NEW JERSEY
MERCER COUNTY

Local Area Plan
for the Workforce Innovation
and Opportunity Act

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INTRODUCTION:

This strategic plan is being submitted by the Mercer County Workforce Development Board in partnership with the Chief Elected official. It is a comprehensive four-year plan supporting the vision, goals and strategies developed to meet the workforce development needs of jobseekers and local/regional business.

I. WDB STRATEGIC PLAN

Data contained in this plan was provided through reports prepared by the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD), Office of Research and Information, the Bureau of Labor Market Information, and the Division of Labor Market and Demographic Research.

Other sources included:
- United States Census Bureau
  - American Fact Finder
  - Quick Facts
  - American Community Survey 5-year Estimates
- New Jersey State Department of Tourism

MERCER COUNTY QUICK FACTS

- Trenton, the state capital of New Jersey is located in Mercer County
- The largest Mercer County racial/ethnic groups are White (52.9%) followed by Black (19.6%) and Hispanic (15.9%)
- Percentage of persons (5+) where a language other than English is spoken at home: 28.7%; 7.8 percentage points higher than the United States total of 20.9%
- Per capita income (2014): $38,076 (Mercer County); $17,021 (Trenton)
- In 2014, the median household income of Mercer County residents was $74,118; whereas the median household income of Trenton (State capital) residents was $35,647
- Mercer County residents living in poverty equals 11.7%
- The median age Mercer County residents is 38.3 years young
- The majority of employees working in private companies, do so in the production, transportation, and material moving occupations
- Mercer County tourism in 2015 generated $1,260.3 million dollars in direct sales, and $160.5 million dollars in state and local tax revenue
A. ANALYSIS OF THE LOCAL AND REGIONAL ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

LABOR SUPPLY

Population numbers provide a part of the story of labor supply. However, some population groups, especially children and the elderly may not participate in part or in full within the workforce. Data such as the number of individuals participating in the workforce, the age of the workforce, and the unemployment rate help identify the current and expected future strength of the workforce across the region.

Projections of Civilian Labor Force by County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercer County</td>
<td>Mercer</td>
<td>194,500</td>
<td></td>
<td>206,100</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>11,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middlesex County</td>
<td>Middlesex</td>
<td>432,100</td>
<td></td>
<td>487,200</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>37,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monmouth County</td>
<td>Monmouth</td>
<td>328,700</td>
<td></td>
<td>344,800</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>10,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ocean County</td>
<td>Ocean</td>
<td>265,300</td>
<td></td>
<td>321,800</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>32,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJP Region</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,220,600</td>
<td>1,268,100</td>
<td>1,359,900</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>91,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4,518,600</td>
<td>4,744,700</td>
<td>5,018,700</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>274,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The overall regional civilian labor force is expected to grow by 11.4% through the year 2034 which is slightly higher than the state expectation (11%). Similar to population, all four counties are expected to see growth in their labor force. Ocean County is expected to see the largest labor force growth in both percent change and net growth.

One statistic to pay attention to is the number of individuals at or nearing retirement age. Given the large number of the Baby Boomer generation, the upcoming retirement numbers are expected to rise across the nation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Labor Force Nearing Retirement Age</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2024</th>
<th>2034</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Labor Force</td>
<td>1,220,600</td>
<td>1,268,100</td>
<td>1,359,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor Force Age 55+</td>
<td>292,600</td>
<td>334,000</td>
<td>337,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Labor Force Age 55+</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. ANALYSIS OF THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS NEEDED TO MEET EMPLOYER NEEDS

Employers not only look for individuals with a specific educational attainment level when filling an open position, they also look for individuals with specific skills and certifications. The following two charts are based on online job postings, occurring during the 2015 calendar year, across the Central Jersey Partnership (CJP) Region that includes Mercer County, Middlesex County, Monmouth County and Ocean County.

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1 Source: NJLWD, 2014 - 2034 Labor Force Projections
2 Source: NJLWD, 2014 - 2034 Labor Force Projections
Two key takeaways from these charts are that the most sought after skill and certification are “communication skills” and “registered nurse” respectively. Other in-demand skills include Microsoft Office, writing, customer service, organization, and team work. Other in-demand certifications include first aid/CPR, Certified Public Accountant, project management, and Class A Commercial Driver’s License. Overall, in-demand skills are focused on interpersonal skills while many in-demand certifications are centralized within the healthcare sector.
C. ANALYSIS OF THE WORKFORCE

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

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<th>Mercer County: Total Population Projections 2014-2034</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>371,500</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>406,300</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New Jersey's total population in 2014 was 8,938,200. It will increase by 4.5% to 9,338,000 in 2024. Ten years later, the population total is projected to be at 9,733,400 (increase of 4.2%).

In 2014, Mercer County's total population was 371,500, making it the 12th most populated county in the State of New Jersey out of 21 counties. In 2024, it is expected to increase by 4.7% and be at 388,900. With a slight decrease of 4.5%, it is expected to grow to 406,300 by the year 2034.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mercer County: 65 Years and Older Population Projections 2014-2034</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51,200</td>
<td>32.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80,300</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New Jersey's total population of persons 65 years and older was 1,313,500 in 2014. It is expected to increase in 2024 by 28% to 1,681,700. In 2034, the total is expected to be at 1,944,400 for an increase of 15.6%.

The county's 65 and older population marked at 51,200 in 2014 is expected to increase greatly in 2024 by 32.8% to 68,000. It will continue to increase, but at a slower rate of 18.1% and make up 80,300 of the population in 2034.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mercer County: Population Projections by Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>38,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>78,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino or Hispanic</td>
<td>61,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>192,300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While the largest groups in Mercer County are those who identify themselves as White, Non-Hispanic, this population is projected to decline by 1.4% in 2024 and by 2.3% in 2034. The county’s fastest growing racial group was Hispanics/Latinos. Projections show that their 2014 population of 61,600 will increase by 20.1% (12,400) in 2024 for a total of 74,000 and by 19.2% (14,200) in 2034 for a total of 88,200. The second fastest growing population will be the Asian racial group, in which they will increase at a rate of 11.9% for 2024 and 10.9% for 2034. They will be followed by the Black/African American population who will increase by 3.4% and 3.2% for years 2024 and 2034 respectively.
SOCIOECONOMIC PROFILE

By 2014, the percentage of individuals foreign born in Mercer County was 21.2%. This is 8.1% higher than the national average. A little over 4% of the populations were veterans and 6.9% of the population under age 65 was identified as disabled. The percent of person’s age 25 years or older that possessed a high school diploma or higher was 87.3% while the attainment of a bachelor’s degree or higher was 39.8%. Both numbers were slightly higher than the national averages. In 2014, the homeownership rate was 65.1%.

The following table shows the poverty status in 2015 of families at varying educational attainments, in Mercer County overall and in Trenton, specifically.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>*Estimated Total &amp; Percentages</th>
<th>Mercer County, NJ</th>
<th>Trenton, NJ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>All families</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Attainment of Householder</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Less than high school graduate</td>
<td>8,917</td>
<td>4,814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>37.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• High School graduate (includes equivalency)</td>
<td>18,824</td>
<td>6,154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Some college, associate’s degree</td>
<td>19,579</td>
<td>4,237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Bachelor’s degree or higher</td>
<td>40,979</td>
<td>2,108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census- American Fact Finder

INDUSTRY

The following table shows the employment status in 2015 of population ages 16 years and over, in Mercer County overall and in Trenton, specifically. Also shown is the industry in which they worked and their classification.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>*Estimated Total &amp; Percentages</th>
<th>Mercer County, NJ</th>
<th>Trenton, NJ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>All families</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• In labor force</td>
<td>196,229</td>
<td>40,345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>65.7%</td>
<td>61.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Employed</td>
<td>177,609</td>
<td>33,351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>59.5%</td>
<td>50.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Unemployed</td>
<td>18,506</td>
<td>6,994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Armed Forces</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unemployment Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mercer County, NJ</th>
<th>Trenton, NJ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Rate</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Mercer County, NJ

#### *Estimated Total & Percentages*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Mercer County, NJ</th>
<th>Trenton, NJ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>All families</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational services, and</td>
<td>46,527</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>health care and social</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assistance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, scientific, and</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>management, and administrative and waste management services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail trade</td>
<td>16,859</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Class of Worker

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class of Worker</th>
<th>Total Annual Average Job Openings</th>
<th>2015 Annual Wage*</th>
<th>Skill Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private wage and salary worker</td>
<td>138,736</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Workers</td>
<td>30,912</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed in own not</td>
<td>7,773</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>incorporated business workers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpaid Family Workers</td>
<td>188</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total nonfarm employment in Mercer County is projected to grow by 22,150 jobs or 9.1% from 2010 to 2020. With a projected increase of 6,400 jobs, health care and social services is anticipated to be the county's job growth leader through 2020. Professional, scientific and technical services industry is projected to grow by 5,150 jobs. The third industry that will claim an increase of 2,200 jobs is retail. Lastly, will be administrative and waste services that are projected to produce 2,150 positions.

