE UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A CONTRACT FOR THE PROVISION OF ONE STOP OPERATOR (AMERICAN JOB CENTER OPERATOR) OF COMPREHENSIVE ONE STOP CAREER CENTER SERVICES.**

**Debbie Ann Anderson abstained from Resolution No. 2024-07.**

**BOARD  
ACTION**

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2024-07**. **Stan Robinson Jr.** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2024-07**. **Hillary McCarron** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Resolution No. 2024-08:**

**RESOLUTION OF THE UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A CONTRACT FOR THE PROVISION OF COMPREHENSIVE ONE STOP CAREER CENTER SERVICES TO ADULTS AND DISLOCATED WORKERS.**

**Debbie Ann Anderson abstained from Resolution No. 2024-08.**

**BOARD  
ACTION**

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2024-08**. **Stan Robinson Jr.** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2024-08**. **Craig Coughlin** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Resolution No. 2024-09:**

**RESOLUTION OF THE UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A CONTRACT FOR THE PROVISION OF COMPREHENSIVE ONE STOP CAREER CENTER SERVICES TO YOUTHS.**

**Debbie Ann Anderson abstained from Resolution No. 2024-09.**

**BOARD  
ACTION**

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2024-09**. **Juanito Chiluisa** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2024-09**. **Stan Robinson** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Resolution No. 2024-10:**



Public Meeting of the Union County Workforce Development Board  
The Hill Tavern, 3 Golf Dr, Kenilworth, NJ 07033  
9:00AM Wednesday, April 17, 2024

MEETING MINUTES

RESOLUTION OF THE UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD AMENDING THE CONTRACT WITH THE COUNTY OF UNION DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES FOR THE PROVISION OF COMPREHENSIVE ONE STOP CAREER CENTER SERVICES TO ADULTS AND DISLOCATED WORKERS.

Debbie Ann Anderson abstained from Resolution No. 2024-10.

BOARD ACTION

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2024-10**. **Teresa Soto-Vega** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2024-10**. **Stan Robinson Jr.** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Resolution No. 2024-11:**

RESOLUTION OF THE UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD AUTHORIZING THE TRANSFER OF WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT (WIOA) EXPENSES FROM PROGRAM YEAR 2023 TO PROGRAM YEAR 2022.

BOARD ACTION

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2024-11**. **Teresa Soto-Vega** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2024-11**. **Stan Robinson Jr.** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Resolution No. 2024-12:**

RESOLUTION OF THE UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD AUTHORIZING PAYMENT OF INDIRECT COSTS.

BOARD ACTION

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2024-12**. **Timothy McConway** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2024-12**. **Stan Robinson Jr.** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Resolution No. 2024-13:**

RESOLUTION OF THE UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD AMENDING ITS AGREEMENT WITH WORKFORCE ADVANTAGE TO AWARD ADDITIONAL TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE TO NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF) FUNDING.

Chairman Tasharofi, Debbie Ann Anderson and Lisa Hiscano abstained from Resolution No. 2024-13.

BOARD ACTION

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2024-13**. **Stan Robinson Jr.** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2024-13**. **James Brady** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Resolution No. 2024-14:**

RESOLUTION OF THE UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD AWARDED FUNDING TO THE PLAINFIELD PUBLIC LIBRARY.

Public Meeting of the Union County Workforce Development Board  
The Hill Tavern, 3 Golf Dr, Kenilworth, NJ 07033  
9:00AM Wednesday, April 17, 2024  
MEETING MINUTES

**BOARD  
ACTION**

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2024-14**. **Stan Robinson Jr.** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2024-14**. **James Brady** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Resolution No. 2024-15:**

**RESOLUTION OF THE UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD AUTHORIZING PAYMENT TO THE GARDEN STATE EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ASSOCIATION.**

**BOARD  
ACTION**

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2024-15**. **Hillary McCarron** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2024-15**. **James Brady** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Resolution No. 2024-16:**

**RESOLUTION OF THE UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD AUTHORIZING THE USE OF COMPETITIVE CONTRACTING PROCEDURES FOR THE PROCUREMENT OF AFFILIATE AMERICAN JOB CENTER OPERATORS FOR WORKFIRST NEW JERSEY SERVICES.**

**Chairman Tasharofi and Lisa Hiscano abstained from Resolution No. 2024-16.**

**BOARD  
ACTION**

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2024-16**. **Stan Robinson Jr.** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2024-16**. **Teresa Soto Vega** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Resolution No. 2024-17:**

