

UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD  
PROGRAM YEAR 2024

# PY 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

## UNION COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

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*A Service of the Union County Board of County Commissioners*

Program Year 2024  
(July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025)

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## INTRODUCTION

The Union County Workforce Development Board (UCWDB) proudly presents the Program Year 2024 Annual Report, reflecting a year of significant transformation as our local economy navigated complex challenges while embracing new opportunities for growth and innovation. Guided by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the New Jersey Combined State Plan for Program Years 2024-2026, our initiatives this year have focused on responding to evolving labor market conditions, strengthening career pathways in high-demand industries, and expanding services for individuals with barriers to employment.

Program Year 2024 marked a pivotal period characterized by what our strategic analysis has termed a "churn economy" - simultaneous workforce restructuring across key industries alongside robust hiring in emerging sectors. This dynamic environment required the UCWDB to adopt a more responsive, data-driven approach to service delivery, particularly in addressing the displacement of workers in professional services while capitalizing on growth opportunities in healthcare, bio-manufacturing, and logistics.

This report highlights key achievements, including preparation for the two-year local plan modification, comprehensive policy reforms addressing NJDOL evaluation findings, strategic investments in youth programming, and the enhancement of our American Job Center system. Each accomplishment stands as a testament to our commitment to creating a workforce ecosystem where opportunities are accessible, skill development is prioritized, and economic mobility is a reality for all Union County residents.

## STRATEGIC PLAN VISION

The Union County Workforce Development Board operates under a four-year strategic plan for 2022-2026, developed in alignment with the New Jersey Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Combined State Plan. Throughout Program Year 2024, the UCWDB continued implementing its strategic priorities while preparing for the required two-year plan modification, integrating real-time labor market intelligence and addressing critical shifts in the local economic landscape.

The strategic planning efforts in PY 2024 pivoted our strategy from general career pathways to a specialized "Rapid Response & Reskilling" framework designed to manage specific workforce displacement while realigning residents with the technical requirements of the innovation economy. Key elements of the strategic plan include:

- Bio-Pharma Pivot: A dual-track strategy addressing simultaneous layoffs and hiring at major employers through targeted reskilling programs
- Healthcare Career Pathways: Expanded bridge programs addressing prerequisite skills gaps for nursing and allied health credentials
- Foundational Skills Enhancement: Integrated education and training models combining basic skills with occupational training
- Enhanced Employer Engagement: Implementation of WIOA reauthorization employer incentives and expanded work-based learning contracts
- Commuter Bridge Initiative: Pilot transportation assistance program connecting residents in high-unemployment areas to job centers

## SETC CERTIFICATION

The Union County Workforce Development Board continues to operate under its 2024-2026 certification approved by the New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) on July 1, 2024. This certification affirms the board's dedication to managing workforce development programs in alignment with both state and federal standards.

To maintain certification, the Union County WDB adhered to the guidelines set forth in SETC Policy Resolution #2020-02, maintaining a membership structure that complies with WIOA Section 107 requirements. The WDB Chairperson remains a business representative, and business members constitute the required 51% majority of the board. The board submitted comprehensive documentation, including updated performance metrics and financial audits to fulfill ongoing SETC requirements.

# MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING AND INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING AGREEMENT

The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDOL) approved the Union County Workforce Development Board's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) for the 2024-2026 program cycle. The UCWDB maintains the MOU between the UCWDB and the Union County Board of County Commissioners to ensure continued compliance with NJDOL policies including NJWIN WD-PY21-6 (Local Governance under WIOA), NJWIN WD-PY24-1 (Sanctions Procedures), and NJWIN WD-PY24-2 (WIOA and WFNJ Budget Guidelines and Requirements).

The MOU establishes the formal collaborative structure among mandated partners, including Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs; Title II Adult Education and Literacy; Title III Wagner-Peyser Employment Services; and Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation services. The IFA delineates financial commitments of each partner to sustain the shared infrastructure of Union County's workforce system, specifying how partners share costs for the American Job Centers and other essential infrastructure.