### PROJECTED OCCUPATIONAL DEMAND (Top Ten)

#### Mercer County: Occupations with the Most Projected Job Openings 2010-2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Total Annual Average Job Openings</th>
<th>2015 Annual Wage*</th>
<th>Skill Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retail Salespersons</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>$25,820</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cashiers</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>$21,900</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered Nurses</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>$71,170</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Service Representatives</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>$38,260</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Clerks, General</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>$39,750</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receptionists and Information Clerks</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>$32,500</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiters and Waitresses</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>$21,900</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Health Aides</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>$24,610 (2011)</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janitors and Cleaners (excludes maids/housekeeping)</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>$22,130</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, including Fast Food</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>$20,660</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Retail salespersons are expected to be the leading occupation in Mercer County in terms of annual job openings. These positions however, tend to pay relatively low wages and typically require only a high school diploma or less. The only occupation ranked within the top ten that requires high skills is registered nurses.
WORK-BASED COMMUTING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of Work</th>
<th>CJP Region</th>
<th>New Jersey (statewide)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Resident Workers</td>
<td>1,096,517</td>
<td>4,122,554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>991,599</td>
<td>3,588,171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked Out of State</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>104,918</td>
<td>534,383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>86,548</td>
<td>384,279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>12,451</td>
<td>120,386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td>526</td>
<td>3,519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>8,106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other States</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>1,912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Worked In State</td>
<td>4,488</td>
<td>16,181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Worked Out of State</td>
<td>90.4%</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live &amp; Work in Same County</td>
<td>653,224</td>
<td>2,244,703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work In State &amp; Live Out of</td>
<td>55,265</td>
<td>295,759</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Live &amp; Work in Same County</td>
<td>65.9%</td>
<td>64.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Work Outside County</td>
<td>34.1%</td>
<td>35.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Employment of CJP population is impacted by other states, mainly New York and Pennsylvania. The region has 9.6% (104,918 individuals) of its population employed out of state. While just over 100,000 CJP residents work outside of New Jersey, the region does have roughly 55,000 residents from other states commute into the region for work. This results in a total net loss of 49,653 workers (4.5% of the region’s labor force) due to commuting across state lines.

The regional percentages of residents that live and work in the same county are nearly equal to that of the state percentage, indicating that the central region has the same worker-related commuting needs as the state in general.

D. ANALYSIS OF THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

The workforce development activities provided by the Mercer County Workforce Development system aims to support seamless customer-focused services that are available and accessible to both jobseekers and business customers. The ultimate goal of all services is to increase the long-term employment outcomes for individuals seeking services, especially those with barriers to employment, and to improve services to the business community by assisting them to find skilled workers.

The Mercer County One Stop Career Center is a comprehensive site that offers full time services of the major One Stop system partners at one location. These are led by the current One-Stop Operator the Mercer County Office of Employment and Training Services (MCOTES) who administers Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and WorkFirst New Jersey (WFNJ) funded programs. Also located at the One-Stop is the NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD) Wagner-Peyser funded Employment Services, Unemployment Insurance Compensation, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation; Mercer County Board of Social Services (MCBOSS) TANF case management staff; and Job Corps staff.

3 Source: New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Office of Research and Information
One of strengths of the Mercer County workforce development system is the high level of collaboration and cooperation not only among the partners located at the One Stop but extends to the other major partners in the workforce development system - Mercer County Economic Development and Sustainability, Mercer County Community College, Mercer County Technical School, faith and community based organizations, and local employers.

New Jersey Career Connections has been integrated into One Stop services providing customers with needed services that enable them to make better career decisions. These include improved assessment, career guidance, career planning, more appropriate training choices, and job search assistance. Career Connections will be expanded to include all libraries in Mercer County. During the spring of 2017 it is our plan to share information and encourage the libraries to utilize Career Connections in assisting their patrons. This will include the Trenton Free Public Library and the County Libraries in Ewing, Lawrence, West Windsor, Hamilton Township, Hightstown, and Princeton.

TALENT NETWORKS AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT CENTERS

The One Stop and the WDB work collaboratively with the Talent Networks (TN), in particular the Advanced Manufacturing. We will continue to expand this partnership to include Talent Networks in the areas of Health Care; Transportation, Distribution and Logistics; Retail, Hospitality and Tourism, and Financial.

The State’s seven industry-focused Talent Networks have been connecting jobseekers, employers, educational institutions and workforce programs and providing key intelligence on the workforce needs of the key industries.

Talent Development Centers (TDC) - New Jersey has invested in the development of Talent Development Centers located at County Colleges in Camden and Union and in Middlesex at Rutgers University. They are focused on the three industries of Advanced Manufacturing, Transportation, Logistics and Distribution and Health Care. Each TDC serves as a “center for excellence” in the state and provides training to incumbent workers and dislocated workers with state funds from the Workforce Development Partnership Program. These Centers also serve as anchors for expanded high-quality employer-driven partnerships in their industry and further build the capacity of the state’s higher education institutions to provide education and training aligned with the needs of the state’s key industries.

The primary mission of each TDC is to provide training to individuals (dislocated workers and currently employed/incumbent workers). As a result, the TDC’s coordinate their efforts with the state’s industry-specific Talent Networks, established to facilitate the development of new partnerships between employers, educational institutions and workforce development programs in their specific industry and in turn the Talent Networks coordinate their efforts with the WDB.

New Jersey's efforts are focused on seven industries that form the foundation of the state's economy:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Biopharmaceutical and Life Sciences
- Health Care
- Financial Services
- Transportation, Logistics & Distribution
- Technology
- Retail, Hospitality and Tourism

The Central Jersey Partners (CJP) Workforce Development Boards work both independently and together in conjunction with the Talent Networks in a number of ways. The CJP has prioritized the following industries based on the real experience of the CJP partners.
The following data was provided by LWD:

- Advanced Manufacturing – region-wide
- Life Sciences, Biopharma – primarily Middlesex
- Health Care – region-wide
- Finance – major force in Monmouth County. A significant portion of workers working in the industry do not work in the county as approximately 55% leave the county to work elsewhere.
- Transportation Logistics and Distribution – region-wide
- Technology – Central NJ is home to some major technology employers and an active IT sector along with firms in other industries that hire significant quantities of IT workers
- Retail, Hospitality and Tourism – major industry in Ocean and Monmouth (although many of the jobs are seasonal)

Mercer County WDB is currently partnering with the Talent Networks and Talent Development Centers for two of our key industry sectors – Advanced Manufacturing and Health Care. Transportation, Logistics and Distribution, Financial Services, and Retail, Hospitality and Tourism have been targeted as areas in need of closer collaboration.

The Talent Networks particularly Healthcare and Advanced Manufacturing assist the WDB in the development of workforce initiatives designed to assist both jobseekers and local businesses. Effective and targeted workforce and education programs require understanding of employer needs and the provision of accurate and timely training to address those needs.

The Talent Networks working closely with labor market analysts from NJ LWD are a crucial source of information on the workforce needs of those specific industries. Each Talent Networks hosts an industry summit on a yearly basis to gather information and inform key stakeholders of essential employer needs. The Mercer WDB will work in partnership with the Talent Networks to ensure that employers in the county are made aware of and participate in these summits.

Mercer WDB will be working with the Talent Networks to engage employers and industry associations to contribute to the development and updating of the industry-valued credential and degree list.

**WIOA TITLE I – ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, YOUTH**

Services for individuals eligible for WIOA Adult and Dislocated Services include the following:

- Orientation to Occupational Training Services
- Specialized assessments i.e. basic skills/literacy, English language proficiency, comprehensive career exploration
- In-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate career goals
- Development of an individual employment plan to identify career goals, appropriate achievement objectives, appropriate combination of services necessary to achieve goals
- Information on eligible training providers (utilizing the Eligible Training Providers List)
- Information on career pathways with specific information on the training necessary to achieve their goals, expected job openings in the area and stateside, average salaries, etc.
- Individual career counseling - before, throughout, and after training enrollment
Skills upgrading and retraining

Occupational Skills Training (in demand occupations), including training for nontraditional employment

On-the-Job-Training

Incumbent Worker Training (to be further explored)

Literacy – basic skills instruction for those needing to increase education levels necessary for occupational training and instruction for English language learners

**WIOA OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH SERVICES**

Out-of-School Youth (OSY) – competitively selected programs for OSY services are provided to eligible individuals who have not obtained a High School Diploma or its equivalent. The programs are designed for the youth to obtain their High School Equivalency credential and to help prepare them for post-secondary education and/or employment. These services were obtained through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process resulting in the awarding of contracts to Mercer County Community College; Isles, Inc.; and Latinas Unidas under the YWCA of Princeton).