**RESOLUTION OF THE UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD AUTHORIZING THE USE OF COMPETITIVE CONTRACTING PROCEDURES FOR THE PROCUREMENT OF AN AFFILIATE AMERICAN JOB CENTER SITE PROVIDER FOR CAREER SERVICES TO ADULTS AND DISLOCATED WORKERS UNDER THE WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT.**

**Chairman Tasharofi and Lisa Hiscano abstained from Resolution No. 2024-17.**

**BOARD  
ACTION**

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2024-17**. **Stan Robinson Jr.** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2024-17**. **Hillary McCarron** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Resolution No. 2024-18:**

**RESOLUTION OF THE UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD AUTHORIZING THE USE OF COMPETITIVE CONTRACTING PROCEDURES FOR THE PROCUREMENT OF AN AFFILIATE AMERICAN JOB CENTER PROVIDER FOR OUT-OF-**



Public Meeting of the Union County Workforce Development Board  
The Hill Tavern, 3 Golf Dr, Kenilworth, NJ 07033  
9:00AM Wednesday, April 17, 2024

MEETING MINUTES

SCHOOL YOUTH SERVICES UNDER THE WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT.

Daryl Palmieri abstained from Resolution No. 2024-18.

BOARD  
ACTION

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2024-18**. **James Brady** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2024-18**. **Roshan White** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Resolution No. 2024-19:**

**RESOLUTION OF THE UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD AUTHORIZING THE USE OF COMPETITIVE CONTRACTING PROCEDURES FOR THE PROCUREMENT OF AN AFFILIATE AMERICAN JOB CENTER PROVIDER FOR IN-SCHOOL YOUTH SERVICES UNDER THE WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT.**

Daryl Palmieri abstained from Resolution No. 2024-19.

BOARD  
ACTION

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2024-19**. **Roshan White** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2024-19**. **James Brady** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Resolution No. 2024-20:**

**RESOLUTION OF THE UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF AN RFP OR RFQ FOR WIOA SUPPORTIVE SERVICES CLEARINGHOUSES AND/OR PROVIDERS.**

BOARD  
ACTION

Chairman Tasharofi requested a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2024-20**. **Stan Robinson Jr.** made a motion to approve **Resolution No. 2024-20**. **Lisa Hiscano** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

VII. **American Job Center Report**

Robert Croom presented an update on the establishment of the operators committee, detailing the initial meetings held in March. The Department of Human Services, serving as the system operator, initiated discussions to foster relationships with core partners. They focused on understanding client experiences and breaking down barriers within the system through Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) to enhance information sharing.

Robert Croom highlighted key performance statistics for Program Year 2023, noting that while many registered for services, a significant number did not complete the eligibility process. He emphasized the importance of assessments in preparing clients for training and shared data on employment placements

**Public Meeting of the Union County Workforce Development Board**  
**The Hill Tavern, 3 Golf Dr, Kenilworth, NJ 07033**  
**9:00AM Wednesday, April 17, 2024**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

and spending distribution. The presentation also covered various job fairs and their outcomes, including the challenges faced, such as language barriers at the Union College and airport job fair.

Robert Croom discussed the on-the-job training program noting that Carolina Marin and Isaias Rivera developed a comprehensive presentation for employers to clarify the process and ensure proper paperwork completion. This initiative aimed to improve outcomes for both customers and organizations by guiding employers through the necessary steps for on-the-job training eligibility.

Hawa Bonds, Director for the Division of Children and Youth Services, discussed the progress of the in-school and out-of-school youth programs, highlighting the roles of United Way of Greater Union County and Simon Youth Academy as key providers. United Way has successfully enrolled seven in-school youth, demonstrating the challenge of recruiting and supporting this vulnerable group. She noted that Simon Youth Academy has made great strides with 21 out-of-school youth enrolled and certified, all of whom completed the CASAS and NJ CAN test, with an upcoming graduation on June 13th. Hawa Bonds also mentioned efforts to use PY22 funds to co-enroll youth aged 16 and older in both youth and adult services. Stan Robinson Jr asked Hawa Bonds to explain what certification entailed. In response to Stan Robinson Jr.'s question, Hawa Bonds clarified that certification involves ensuring all necessary documentation is complete and testing for academic levels to provide necessary support. Additionally, Simon Youth Academy is on track for a 100% graduation rate this year.