## CORE VALUES

The Union County Workforce Development Board remains committed to aligning its workforce development strategy with the core values outlined in the New Jersey WIOA Combined State Plan PY 2024-2027. These values, as reflected in the Union County Strategic Plan 2022-2026, serve as guiding principles:

**Career Pathways and Industry-Credential Attainment:** We emphasize supporting individuals in identifying and pursuing career pathways aligned with their interests and skills, with a renewed focus on healthcare, bio-manufacturing, and logistics credentials identified as priorities in our labor market assessment.

**Integrated Service Delivery through One-Stop Centers:** We strive to create seamless and comprehensive service delivery by expanding integration within our One-Stop Centers, with the County Department of Human Services serving as One-Stop Operator to facilitate co-enrollment with TANF, GA, and SNAP programs.

**Utilization of Technology:** We recognize the importance of technology in optimizing operations, including the FutureWorks BI platform for data-driven decision-making and preparation for state data system modernization initiatives.

**Increased Access to Services:** We are dedicated to expanding access to services, with particular attention to geographic disparities between job centers and unemployment concentrations in Elizabeth and Plainfield.

**Strong Employer Engagement:** We actively engage with employers through expanded OJT and Incumbent Worker Training contracts, work-based learning partnerships, and implementation of the Pay-for-Performance contract strategy policy.

**Comprehensive Evaluation and Systematic Oversight:** We go beyond national performance standards by implementing robust evaluation metrics and ensuring systematic oversight, including response to NJDOL evaluation findings and corrective action implementation.

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## HIGHLIGHTS OF KEY RESOLUTIONS

In Program Year 2024, the Union County Workforce Development Board made substantial strides in strengthening the workforce system through comprehensive policy reforms, strategic planning, and enhanced program development. These efforts reflect the Board's dedication to addressing NJDOL evaluation findings while adapting to the evolving needs of Union County's economy.

### Program Funding and Resource Allocation

In Program Year 2024, UCWDB managed a comprehensive \$5.3 million budget strategically directed toward core workforce initiatives. Funding allocations reflect the Board's commitment to serving diverse populations while responding to emerging economic challenges:

Program Area	PY 2024 Allocation
WIOA Adult Services	\$1,011,143
WIOA Dislocated Worker Programs	\$1,256,553
WIOA Youth Services	\$1,043,662
Work First New Jersey - TANF	\$1,215,656
WFNJ - GA/SNAP Programs	\$798,013
Data Reporting and Analysis	\$12,971
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$5,337,998</b>

*Source: NJDOL Notices of Award dated June 7, 2024. PY 2024 WIOA funds must be 80% obligated by June 30, 2025 and fully expended by June 30, 2026. WFNJ funds must be fully expended by June 30, 2025.*

### Adult Literacy Innovations Program

The Board adopted a measure allocating \$450,000 for the Adult Literacy Innovations Program. The resolution distributes funding among consortium partners: UCNJ Union College receives \$133,334, while Workforce Advantage and Plainfield Public Library each receive \$133,333. Additionally, Workforce Advantage receives \$50,000 for supportive services. Partners are mandated to co-enroll participants in WIOA or WFNJ activities to create comprehensive career pathways.

### Cost Allocation Plan

The Board formally adopted the Cost Allocation Plan in compliance with Uniform Guidance (2 CFR 200) and NJDOL mandates. The approved framework utilizes a Quarterly Time Distribution Analysis with staff time allocations of: 23.04% for TANF, 21.09% for WIOA Adult, 20.07% for Dislocated Workers, 16.66% for WFNJ/SNAP, 14.24% for Out-of-School Youth, and 4.90% for In-School Youth.

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### **Establishment of AI Strategy Subcommittee**

The Board approved creation of the AI Strategy Subcommittee, an ad hoc body under the Executive Committee designed to prepare the local workforce for the transformative impact of artificial intelligence. The subcommittee is tasked with assessing emerging technologies, identifying high-growth opportunities, developing training programs for AI-assisted productivity and strategic decision-making, creating career pathways tailored to Union County residents, and establishing implementation protocols aligned with state and federal initiatives.

### **Summer Youth Work Experience Program**

The Board authorized acceptance of the State Fiscal Year 2025 Summer Youth Work Experience Program grant with a total budget of \$1,950,000, aiming to serve 480 youth countywide. The program provides 200 hours of paid work experience, career readiness training, and stipends of up to \$3,400 per participant. Funding allocates \$1,205,000 to the City of Elizabeth (300 youth) and \$745,000 to United Way of Greater Union County (180 youth).