Services provided to eligible individuals include the following:

- Orientation to Program Services
- Comprehensive counseling and assessments i.e. academic, career, job readiness
- Comprehensive career exploration
- In-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate career goals
- Development of an individual employment plan to identify career goals, appropriate achievement objectives, appropriate combination of services necessary to achieve goals
- Information on eligible training providers (utilizing the Eligible Training Providers List)
- Information on career pathways and career ladders with specific information on the training necessary to achieve their goals, expected job openings in the local/regional area and stateside, average salaries, etc.
- Individual career counseling - before, throughout, and after occupational training enrollment
- Skills upgrading and retraining
- Occupational Skills Training (in demand occupations), including training for nontraditional employment
- On-the-Job-Training
- HSE preparation and testing – provided by partner agencies through an RFP process
- Comprehensive job readiness workshops - provided by partner agencies through an RFP process and One Stop Youth staff
- Financial Literacy - provided by partner agencies through an RFP process
- Paid Internship Opportunities – primarily in the private sector administered by One Stop Youth staff
- Referrals to other appropriate services for OSY i.e. Youth Corps, YouthBuild, Job Corps, etc.
- Follow-up Services
- Skills upgrading and retraining
- Literacy – basic skills instruction for those needing to increase education levels necessary for occupational training and instruction for English language learners

**WIOA IN-SCHOOL YOUTH SERVICES**

In-School Youth (ISY) – services are provided to eligible individuals who are at risk of dropping out to help them remain in school and obtain their High School Diploma. These services were obtained through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process resulting in the awarding of contracts to Mercer County Community College and the Mercer County Special Services School District.

Services provided to include the following:
- Training in the skills and attitudes necessary for employment
- Receive education and/or attain the level of basic skills required for success on the job
- Introduction to all types of Labor Demand Occupations in the area and well as career ladders and pathways
- Introduction to financial literacy
- Development of leadership skills through group and community activities
- Mentoring opportunities as needed
- Tutoring as needed
- Become familiar with community resources
- Work experience

All In-School Youth services provided should be working towards the goals of the achievement of a High School diploma and enrollment into post-secondary education and/or obtaining full time employment.

**JOB CORPS**

Job Corps is an onsite partner located at the Mercer County One Stop. Their programming is designed to assist eligible youth connect to the labor force by providing them with intensive social, academic, career and technical education, and service-learning opportunities primarily in a residential center.
Job Corps services include:

- Weekly orientations provide by Job Corps staff
- Referral to the Mercer County WIOA Youth Career Connection (YCC) for enrollment
- Referrals to YCC upon completion of Job Corps for potential internships

**TITLE II – ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY**

It is the goal of the Mercer County Workforce Development system to ensure that all residents of our County have access to the services they need in order to equip them with the tools necessary for success on the job, with family, and in social environments. Our focus is to help individuals improve both their short-term as well as long-term employment outcomes, promote life-long learning opportunities, prepare for occupational training, and connect employers to a well prepared workforce.

Mercer has developed partnerships and collaborations with educational and community/faith-based organizations that allow our basic skills students to receive the services they need to achieve their goals. The Workforce Learning Link (WLL) is designed primarily to assist adult learners and young adults with short-term computer assisted basic skills education and literacy services designed to:

- Improve customers’ basic computer skills
- Assist individuals increase their educational levels
- Build individuals’ English language skills
- Prepare customers for entry into post secondary or occupational skills training
- Assist customers secure or improve their employment opportunities.

The WLL works in collaboration with our Consortium partners to ensure the services in the WLL will supplement and expand existing basic skills and literacy programming and will not supplant other State or local public funds for this purpose. Services in the WLL are targeted to individuals who are at or above the fourth grade reading and those who may have a high school diploma or its equivalent that are in need of additional academic remediation.

**WORKFORCE LEARNING LINK**

For State Fiscal Year 2016 (7/1/15-6/30/16) Performance goals and outcomes include the following:

- Goal: Serve a minimum of 121 students.
  - Outcome: 94 customers were enrolled.

- Goal: To assist a minimum of 30% of our customers in increasing their educational levels.
  - Outcome: 41% of customers (38) achieved an educational gain. This is an 11% increase over the goal.

- Goal: To assist a minimum of 60% of customers served enroll in post-secondary education, occupational training, or become employed.
  - Outcome: 60% of customers served (56) achieved their proposed outcome: 18 entered occupational training, 1 attained their HSE; and 37 obtained employment.
CONSORTIUM SERVICES

Consortium services provided in Mercer County include the following:
- Adult Basic Education (Levels I, II, and III)
- Adult Secondary Education (ABE/ASE)
- English as a Second Language (ESL)
- Civics – rights and responsibilities of citizenship, civic participation and U.S. History
- Workplace Literacy
- Preparation for High School Equivalency (HSE) exam
- Sector specific contextualized instruction

TITLE III WAGNER-PEYSER EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PROGRAM

The Wagner-Peyser program provides Basic Career Services that include:
- Orientation to services available through the One Stop workforce development system
- Initial assessment of skill levels (aptitudes, abilities including skill gaps)
- Self service Labor Market Information
- Introduction to Career Connections
- Self service career exploration (NJCAN)
- Self-service job search (use of Resource room)
- Staff assisted job search
- Group Job Preparation workshops - resume writing, interviewing techniques, online employment applications, job search skills including use of social media
- Access to onsite positive recruitments
- Networking opportunities (Jersey Jobs Club)

TITLE IV VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) provides employment and training services that enable individuals with disabilities to find jobs or maintain their existing jobs. Services include:
- Vocational counseling and guidance
- On-the-Job Training
- Placement Services
- Job Seeking skills
- Supported employment
- Time limited placement and counseling
- Job accommodations
- College enrollment
- Technology assistance
- Transition from school to work
- Deaf and hard of hearing services

**SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM**

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is a community service and work-based job training program for mature workers. The program provides training for low-income, unemployed individuals 55 years of age and older. Participants have access to One Stop services. Through enrollment in SCSEP, individuals can participate in a variety of community service activities at non-profit and public agencies. Individuals can work a maximum of 15 hours per week and earn the highest of federal, state, local minimum wage. For those that are interested in eventual unsubsidized employment this can serve as a path toward that goal. Currently there is no SCSEP located at the Mercer One Stop. Occasionally we have participants from assigned to the One Stop as a worksite.

This training serves as a bridge to unsubsidized employment opportunities for participants.

Eligibility for the SCSEP (55+) program is a follows:
- Participants must be at least 55, unemployed
- Have a family income of no more than 125% of the federal poverty level

Enrollment priority is given to veterans and qualified spouses, then to individuals who are over 65, have a disability, have low literacy skills or limited English proficiency, reside in a rural area, are homeless or at risk of homelessness, have low employment prospects, or have failed to find employment after using services through the One-Stop system.

**JOBS FOR VETERANS STATE GRANT**

At this point in time there are no special Jobs for Veterans State Grant administered and operated out of the Mercer One Stop. Veterans are served through the services provided by the DVOP and LVER as well as all One Stop staff.

**MIGRANT AND SEASONAL FARMWORKERS PROGRAM**

At this point in time that are no specific programs for the Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers population as Mercer County does not have call for it.
EX-OFFENDER PROGRAMS

The Mercer One Stop through the LWD has dedicated staff to provide services to ex-offenders. Although ex-offenders can be mainstreamed into One Stop activities, the designated staff can provide special attention to this vulnerable population. Orientations are held on a weekly basis. The workshops address not only the attainment of general job readiness skills, but they focus on the special needs of this population as they often face additional difficulty in securing employment. These include:

- Review of the Opportunity to Compete Act
- Review of Federal Bonding Program
- Review Record Expungement Information
- Driver’s License Restoration Information
- Access to WIOA Services i.e. occupational training, OJT
- Community Resources

CARL T. PERKINS CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION ACT

The Carl T. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act is designed to provide an increased focus on the academic achievement for technical education students, strengthening the connection between secondary and post-secondary education. The WDB reviews and signs off on Perkins funding requests from local school districts intending to ensure diversity of in-demand, industry valued career programs. This is an area that needs improvement as oftentimes the requests for sign off are not received in a timely manner allowing for a substantive review and evaluation of the proposed project/program.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Unemployment Insurance (UI) is temporary income for eligible workers who have lost employment through no fault of their own. UI recipients must actively look for work during the time benefits are being claimed. As one of the larger comprehensive One Stops, our location has an UI unit that includes two agents and one supervisor. UI is fully integrated into our One Stop delivery system.