Juanito Chiluisa reported that the number of customers they handled had increased from 286 to 346 per week, despite operating from the Plainfield office due to issues at the Elizabeth office. Unemployment services had also seen a rise, with their monthly customer count growing from 1100 to around 1486. He advised directing customers to the unemployment website for queries and mentioned that many were requesting the 1099-3 form for tax purposes, which they had to print themselves.

James Brady inquired about the status of the Elizabeth office, to which Juanito Chiluisa indicated that he could not disclose details but suggested the AJC director could provide information. Amy Wagner, Deputy County Manager, then explained that there were potential mold and other issues in the Elizabeth office, which were being investigated by an engineering firm which was doing an exhaustive review of the building to see what might need to be remediated and what situations actually exist. They expected more detailed information on necessary repairs the following week.

**Public Meeting of the Union County Workforce Development Board**  
**The Hill Tavern, 3 Golf Dr, Kenilworth, NJ 07033**  
**9:00AM Wednesday, April 17, 2024**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

Isaias Rivera's discussed the recent achievements and activities of Union College of Union County, NJ over the past three months. He expressed excitement about a major job fair that attracted over 900 attendees, necessitating the use of an additional floor due to the large turnout. The event aimed to help people find employment, and Union College of Union County, NJ trained over 44 students in workplace readiness and individual career services. Isaias Rivera emphasized the importance of employer engagement, mentioning efforts to inform employers about available services such as on-the-job and incumbent worker training. He acknowledged the need for repetition in communication to reinforce the benefits of these services. Isaias Rivera also noted the success in job placements and the goal of improving job placement rates through better data capture from job fairs.

Dr. Lisa Hiscano's focused on the accomplishments of the Title II Consortium for Adult Basic Skills and Literacy, led by Union College of Union County, NJ with partners including Workforce Advantage, Elizabeth Public Schools, and Literacy in New Jersey. Over the past period, they served 827 individuals, with 709 enrolled in ESL, ESL Civics, or integrated education and training programs. She highlighted their success in leveraging funding from both Title II and an opportunity partnership grant from the Department of Labor to offer a supply chain management principles program for higher-level English language learners. This program provided technical training alongside contextualized English language support, resulting in eight students earning industry credentials from the Council for Supply Chain Management Professionals since January. The pilot program's success has paved the way for its future offerings, maximizing the available funds.

Stan Robinson Jr. congratulated Robert Croom on the success of the job fairs and raised a concern about potentially underreported employment numbers resulting from these events. Debbie Ann Anderson responded by explaining their twofold process for tracking employment outcomes: they reach out to both employers and customers. While they generally have more success obtaining information from hired customers than from employers, their back-end team persistently follows up with attendees a few weeks after the job fair to gather details on their employment status, job positions, and earnings.

Robert Croom added that they are establishing agreements with companies participating in the job fairs to set clear expectations for reporting employment outcomes. These agreements will specify a timeframe for employers to provide updates on who has been hired. This measure is being taken because some employers have been unresponsive in the past, and setting expectations aims to ensure better reporting and accountability from the participating companies.

**Public Meeting of the Union County Workforce Development Board**  
**The Hill Tavern, 3 Golf Dr, Kenilworth, NJ 07033**  
**9:00AM Wednesday, April 17, 2024**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

Director Rivera noted that the national push for the Learning and Employment Record strategy would help solve the tracking and data concerns.

VIII. **Old Business**

No Comments

IX. **New Business**

Debbie Ann Anderson reported that Union County saw a 30% increase in from 2023 to 2024 applications and participants, and the number of individuals on TANF rose from 777 in January to nearly 800, compared to under 500 last year. She noted that more people are seeking services due to federal mandates requiring participation in work activities to retain benefits. Debbie Ann Anderson highlighted the need to prepare for this influx, including translating resources into Spanish, Creole, and Arabic. She mentioned that social services have already seen over 2000 Creole-speaking families, with an expected increase to 20,000-25,000 by the end of 2024, prompting efforts to partner with bilingual Creole speakers to better serve these clients.

X. **Public Comments**

No Comments

XI. **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Dr. Kamran Tasharofi at 10:55 am.

**Meeting Schedule:**

**9:00 AM, Wednesday, June 12, 2024**

**Location:**

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