### **Out-of-School Youth Services Contract Award**

The Board awarded the contract for Out-of-School Youth Services to Union County Vocational Technical School (UCVTS), selected based on a superior proposal evaluation score of 98 out of 100. The \$333,000 program utilizes the successful Simon Youth Academy model with a documented 100% graduation rate, delivering academic instruction, mental health counseling, and vocational rotations in high-demand trades including HVAC, auto mechanics, and cosmetology, with 20% allocated to work-based learning experiences.

### **Sub-Recipient Monitoring Services RFP**

The Board authorized issuance of an RFP to procure specialized Sub-Recipient Monitoring Services ensuring compliance with federal and state regulations governing WIOA and Work First New Jersey programs. The scope includes auditing the five phases of Title I service delivery, data validation to meet PIRL standards, verification of 14 required Youth Program Elements, and comprehensive file management reviews.

### **FutureWorks BI System**

The Board authorized \$12,971 for the annual FutureWorks Business Intelligence subscription, providing advanced tracking tools including Intelligent User Views, ad hoc reporting capabilities, and WIOA rosters facilitating real-time performance management and strategic decision-making. The subscription includes technical support, training webinars, and five user licenses.

### **Contract Amendments and Service Agreements**

The Board executed several key contract actions to ensure service continuity:

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- UCNJ Career Services contract increased from \$500,000 to \$640,000 with extension through September 30, 2025
- Workforce Advantage WFNJ agreement amended to \$840,000 with additional \$140,000 in TANF funds
- United Way authorized \$60,000 in infrastructure costs for AJC office space, increasing total contract to \$660,000
- One Stop Career Center services agreement extended with \$1,700,000 allocation through September 30, 2026
- American Job Center Operator agreement extended with \$100,000 allocation through September 30, 2026

### Enhancing the American Job Center System

A priority this year was strengthening the American Job Center (AJC) network to ensure accessible and high-quality career services. The Union County Department of Human Services continues to serve as the One-Stop Operator under a two-year agreement, promoting operational excellence and service coordination with an annual investment of up to \$100,000.

The AJC's certification affirmed its operational standards in leadership, strategic planning, customer service, and accessibility for individuals with disabilities. Enhanced data-sharing protocols and joint case management processes were implemented to support the state-mandated co-enrollment initiative, ensuring efficient tracking of participant progress across funding streams.

### Expanding Youth Employment Programs

Recognizing the importance of youth workforce development, UCWDB continued strategic investments in targeted programs to support youth employment and education:

**UWGUC WIOA Youth Services 2025 Operational Plan:** On February 5, 2025, the Board formally adopted the United Way of Greater Union County's WIOA Youth Services 2025 Operational Plan, acknowledging UWGUC's role as the funded provider for In-School and Out-of-School youth services. The operational plan outlines comprehensive frameworks for youth service tracking, optimization of the America's One-Stop Operating System (AOSOS), and development of career pathways supporting regional workforce needs.

**Out-of-School Youth Program:** The Board awarded the Out-of-School Youth Services contract to Union County Vocational Technical School (UCVTS) with a score of 98 out of 100. The \$333,000 program utilizes the successful Simon Youth Academy model, operating a blended learning environment at Jersey Gardens Mall with a documented 100% graduation rate. UCVTS delivers academic instruction, mental health counseling, and vocational rotations in HVAC, auto mechanics, and cosmetology, with 20% allocated to work-based learning. Partnerships with Union College and YouthBuild ensure effective transitions to post-secondary education, apprenticeships, or employment.

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**In-School Youth Program:** The partnership with United Way of Greater Union County continues to address in-school youth in high-need districts. The Board authorized \$60,000 in infrastructure costs for UWGUC's dedicated office space at the American Job Center in Plainfield, increasing the total service contract to \$660,000.

**Summer Youth Work Experience Program:** The Board authorized the SFY 2025 Summer Youth Work Experience Program with a total budget of \$1,950,000 to serve 480 youth countywide. The program provides 200 hours of paid work experience, career readiness training, and stipends up to \$3,400 per participant. The City of Elizabeth receives \$1,205,000 to serve 300 youth, and United Way receives \$745,000 to serve 180 youth, utilizing blended WIOA and TANF funding streams.

## COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD

The Union County Workforce Development Board oversees a range of committees, each dedicated to advancing workforce development services across diverse populations in Union County. Each committee's work aligns with the principles of WIOA, focusing on tailored support, resource management, collaborative partnerships, and accessible opportunities.

### American Job Center Committee

The American Job Center Committee is committed to optimizing workforce services for adults, dislocated workers, youth, and recipients of TANF, GA, and SNAP benefits. This committee plays a crucial role in evaluating and enhancing service delivery across career development programs. In PY 2024, the committee focused on MOU/IFA negotiations with over 30 mandated partners, coordinating plans, budgets, and operational aspects. Partner presentations from Union College, NJ HESAA, and the Urban League provided updates and resource information, while cross-committee coordination ensured regular updates from Youth, Disabilities, and Literacy committees. The committee also reviewed reentry partnerships, including the Urban League Reconnections program serving previously incarcerated individuals.

### Adult Education and Literacy Committee

The Adult Education and Literacy Committee leads efforts to advance literacy and educational programs, fostering economic self-sufficiency through comprehensive educational pathways. In PY 2024, the committee secured the \$500,000 Adult Literacy Innovations Grant for ESL training and workforce readiness services. Key initiatives included developing Title I/Title II co-enrollment procedures to streamline assessments and formalize Integrated Education and Training (IET) models. The committee procured real-time translation and interpretation devices for participants with limited English proficiency and worked on cross-system data coordination between LACES and AOSOS for TANF/GA/SNAP participants. Active partners included Union College, Workforce Advantage, and Plainfield Public Library, with new strategies developed for older adult learners and low-literacy participants seeking workforce reentry.

### Disabilities Committee

The Disabilities Committee is dedicated to creating an inclusive workforce system that supports individuals with disabilities. In PY 2024, the committee created employer information packets, fact sheets addressing liability concerns, and a disability awareness training curriculum for AJC staff and employer partners. The committee continued working with the ADA Bureau on implementing 2021 accessibility audit recommendations for the Plainfield One-Stop and advocated for a unified countywide transition plan for youth with disabilities across school districts. Data analysis revealed low disclosure rates (76 out of 4,600 participants), prompting identification of AOSOS tracking improvements as a priority. Partnerships with DVRS (1,121 open cases) and CBVI were strengthened for coordinated service delivery.

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## Youth Committee

The Youth Committee advances workforce development opportunities tailored to young people. In PY 2024, the committee developed the comprehensive Youth Services Operational Plan in partnership with United Way of Greater Union County, achieving co-enrollment of over 50 out-of-school youth. The committee incorporated youth feedback from focus groups, prioritizing mental health support beyond traditional therapy, practical life skills training, one-on-one attention, and staff mentorship. A strategic shift from one-time job placement to long-term career pathway strategies was implemented.

## **PROGRAM EVALUATION AND ANALYSIS**

The UCWDB conducted comprehensive program evaluations in PY 2024, building on prior year assessments while addressing identified areas for improvement.

### **Out-of-School Youth Program Evaluation**

The ongoing evaluation of the Simon Youth Academy Out-of-School Youth program assesses performance in providing education and training to youth aged 16-24 who have exited traditional schooling. The Academy continues to deliver all 14 required WIOA program elements, including tutoring and dropout prevention, leadership opportunities, supportive services, work experience partnerships, comprehensive guidance, adult mentoring, mental health support, and financial literacy.

Corrective actions implemented in PY 2024 include standardized documentation protocols, enhanced occupational training referrals, personalized transition plans, strengthened follow-up services, and improved data sharing with the American Job Center.

### **WorkFirst New Jersey Program Evaluation**

The UCWDB continued monitoring the WorkFirst New Jersey (WFNJ) TANF program, implementing corrective actions identified in the PY 2023 evaluation. Key improvements include standardized data collection and reporting tools, mandatory staff training on data accuracy, streamlined referral processes with clearer guidelines, expanded employment-directed activities through new partnerships, recruitment and retention strategies to address staffing challenges, and expanded Community Work Experience Program (CWEP) opportunities through new community partnerships.