One of the weaknesses of the UI system is that all claimants are not informed of all WIOA services, particularly occupational training opportunities, on a timely basis. Unless the individuals are selected to participate in RESEA, oftentimes when claimants attend a Training Orientation they have already exhausted most if not all of their benefits. We need to utilize the technology available to encourage participation earlier in their re-employment journey.

WORKFIRST NEW JERSEY (TANF) EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAM

Unique to the Mercer County One Stop is that the Mercer County Board of Social Services has a unit comprised of TANF case managers and support staff to provide for a comprehensive and seamless system delivery of employment directed activities. MCBOSS case managers are responsible for the referral of TANF customers to “To Work” activities, ongoing case management, and referral for sanctions. Other MCBOSS collocated staff are responsible for imposing and managing sanctions (utilizing TANF funds administered by the County). On-site
TANF services include:
- Orientation to TANF work requirements
- Referrals to employment directed activities secured via a RFP process to include:
  - Job Search
  - Job Search Sanction Compliance
  - Community Work Experience Program (CWEP)
  - Education Directly Related to Employment
  - Job Skills Training Directly Related to Employment
  - English as a Second Language (ESL) related to Employment
- Referrals to County partner for CWEPs (stand-alone)
- Referral to County partner for occupational training program

GA/SNAP AND ABAWD EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

The Mercer County One Stop LWD staff provides the services associated with the GA-28 protocol and GA/SNAP/ABAWD case management services that provides for a comprehensive and seamless system delivery of employment directed activities. LWD case managers are responsible for the referral of GA/SNAP/ABAWD customers into “To Work” activities, ongoing case management, and referral for sanctions. Mercer’s GA/SNAP/ABAWD case management unit was one of the first local areas to use the IAR (Inter Agency Referral) system which makes communication with MCBOSS more effective and timely. Services provided include:
- Orientation to work requirements
- Referrals to employment directed activities secured via a RFP process to include:
  - Job Readiness
  - Supported Work
  - Adult Basic Education (ABE) and High School Equivalency (HSE)
  - ESL related to Employment
- Referral to County partner for occupational training programs

NEW JERSEY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Workforce Development Partnership Program (WDP) funds, when available, are utilized to serve Dislocated Workers when WIOA funds have been exhausted. The use of these funds is less restrictive than WIOA. However, oftentimes the availability of the funds is not known until after the program year has begun and cannot be expended in time to meet the State’s expenditure deadlines. For the current year, Mercer did not receive WDP funding

NEW JERSEY SUPPLEMENTAL WORKFORCE FUND FOR BASIC SKILLS

The Supplemental Workforce Funds for Basic Skills are utilized for the operation of the Workforce Learning Link (WLL). The WLL services include Adult Basic Education for customers that need to increase their TABE scores to enter occupational training, English language instruction, and basic computer skills training. All instruction is individualized and computer-based. An instructor is available as needed.
E. WDB STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS

The Mercer WDB’s strategic vision aligns with the vision and goals in the NJ Combined State Plan. The WDB is committed to developing a highly competitive workforce that will allow employers to attract, retain, and grow area businesses through four (4) Core Values.

Core Value 1 – Driving Investments Based On Industry Needs
The WDB primarily through its committees will continue to work with the Talent Networks to ensure that the services and activities of the workforce system are meeting the needs of employers. This will be accomplished in part by:

- Positioning the WDB as a primary repository where local and regional businesses share information on workforce needs
- Conduct roundtables in conjunction with the Talent Networks that bring together members of key industries to update the WDB on workforce needs including skills and staffing levels
- Develop connection to youth development opportunities that enhance focus on workforce preparation
- Collaborate with organizations to identify, develop and offer training responsive to emerging jobs
- Develop connection to adult literacy opportunities
- Develop resources and connections to serve populations including individuals with disabilities and veterans

Core Value 2 – Meeting Jobseekers Where They Are
Addresses the need to identify key industries in the Mercer County region that characterize occupation growth opportunities where county citizens may realize full-time employment. Points correlating with this core value include:

- Institute dashboard indicators that report key elements that will provide direction regarding training and employment readiness requirements for prospective employees
- Establish processes that facilitate a data-gathering list of regional industries and skill-level requirements
- Design and implement a process the ensures rapid response to changes in the needs of local/regional employers
- Prioritize industry clusters to form “business teams” which will allow the WDB to capitalize on additional training and resource allocation
- Work toward processes to allow for specialization to avoid duplication of effort within industries and collaboration across the state.

Efficient service delivery to jobseekers and employers alike remain a WDB priority. In order to ensure that Mercer County fully develops its local labor force, the WDB will continue to work with employers, institutes of higher education, training facilities and faith/community based organizations. The WDB will also continue making strides to better identify service gaps present in surrounding municipalities and develop a plan to address these problems, i.e., literacy issues, gaps in transportation, engagement of out-of-school youth, challenges faced by the long term unemployed and assessing the needs of veterans. Further, the WDB will begin preliminary discussion about the feasibility of providing services based on population needs in the Hightstown/East Windsor municipality.

Core Value 3 - Equipping the Workforce for Employment
Addresses the need to increase and strengthen communication and collaboration regarding employment requirements and prospects between the WDB and local and regional employers. This will be accomplished by the development of a communication plan with a focal message linking regional employers to the WDB as the potential primary provider of their workforce for the greater Mercer County area through the following:

- Develop procedures to optimize the use of electronic and social media to ensure
maximum impact with employer recruitment

- Identify the strategies and special initiatives that employers are using to recruit prospects
- Affirm the use of mutually understandable language and terminology

Continued collaborations with local Chambers of Commerce and the Talent Networks are both essential to equipping the workforce. Strengthening and leveraging relationships with local businesses in growth sectors and our educational institutions shall continue to be a priority.

Unfortunately, low literacy levels continue to be a barrier for many jobseekers. The WDB will continue marketing and promoting the two literacy videos that were produced, in particular the video geared for students stressing the importance of upgrading literacy skills and educational attainment. The second, that targets businesses, creates overall awareness of literacy issues and offers suggestions of how local businesses can forge partnerships with educational institutions to be part of the solution. The WDB will enlist assistance from the local Chambers of Commerce to help distribute the videos as well as place a link on the county website.

Monthly there are roughly 3,000+ county residents using the Route 130 shuttle for their transportation needs. Funding for this transportation initiative is provided through a JARC grant from NJ Transit and County matching funds. The WDB will continue marketing One Stop and literacy services, utilizing pamphlets listing local resources as well as free books (on all levels) on each shuttle.

Core Value 4 - Increasing System Accountability

WIOA and Wagner-Peyser programs are both held accountable to standards set by Performance Measures. Each local area is bound by standards set by USDOL and the State. The WDB looks beyond the required measures to identify additional measures that may be necessary to evaluate vendor performance. An example is the WDB policy that established a minimum acceptable standard of 60% for training-related employment rate. Although system accountability is a priority with other One Stop partners, there is a widely held belief that all partners should evaluate their successes based on common measurable outcomes.

The WDB Oversight Committee will continue in its role as a mechanism to assist the One Stop in assessing local programs ensuring their alignment with labor market needs. This committee will continue to meet quarterly making certain all resources that support the workforce development system are carried out as expeditiously and efficiently as possible.

F. STRATEGIES TO WORK WITH LOCAL ENTITIES

The WDB will work with local entities to strengthen the targeted industry sectors by aligning business, education, economic development, and the workforce system. The Mercer WDB will establish a process of planning, implementation and evaluation primarily through its committees. The WDB has found working through the various committees is an effective method to accomplish this. At the committee level the needs, challenges, and potential solutions for the various sectors are explored. The current WDB committees are industry- focused i.e. Health Care, Advanced Manufacturing, or population focused i.e. Disabilities, Youth, and Literacy. All committees are represented by the respective industries/populations, community college, technical school, and major partners in addition to the One Stop Operator. The One Stop Operator and/or the WIOA/WFNJ administrative entity are responsible for ensuring that the recommendations developed are followed up on. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the WBD and the One Stop system partners details the responsibility of each partner and how those responsibilities will be carried out. The Oversight Committee then reviews and evaluates the actions implemented and reports back to the WDB.
It is the intent of the industry-focused committees to collaborate in a more substantial manner with the Talent Networks to ensure that the committees have the information they need to make appropriate recommendations.

II. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

The Mercer County Workforce Development system is anchored by the Mercer County One Stop Career Center which is a comprehensive site that offers the services of the major One Stop system partners at one location. These are lead by the Mercer County Office of Training and Employment Services (MCOTES) who administers the WIOA and WorkFirst New Jersey (WFNJ) funded programs. MCOTES currently performs the functions of the One Stop Operator until there is a selection made through competitive contracting process. The Center includes the NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD) Wagner-Peyser funded Employment Services, Unemployment Insurance Compensation, and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation; the Mercer County Board of Social Services (MCBOSS) TANF case management staff; and Job Corps staff. All agencies are located in the One Stop on a full time basis.

One of strengths of the Mercer County workforce development system is the high level of collaboration, communication, and cooperation not only among the partners located at the One Stop but it extends to the other major partners in the workforce development system. These other partners are the Mercer County Office of Economic Development and Sustainability, Mercer County Community College, Mercer County Technical School, faith and community based organizations, and local employers.

According to the NJ Combined State Plan for WIOA, New Jersey is committed to locally-driven and managed One Stop Career Centers that assist individuals who are unemployed or under-employed to obtain new skills and employment. In that vein, the Mercer One Stop provides universal access to jobseekers and employers. WIOA and Wagner-Peyser services are readily available to customers in a seamless approach.

The services available at the One Stop are detailed in Section I. WDB Strategic Plan D. Analysis of the Workforce Development Activities according to the partner providing them. These services include the following for Title I WIOA Adult, Dislocated Workers, Youth; Title II Adult Education and Literacy; Title III Wagner-Peyser Employment Service; Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation; Ex-Offender Programs; Unemployment Insurance; WorkFirst New Jersey (TANF) Employment and Training Program; GA/SNAP/ABAWD Employment and Training Programs.

- Orientations (for Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment Initiative (RESEA), occupational training, WFNJ TANF, GA/SNAP/ABAWD requirements)
- Assessments (academic basic skills/literacy, English language proficiency, comprehensive career exploration
- Brief and comprehensive interviewing
- Group Job Preparation workshops
- Self-service Labor Market Information
- Introduction to Career Connections
- Self-service career exploration (NJCAN)
- Self-service job search (use of Resource room)
- Staff assisted job search
- Access to onsite positive recruitments
- Networking opportunities (Jersey Jobs Club)
III. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD ACTIVITIES

A. ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING, EDUCATION, AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

The One Stop provides access to employment, training, education and supportive services to eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment. The One Stop Operator (MCOTES) currently serves in a coordinating capacity to ensure collaboration, cooperation and open communication among One Stop partners. The partners collaborate in the creation of a seamless delivery network enhancing access to program services and integrating activities to enable customers and businesses seeking assistance to access the information and services that lead to positive employment outcomes and a well prepared workforce.

The co-located partners meet to ensure that jobseekers and employers have access to all employment, training, education, and support services available.

When new initiatives are presented by LWD, the partners meet to strategize as to the best methods of integrating those initiatives into existing programming. The RESEA and the Career Connection rollout are examples of this collaboration.

The WDB through its oversight role holds the OSO accountable to provide access to employment and training services by continuous review of program performance.

It was at the WDB committees that much of the planning for this Plan was done. There were common themes and ideas that surfaced. Two of the main themes, is that there needs to be improved communication and coordination amongst partner agencies that provide similar services in order to serve the customer better and that workforce staff needs to be better educated on the vast opportunities available especially in the areas of Health Care, Advanced Manufacturing, Transportation, Logistics and Distribution, and Retail, Hospitality and Tourism.

It is the intent of the WDB to promote and further explore the following:
- Health Care and Advanced Manufacturing offer viable occupations that many jobseekers are not aware of.
- There are many changes in those industries. In health care there is a marked shift towards preventive care. This opens up fields of study that may not have been available previously i.e. the position of “care coordinators” at one of the major hospitals in the county.

Future Programming should include:
- Improved delivery of labor market information to increase career awareness for customers leading them to make more informed training choices.
- Review of the Credentials List to identify if those credentials listed are the ones our local and regional employers are seeking.
- Vocational Career Information Fair will be explored, providing high school students and young adults the opportunity to learn about career pathways in the three major areas identified above that do not require college education yet can lead to industry recognized credentials, well-paying jobs, and career pathways.
- Mechanism to promote and alert Community College and Technical School of new positions created in local and regional companies in order to create appropriate training curricula to meet the needs of those employers.
- Partner with employers in collaboration with the Talent Networks to identify incumbent worker training needs.
- Explore apprenticeship model for new and incumbent workers.
- WDB Committee member participation in the Targeted Industry Partnership (TIP) events and encourage local/regional employer participation.
• Work with MCCC in their development of an Advanced Manufacturing Center which is currently being built.
• Increase local and regional employer participation in apprenticeship programs.

B. DEVELOPMENT OF CAREER PATHWAYS

New Jersey has adopted a common definition of Career Pathways in New Jersey’s Blueprint for Talent Development. The WDB will work to ensure that all workforce programs incorporate this definition into their programming.

Career Pathways are defined as a series of education and training experiences resulting in industry-valued credentials leading to employment, promotion and/or advanced education. Career Pathways are industry focused, have diverse entry and exit points, and include integration of adult basic skills, digital literacy, employability skilled and work-based learning, including registered apprenticeships.

One of the recurring themes that surfaced during the Plan development meetings in all of the WDB committees was the need to educate both career counseling staff as well as the customers on the career choices available and improved communication.

The WDB will support co-enrollment in WIOA and Wagner-Peyser funded programs initially through the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment initiative (RESEA). Co-enrollment in WIOA and other programs may be added in subsequent years.

C. ACCESS TO INDUSTRY VALUED CREDENTIALS

NEW JERSEY INDUSTRY-VALUED CREDENTIAL LIST (IVCL)

“National Experts estimate that by 2020, 65 percent of U.S. jobs will require some form of post-secondary credential. If current trends continue, the nationwide supply of workers with relevant degrees and credentials in 2015 will be 23 million short of the 62 million high-quality job openings American employers must fill. To close that gap, dramatic steps are needed to raise the skills levels of potential workers at every point in their careers — especially those facing barriers to employment such as low-income and first generation students, immigrants, veterans and adults who have some college but lack a credential. Training and recruiting new sources of talent from jobseekers who have been overlooked in the past will not only fill vital jobs and boost individual incomes, but will also reduce the cost of public assistance and promote greater community engagement.” New Jersey Industry-Valued Credential List – November 2016

Building on the State List of Industry Recognized Credentials the Mercer WDB will work with the Talent Networks and with employers and education partners to develop career pathways initially in the areas of Healthcare and Advanced Manufacturing as these are two of the major industries in the county — both current and future. Transportation, Logistics and Distribution; Financial Services; and Retail, Hospitality and Tourism have been targeted as areas in need of closer collaboration.

The Talent Networks particularly Healthcare and Advanced Manufacturing assist the WDB in the development of workforce initiatives designed to assist both jobseekers and local businesses. Effective and targeted workforce and education programs require understanding of employer needs and the provision of accurate and timely training to address those needs.

Mercer WDB will be working with the Talent Networks to engage employers and industry associations to contribute to the development and updating of the industry-valued credential and
degree list. Information gathered through these efforts will be utilized to develop and expand current occupational training programs and other training initiatives. Credential attainment will be added to the criteria by which training providers are evaluated by the WDB Oversight committee.

LWD has adopted a policy that that for Program Year 2016 a minimum of 50% of occupational training investments in WIOA will be focused on programs that result in industry-valued credentials. In subsequent years, the percentage will increase incrementally until PY 2021 when 80% will be the requirement. Mercer is already meeting the 50% requirement and has taken steps to ensure that this measurement is not only achieved but surpassed. Mercer utilizes performance-based contracts for ITAs where the final 25% of a program cost is held until placement and retention occur. The 10% placement benchmark is paid upon verification that employment was obtained in a training-related occupation. Under consideration for future contracts will be to tie placement and retention payments not only to training-related employment but to the attainment of an industry-recognized credential if that was the initial goal.

Training of all One Stop staff will be conducted in the coming months to assist them to become conversant and knowledgeable regarding the IVCL. We will be reviewing all current training providers and the programs they offer to ensure that the majority of customers completing training will have attained an industry recognized credential. We will add that criteria to the research that customers must complete prior to being referred to training. We will also ensure that any training program that does not offer an industry-valued credential provides effective training that will lead individuals to find viable sustainable employment. We are encouraging all current providers to ensure that they look towards providing Industry recognized credentials if they do not do so already.

**IV. EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT, COORDINATION AND LINKAGES**

**A. EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT - B. MEETING EMPLOYER NEEDS**

In accordance with the NJ Combined State Plan for WIOA, the primary goal of the Mercer County WDB is to build a stronger workforce that meets the demands and needs of local and regional employees. The Mercer Business Team comprised of LWD’s Business Service Representative (BSR) and WIOA local area representative work together in relation to employer interactions, business development, and job placement activity. The Business Resource Center (BRC), located within the One Stop, provides business solutions to small and mid-size employers. The BRC addresses workforce development requirements associated with recruitment and training. The BRC offers experienced staff to be the single point of contact to access State and County programs.

The depth of involvement of the BRC staff is dictated by the needs of the employer and can range from accepting job orders and making referrals to job openings to pre-screening, testing for basic reading and math skills, preparing jobseekers via a series of workshops, arranging for customized training or On-The-Job (OJT) training, facilitating Work Opportunities Tax Credit (WOTC) application, providing employee Federal Bonding information, facilitating Job Fairs and Positive Recruitments, etc. Job Fairs can be organized by the BRC staff according to employer needs.

One of the primary activities is the facilitation of Positive Recruitments which are employer conducted on-site interviews. Positive Recruitments can also be held at the employer site, or another suitable site (local college, community agency, etc.). The BRC and the One Stop market these recruitments through its wide network of partners and conducts preliminary pre-screening in an attempt to ensure that the employer will interview the best possible candidates. In PY 15 a total of 77 employers and 1,167 jobseekers participated in the Positive Recruitments, resulting in 205 confirmed hires. Through the first half of PY 16 we have held 58 recruitments, served 726
jobseekers resulting in 122 confirmed hires! We are confident that many more jobseekers actually were hired, but our challenge remains in obtaining hiring information from employers. We will be instituting several activities in effort to obtain more accurate outcomes.

In addition to the Positive Recruitments the One Stop hosted this past year several information sessions/and or recruitments for employers with multiple openings — PSEG seeking 100 new employees, BAI Drinks seeking 140, Great Adventure seeking 100, Marriott Courtyard seeking 60, and FedEx seeking 47. Continuous referrals are made to Amazon in Robbinsville as well as the new Amazon opening in Burlington.

It is our intent to expand both locally and regionally in our approach to business services particularly when the business needs are of a large scale. Locally we will incorporate in a more substantial way all relevant partners i.e. MCCC, MCTS, Talent Networks, WFNJ providers, OSY program providers, and faith-based and community agencies job developers in marketing the Workforce Development System services in a coordinated fashion. Currently all job openings received by the Business Resource Center and all Positive Recruitments are shared with our partner network. As the Talent Networks are charged with building new employer-driven partnerships including the creation of the Targeted Industry Partnerships (TIPs) it is hoped that this initiative will assist the WDB in meeting the needs of our employers while building new pathways that can lead our jobseekers to economic opportunity and independence.

It is also our intent to work together with our regional partners in relation to employer interactions, business development and job placement activity. This will be accomplished in part by the following:

- sharing ideas and insights on the needs of employers and industries within the region
- sharing job leads through a single point of contact method. When a BRC/One Stop brings an employer with a significant hiring or training need to the CJP, that office becomes the single point of contact for that firm. They will disseminate job orders or other information to the regions BRC/One Stops in order to maximize the system’s ability to serve the employer and link candidates from across the region to that employer. The same process will be followed when a BRC/One Stop is having difficulty finding appropriate candidates within their area.

A focus of the WDB committees will be to continuously focus on the emerging and ongoing needs of the employers in those respective industries – currently health care and advanced manufacturing. These will be expanded to include Transportation, Logistics and Distribution and Retail, Hospitality and Tourism.

C. COORDINATION OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In Mercer County the workforce development system and Economic Development are uniquely linked in that is the One Stop County partner MCOTES that administers the WIOA and WFNJ programs. MCOTES is one of the divisions under the County Department of Economic Development and Sustainability. As the county engages businesses to offer the totality of services available the WDB and One Stop are an integral part of that engagement strategy.

According to data from the NJDOLWD Projected Employment Change Chart (2014 – 2024) Mercer County is projected to add 15,935 jobs during this period. Professional, scientific, and technical services is projected to experience the most employment growth, followed by healthcare and social services, accommodation and food services and retail trade. Total employment in the county is projected to grow by 6.3%, slightly lower than the statewide rate of 6.5%. The Mercer WDB has prioritized Healthcare; Advanced Manufacturing; Transportation, Logistics, and Distribution; Financial Services; and Retail, Hospitality & Tourism as the industry clusters.
represented by New Jersey's Talent Networks in which our training and employment efforts will be focused. This decision was based on information provided by LWD, local experience, and local employers.

Mercer County WDB is currently partnering with the Talent Networks and Talent Development Centers for two of our key industry sectors – Advanced Manufacturing and Healthcare. Transportation, Logistics and Distribution; Financial Services; and Retail, Hospitality and Tourism have been targeted as areas in need of closer collaboration.

The Talent Networks particularly Healthcare and Advanced Manufacturing assist the WDB in the development of workforce initiatives designed to assist both jobseekers and local businesses. Effective and targeted workforce and education programs require understanding of employer needs and the provision of accurate and timely training to address those needs.

Mercer WDB will be working with the Talent Networks to engage employers and industry associations to contribute to the development and updating of the industry-valued credential and degree list and to assist in the development of relevant training programs.

Healthcare – the Mercer WDB Healthcare Committee in collaboration with the Healthcare Talent Network/Talent Development Center and Mercer Community College will sponsor a Healthcare Employer Forum in the summer 2017 to elicit their input on the Industry Valued Credential and Degree List and to identify specific employer needs in an effort to address those needs through the development of effective and current curricula and training programs to prepare customers for those jobs. The Committee is seeking to expand its membership to include a wide cross section of healthcare providers and health care associations

Advanced Manufacturing – the Mercer WDB Advanced Manufacturing Committee has expanded its membership to include additional employers to enable us to focus on implementing training programs that will directly benefit this industry. The partnership between this committee and the Advanced Manufacturing Talent Network has been steadily strengthening. The chair of the WDB AM Committee has been an active participant in the TIP meetings and constantly encourages other members to join. Conversely, there is a strong presence and participation by the TN on the committee.

Advanced Manufacturing employers have been actively engaged with workforce development in the County. Several serve as facilities for Technical School staff to gain professional insight on trends in this growing industry and well as sites for students to participate in structured learning experiences, job sampling, job shadowing, internships and provide mentorship opportunities. These employers also serve as members of the STEM Advisory Group providing input on programming and curriculum for the Technical School. It is our intent to participate with the Advisory Group and connect the employers with the Advanced Manufacturing Committee

This industry continues to face an image problem rooted in decades-old perspectives of “old manufacturing” and finds insufficient number of qualified workers. Coupled with many of the experienced, qualified workers starting to retire – there are insufficient number of workers prepared to replace them. This is an area that the AM Committee will focus on. One of the initiatives planned is a joint effort of the AM committee and the YIC to sponsor an informational event for youth to expose them to career paths in both the trades and AM.

The following chart is from The NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Office of Research and Information (ORI), Data for Decision Making Series November 2016
Total Jobs by Industry, Mercer County –3rd Qtr. 2010 & 3rd Qtr. 2015

Mercer County’s private sector employment totaled 153,480 in the 3rd quarter of 2015. Trade, transportation, and utilities added the most jobs between the 3rd quarters, 2010 and 2015 (+6,152).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, LEHD, 3rd Quarter 2010 and 3rd Quarter 2015 employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>2015 Q3</th>
<th>2010 Q3</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>4,682</td>
<td>4,719</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>7,592</td>
<td>8,999</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trade/Transp./Utilities</td>
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<td>Information</td>
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<td>Financial Activities</td>
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<td>Prof./Business Services</td>
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<td>Educ./Health Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leisure/Hospitality</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Services</td>
<td>6,226</td>
<td>6,261</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D. STRENGTHENING LINKAGES BETWEEN THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM AND UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PROGRAMS

As previously stated UI is a full partner that is co-located at the Mercer One Stop. This co-location facilitates the engagement of UI claimants in other workforce activities. This promotes easy access to Positive Recruitments, employability workshops, training orientations and other services.