## NJDOL POLICY BRIEFS

The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development implemented a comprehensive suite of policies in Program Year 2024 and 2025 designed to enhance service delivery, streamline processes, and ensure compliance within New Jersey's workforce development system. Key policies affecting Union County operations include:

- **WD-PY25-1:** Payment of Profit - Guidelines for profit payments in workforce contracts
- **WD-PY25-2:** Poverty Guidelines and Lower Living Standard Income Levels
- **WD-PY25-5:** Supporting Basic Education and Literacy Services in NJ One Stop Career Centers
- **WD-PY25-6.1:** Individual Training Accounts - Updated ITA guidance
- **WD-PY25-7:** PY24 Policy Updates and Listing of Current Policies
- **WD-PY25-9:** Triage - Updated triage procedures for AJC intake
- **WD-PY24-8:** Workforce Service Integration and Co-Enrollment - Mandatory co-enrollment guidance
- **WD-PY24-10.1:** WIOA and WorkFirst New Jersey (WFNJ) Budget Guidelines and Requirements
- **WD-PY24-11:** Consolidated eligibility guidelines for WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs
- **WD-PY24-1:** Sanctions Procedures for LWDA's and LWDB's addressing non-compliance

## LABOR MARKET CONDITIONS

Union County’s labor market experienced significant transformation during Program Year 2024, reflecting both local economic shifts and broader state and national trends. The unemployment rate demonstrated substantial volatility, rising from 4.4% in early 2024 to 5.9% by June 2025, indicating localized economic stress exceeding state and national trends.

The 0.8% increase in unemployment year-to-date represents an additional 2,572 residents out of work compared to January 2025. This increase exceeds the state average, reflecting the impact of corporate restructuring in key industries, particularly the professional services sector which experienced a -22.9% employment decline.

### Unemployment Rate Trends (PY 2024)

Month	Union County	New Jersey	United States
July 2024	5.9%	5.4%	4.3%
August 2024	5.7%	5.2%	4.2%
September 2024	5.2%	4.8%	4.1%
October 2024	5.0%	4.6%	4.1%
November 2024	4.8%	4.5%	4.0%
December 2024	4.9%	4.6%	4.0%
January 2025	5.2%	4.9%	4.0%
February 2025	5.3%	5.0%	4.1%
March 2025	5.4%	5.1%	4.1%
April 2025	5.6%	5.2%	4.2%
May 2025	5.8%	5.4%	4.2%
June 2025	5.9%	5.5%	4.3%

*Source: NJDOL Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS)*

### In-Demand Industries and Occupations

Union County's labor force of approximately 302,500 residents demonstrates a labor force participation rate of 70.0%, exceeding the statewide average of 66.9%. Analysis of employment data, projected growth, and alignment with New Jersey State Plan priorities identifies the following priority industry sectors:

**Healthcare and Social Assistance:** The county's largest sector with 35,000+ jobs, projected to add 3,650 jobs (10.9% growth) by 2030. Healthcare Practitioners and Technical occupations led all categories with 10,471 unique job postings in 2024.

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**Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics:** Projected growth of 13.7% (2,250 jobs) by 2030, benefiting from Union County's strategic location and proximity to Port Newark-Elizabeth Marine Terminal.

**Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services:** Despite recent layoffs, the sector offers the highest average wages (\$159,998). Merck & Co. generated 4,909 job postings in 2024, though primarily for production and technical roles rather than administrative positions.

**Advanced Manufacturing:** Pharmaceutical and medicine manufacturing generated 5,597 job postings, reflecting Union County's role in New Jersey's biopharmaceutical cluster.

## PRIMARY INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE

Under WIOA Section 116(b)(2)(A), there are six primary indicators of performance that guide workforce development program accountability:

- 1. Employment Rate - 2nd Quarter After Exit:** The percentage of participants in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program.
- 2. Employment Rate - 4th Quarter After Exit:** The percentage of participants in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program.
- 3. Median Earnings - 2nd Quarter After Exit:** The median earnings of participants in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit.
- 4. Credential Attainment:** The percentage of participants enrolled in education or training who attain a recognized postsecondary credential or secondary school diploma within one year after exit.
- 5. Measurable Skill Gains:** The percentage of program participants achieving documented academic, technical, occupational, or other forms of progress toward credential attainment or employment.
- 6. Effectiveness in Serving Employers:** Measured through retention with same employer, repeat business customers, and employer penetration rate.