As a collocated partner, the UI supervisor attends partner meetings. Effective communication exists amongst the partners leading to issues/complaint/problems being addressed when they occur.

One of the areas in need of improvement is the prompt notification of the availability of occupational training. Those UI claimants who visit the One Stop can easily access the information. However UI claimants that apply and/or resolve issues without visiting the One Stop would have to know that training is available in order to seek it. The availability of occupational training should be made more readily available in an effort to lead jobseekers to starting their pursuit of training earlier in their reemployment journey.
E. CREATING LINKAGES DURING PROGRAM DELIVERY BETWEEN CUSTOMERS AND EMPLOYERS

To strengthen the linkage between customers and employers the WDB will implement the following:

- Creation of a marketing plan in partnership with the County Department of Economic Development and Sustainability, Talent Networks, Mercer County Community College and Mercer County Technical School to increase awareness of LWD, WIOA, WFNJ, and WDP services among local and regional employers. This will include reaching out to local and regional chambers of commerce and other business associations – targeting the Mid-Jersey Chamber of Commerce, Princeton Area Chamber of Commerce, and the African American Chamber of Commerce. The following services will be targeted:
  - Incumbent Worker Training
  - On-the-Job Training programs
  - Customized training
  - Industry & Sector Strategies
  - Career Pathways Initiatives
  - Utilization of effective business intermediaries
  - Other business services and strategies as needed
- Engaging employers in the development of relevant employability seminars
- Ensuring that employability seminars are relevant to the needs of local and regional employers
- Targeting additional business associations for WDB membership and/or WDB committee participation in an effort to bring the concerns and business needs of their members to the WDB

V. LOCAL WDB DRIVING EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

County government is committed to facilitating the relationship between small and large businesses that operate in Mercer County with the county, state, and federal programs that exists to assist businesses with a variety of needs. The County includes the many LWD/WIOA/WFNJ services available to employers in their engagement, retention, and servicing strategies for area businesses.

Mercer has a highly skilled and educated workforce that is one of the county’s strongest assets. Residents and businesses alike enjoy our proximity to the New York and Philadelphia metropolitan areas. Our transportation infrastructure has three major train stations along the NJ Transit Northeast Corridor Line, two stations along the Philadelphia line, easy access to the NJ Turnpike and many major expressways, an extensive bus system that extends through most of the county, and special transportation resources for jobseekers, seniors, and individuals with disabilities.

In Mercer County the workforce development system and Economic Development are uniquely linked in that the One Stop County partner that administers the WIOA and WFNJ programs is one of the divisions under the County Department of Economic Development and Sustainability. As the county engages businesses to offer the totality of services available the WDB and One Stop are an integral part of that engagement strategy.

This was evident when Amazon was interested in building a million square feet distribution facility in the County. The WDB and One Stop were engaged in from the start of the planning sessions with Amazon. Mercer County One Stop took a lead role in the recruitment for the hundreds of jobs that needed to be filled Amazon Fulfillment Center (estimated at over 1,400). Recruitment
was conducted for all positions from lead trainers to fulfillment associates. In an effort to assist as many county residents as possible, the One Stop conducted daily Amazon Informational Sessions to better prepare individuals for the application and assessment process. In addition to the information provided by Amazon, Mercer One Stop developed a “tip sheet” designed to assist applicants in navigating the Amazon website and subsequent online assessment that is part of their process. We provided computer access in the Resource Room as well in the WLL to accommodate the needs of our customers. The County, LWD, and One Stop representatives conferred via conference calls, email and in person meetings with Amazon to ensure that we provided the best services possible. To quote our County Executive Brian M. Hughes “the Mercer County One Stop has an established connection to a number of talented people in our region who might find themselves to be a good fit for a career at Amazon”. We are “building a strong partnership with Amazon to connect those people with good paying jobs”.

County officials also worked with the Greater Mercer Transportation Management Association (GMTMA) to provide transportation to the park from several major NJ Transit bus routes. GMTMA successfully obtained a grant that provided and continues to provide transportation from the Hamilton Marketplace directly to the Amazon site. The ZLine is the free commuters’ link between Hamilton Marketplace and Amazon which is sponsored by Mercer County, New Jersey Transit, Amazon, and Greater Mercer TMA.

VI. ONE STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM

A. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF ONE STOP AND PROVIDERS OF SERVICE

The One Stop Partner Matrix (page 67) included with this plan was updated to accurately reflect the services provided by the partners. All services are described in the appropriate sections of the Plan.

The Mercer WDB established a One Stop Oversight Committee whose primary function is to review the services and activities carried out by the One Stop primarily those funded by WIOA, WFNJ, WLL, and other funds administered by the County. It is comprised of private sector members of the WDB. The One Stop Operator presents information at a minimum on a quarterly basis. The primary areas of review by the Committee include:

- Vendor Performance – information is provided by individual ITA vendor that includes number of customers enrolled; number terminated, number of placements, number of training-related placements, and average wage. Data is provided for the last three years. If vendors are not performing in accordance with WDB expectations, for example not meeting the 60% minimum for training-related employment, these issues will be addressed with the vendor (s) by the One Stop Operator and a follow-up report is provided to the Committee at their next meeting.
- Performance Targets – performance regarding the negotiated performance targets are reviewed for the previous quarter. If targets are not being met explanations and/or corrective action is discussed.
- Expenditures – expenditures as reported to LWD for the preceding quarter are provided.
- Annual Budget – on a yearly basis the Committee reviews the WIOA, WFNJ, WLL annual budget prior to its presentation for approval to the full WDB.
- Other relevant WDB, WIOA, WFNJ, and LWD issues and initiatives as appropriate.
The full WDB is presented with the One Stop Report that incorporates all of the activities and services of the One Stop. This Report includes:

- **Total customer flow** – number of all customers visiting the One Stop on a daily basis, some of whom make multiple visits. These include:
  - WIOA Services – Occupational Training Orientations, testing, career counseling, Workforce Learning Link, Youth Career Connection (YCC) orientations and workshops
  - Labor Exchange – resource room use, RESEA Orientation, JJC workshops, employability workshops, individual job search assistance, Re-entry orientation/workshops
  - UI Services – claimants with problems meeting with agents or utilizing UI phone
  - WFNJ TANF – customers attending TANF work requirement orientations, and/or requiring TANF case management assistance
  - WFNJ GA/SNAP/ABAWD - customers attending required orientations, participating in GA-28 initiative, requiring GA/SNAP/ABAWD case management assistance

- **WIOA Occupational Training**
  - Number of enrollments
  - Number of completions/terminations
  - Number of placements
  - Number of training-related placements
  - Average wages

- **WFNJ TANF Vendor-provided Services**
  - Level of Service (LOS)
  - Number of referrals
  - Number of enrollments
  - Number of placements

- **WFNJ GA/SNAP/ABAWD Vendor-provided Services**
  - Level of Service (LOS)
  - Number of referrals
  - Number of enrollments
  - Number of placements

- **Business Services – Positive Recruitments**
  - Number of events
  - Number of jobseekers served
  - Number of confirmed hires

- **Business Services – On-the-Job Training (OJT)**
  - Number of contracts
  - Number of served
  - Number of completed
  - Number of retained

- **Youth Services - In-School Youth**
  - Level of Service (LOS)
  - Number of enrollments
  - Number of completions
  - Number of HSE attainment
  - Number of job placement/post-secondary enrollment
• Youth Services - Out-of-School Youth
  o Level of Service (LOS)
  o Number of enrollments
  o Number of exits
  o Number of HSE attainment
  o Number of internship
  o Number of job placement/post-secondary enrollment

• Special Events/Initiatives

• Customer and Employer “Success Stories”

We have created a Regional approach to staff development and training that includes WDBs and One-Stops but also staff working in similar roles of case management, career guidance, and business services at regional education partners, Employment Services, community colleges and other WIOA system partners and collaborating institutions. As with BSR and monitoring collaboration, CJP will engage all staff in common functions together for best practice development and shared learning. The CJP will bring the various common role/function groups together regularly through annual conferences and/or training workshops to share insights and learn together.