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## NEGOTIATED PERFORMANCE GOALS

The UCWDB works closely with NJDOL to establish fair and equitable performance goals based on economic conditions, participant characteristics, and service delivery strategies. The following tables present the negotiated performance targets for Program Year 2024.

### Chart A: Program Year 2024 Performance Goals

#### ADULT PROGRAM

Performance Indicator	PY 2024 Targets
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	61.90%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	56.70%
Credential Attainment 4th Quarter After Exit	77%
Measurable Skills Gain	63.30%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$5,600

#### DISLOCATED WORKER PROGRAM

Performance Indicator	PY 2024 Targets
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	60.10%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	60%
Credential Attainment 4th Quarter After Exit	73%
Measurable Skills Gain	55.10%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$7,000

#### YOUTH PROGRAM

Performance Indicator	PY 2024 Targets
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	63.40%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	70.20%
Credential Attainment 4th Quarter After Exit	64.70%
Measurable Skills Gain	69%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$3,262

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## PROGRAM YEAR 2024 ACTUAL PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

The following tables present preliminary actual performance outcomes for Program Year 2024. Final performance data will be updated upon receipt of NJDOL's official year-end performance reports.

*Note: Given the rise in unemployment to 6.0% and the structural changes in our labor market, the UCWDB anticipates that Dislocated Worker performance may be impacted by longer durations of unemployment among displaced white-collar workers who typically have higher wage replacement requirements.*

### ADULT PROGRAM - PY 2024

Performance Indicator	PY 2024 Target	PY 2024 Actual	Achieved	Exited
Employment Rate Q2 After Exit	61.90%	70.50%	52	74
Employment Rate Q4 After Exit	56.70%	68.25%	45	66
Credential Attainment Q4 After Exit	77%	83.33%	35	42
Measurable Skills Gain	63.30%	87.50%	21	24
Median Earnings Q2 After Exit	\$5,600	\$9,450	52	52

### DISLOCATED WORKER PROGRAM - PY 2024

Performance Indicator	PY 2024 Target	PY 2024 Actual	Achieved	Exited
Employment Rate Q2 After Exit	60.10%	74.00%	85	115
Employment Rate Q4 After Exit	60%	73.50%	89	121
Credential Attainment Q4 After Exit	73%	77.00%	57	74
Measurable Skills Gain	55.10%	94.92%	56	59
Median Earnings Q2 After Exit	\$7,000	\$11,800	85	85

### YOUTH PROGRAM - PY 2024

Performance Indicator	PY 2024 Target	PY 2024 Actual	Achieved	Exited
Employment Rate Q2 After Exit	63.40%	42.50%	40	94
Employment Rate Q4 After Exit	70.20%	58.00%	58	100
Credential Attainment Q4 After Exit	64.70%	18.75%	15	80
Measurable Skills Gain	69%	100%	24	24
Median Earnings Q2 After Exit	\$3,262	\$2,150	40	40

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## CLOSING

In conclusion, the Union County Workforce Development Board's work in Program Year 2024 reflects our unwavering dedication to building a skilled, adaptable workforce aligned with the needs of local employers and the aspirations of Union County's residents. This year marked a period of significant transformation as we responded to evolving economic conditions characterized by a "churn economy" requiring rapid adaptation and strategic repositioning of our service delivery model.

The comprehensive policy reforms developed in response to NJDOL evaluation findings and the strategic initiatives deployed to address workforce displacement demonstrate the Board's commitment to continuous improvement and responsive governance. Our focus on high-demand sectors including healthcare, bio-manufacturing, and logistics positions Union County residents for success in an evolving labor market.

As we look to the future, UCWDB remains committed to enhancing workforce development strategies that promote economic growth, career advancement, and sustainable employment pathways. The strategic initiatives being developed - including the Bio-Pharma Pivot dual-track strategy, the Executive Re-Employment Cadre, expanded youth workforce opportunities in the creative economy, and the Commuter Bridge Initiative - reflect our comprehensive, evidence-based approach to workforce development.

Our achievements are made possible by the shared commitment of our partners, stakeholders, and the broader community. Together, we will continue to adapt, innovate, and respond to the evolving landscape, ensuring that Union County remains a place of opportunity and prosperity for all. Thank you for joining us on this journey toward a brighter, more inclusive workforce future.

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