Our approach to staff development will include an individual assessment of each staff member’s needs. Training will include technical, job specific modules. The region will focus on Professional Skills Development including: Assessment, Career Counseling, Career Pathways, and Job Development. In addition, training for staff will include a comprehensive list of topics such as:

- Customer Service skills
- Time Management skills
- Effective and Efficient note taking
- Cultural Diversity training
- Computer skills
- Staff to become more knowledgeable of local resources, training services and opportunities, and grants available for training (other than NGO WIOA)
- Resource opportunities of services in the community

A subcommittee of the Central Jersey Partners has been established and will develop specific shared strategies to serve Out of School Youth. A Youth Planning Conference that includes key regional partners may be an outcome of that committee. The overall strategy is to meet the WIOA requirement of 75% Out of School Youth by increasing resources that provide High School Equivalency, Paid Work Experience, apprenticeships and internships. Increased outreach in building community and business partnerships will be a focus. The long-term goal will be continuous improvement of youth programming.

MERCER COUNTY ONE-STOP REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL PROCESS

The Workforce Development Board and the One-Stop follow the guidelines and regulations for procurement of competitive contracting procedures outlined in accordance with the following:

- NJ Local Public Contract Law N.J.S.A. 40A:11-1 et seq, current as of April 1, 2014
- County of Mercer, Administering Competitive Contracting
- Office of Management and Budget (OMB) 2 CFR Chapter I, II and III Part 200 et al
- State Employment and Training Association (SETC), New Jersey Combined State Plan for WIOA, 2016
- New Jersey One-Stop Workforce Development Local Plan Four-Year
- Central Jersey Partners Regional Plan
- The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 guidance and regulations
We will continue to update this list as more guidance becomes available from the State and federal government.

The Central Jersey Partners have been meeting since November 2015 to prepare for regional planning. At this point in time regional procurement has not been formalized and until such time Mercer will continue to utilize the processes in place.

To initiate the procurement process the Mercer County Freeholders must approve a Resolution that authorizes competitive contracting. The resolution is valid for a two (2) or three (3) year period.

Competitive contracts follow the funding of each Program Year and can be awarded for a one (1) year period, a one (1) year period with an Option to Extend into a second year if all performance measures have been met, or for a two (2) year period. At all times continuation funding in the 2\textsuperscript{nd} year of the contract is contingent upon the receipt of funding and the provider’s performance. This process will continue until the County Purchasing Agent and/or Counsel's Office or the State of New Jersey institutes a change.

The One-Stop initiates the competitive contracting process by releasing a public notice to announce the program. The notice is designed to reach the maximum number of vendors through a fair an open process and is made available on the release date through the following sources:
- The Times of Trenton newspaper
- Posted on the Mercer County website
- Sent out by email to those on the One-Stop Request for Proposal Notification List.
- Sent out through the Mercer County Human Services List Serve email system
- All who request a copy of the RFP are responded to quickly and no fee is charged.

RFP’s for competitive contracts follow a timeline of activities and dates are given of dates for the following:
- Public Notice of release of RFP includes the following information:
  - Purpose of the RFP
  - Date for submission of the RFP
  - Estimated Funding available
  - Date for Technical Assistance Workshop with date, place and time.
  - Evaluation criteria that will be used in review of proposal
  - Agency eligibility
  - Addenda: Information: in the event there is a substantive change to any information in the RFP addenda will be issued. Addenda will be posted on the County web site and a letter sent to all who had requested a copy of the RFP.
- RFP is open for a minimum of 20 business days not counting weekends or holidays.
- Questions from the workshop are posted on the WDB web site 7-days prior to submission
- Questions and Answers from the workshop with the attendance list are emailed to all attendees of the workshop
- Date for submission of RFP and public reading of proposal received
- Proposal committee review and evaluation period
- Notification of awards
- Contract preparation
- Approval by Board of Chosen Freeholders

**RFP EVALUATION PROCESS**

All proposals received are reviewed by an Evaluation Committee to determine if they satisfy program needs as requested in the RFP and a ranking report is issued based on the scores received.
All Respondent proposals are evaluated utilizing the methodology as outlined below and successful proposals must:

- Present a very clear outline of their program in the written narrative
- Meet the programmatic needs identified in the RFP
- Include a listing of resources identified for use in the program
- Include all documentation requested
- Have budgets that are fiscally responsible, prudent, reasonable, and allowable
- Have received the highest-ranking scores based on the evaluation criteria

Contract Awards are made to Respondents whose proposals receive the highest-rankings that meet the needs identified in the RFP, whose programs are most advantageous to attaining the stated program goals and objectives, with price and other factors considered. All proposals that do not meet a minimum 70% score will not be considered for an award. Recommendations for awarding of contracts will be forwarded from the Workforce Development Board to the Mercer County Administration and the Mercer County Board of Chosen Freeholders for approval of award.

The evaluation criteria and point value used in the evaluation process for the WIOA Youth and WFNJ contracts are outlined below:

**Technical Merit - 5 points**: Technical Merit is based on compliance with all significant proposal instructions and the inclusion of all requested documentation, attachments and certifications. Non-compliance with this documentation is grounds for disqualification.

**Program Design and Implementation – 50 points**: This section should outline the knowledge and professional competence of the organization. High quality service is of maximum importance to the County. If the program, as written, is difficult to understand evaluation points will be lost. The written narrative must communicate the respondent’s understanding of the technical skills necessary to provide a successful program. The narrative must incorporate the required program elements and components with a solid curriculum and a realistic timeline to achieve the program goals and outcomes.

**Previous Experience – 15 points**: All respondents must have at least 1-year of experience serving the same or a similar population. The respondent must demonstrate their previous performance and accountability. Providers who have contracted with the One-Stop need to provide past experience information that is accurately reflected in the One-Stop internal data. Providers who have not previously contracted with the One-Stop will include a list of references that may be contacted.

**Program Administration – 10 points**: The program administration section asks for the experience and qualifications of all personnel associated with the proposed program. A program manager must be identified by title and their responsibilities defined. Key staff positions and responsibilities need to be identified with a current resume and/or, if not hired, to include a job description that outlines responsibilities. Any subcontractors used must have complete program information included.

**Fiscal and Budget – 20 points**: The programs fiscal and budget information is reviewed for effective and efficient use of public funds and to make sure all costs are justified, explained and are allowable within the funding requirements. Competitive preference is given to proposals that have well-constructed budgets that are prudent, reasonable and implement cost-effective approaches to the development and delivery of program services. The budgets must also demonstrate the effective coordination of the organizations leveraged costs with proposed Mercer County funding. Detail on any subcontractor funding must be justified and explained.

The fiscal section also has a minimum funding section. In New Jersey competitive contracts are not allowed to be negotiated. Any increase or decrease to a contract will be based on the Cost
per Participant (CPP) as submitted if proposals submitted are above the funding threshold or funding resources available, and/or would not allow for other programs as needed.

Prior to regionalization Mercer County was a member of “The Quad” that included the counties of Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth and Ocean. The master agreement that is currently being used for Individual Training Agreement vendors in Mercer was based on the agreement used by “The Quad”. Mercer County will continue to work with the Central Jersey Partners to modify ITA agreements and incorporate changes as they are finalized.

The Central Jersey Partners have been preparing for instituting regional planning of Training Provider services. This work has focused on operational processes and outreach to additional partners in the regional planning area including community college, vocational schools, community-based and faith-based organizations, and businesses from key industry sectors in the Region.

**PROCESS FOR UTILIZING ELIGIBLE TRAINING PROVIDERS LIST (ETPL)**

The Central Jersey Partners are committed to a more formal strategy of coordination and collaboration at all levels of the region’s respective workforce services and organizations. CJP will focus on a number of service delivery strategies that are in place and will be expanded and enhanced during the period of this plan. The Mercer County Workforce Development Board and the One-Stop will begin a system that replicates a region-wide process for working with and overseeing vendors, and in particular trainers on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL).

As a region the individual WDBs use many of the same vendors across borders and boundaries in order to coordinate work and simplify the process for vendors to become training providers and work as vendors across the four WDBs in the Region. In the planning process the Master Agreement can be generated in common as one main document, and include sub-agreements where needed for requirements unique to the individual counties/WDBs. The CJP Individual Training Account Master Agreements for WIOA, WDP Contracts will include the following:

- Outline of roles and responsibilities for the County and each provider
- Detail curriculum requirements
- Address funding sources including guidance on how Pell Grants are to be utilized
- Details payment conditions and documentation requirements
- Provides guidance on monitoring and program and fiscal auditing requirements
- Include each trainer’s curriculum and other required training program materials as evidence of the commitment to provide the training.

Building on the State list of Industry Recognized Credentials, the region will work with employers and Talent Networks to identify a sub-list of trainings and credentials that are of highest demand and priority within the region and work to guide customers toward those trainings.

- Build stronger partnerships with economic development entities in the region as the Region’s WDBs have varying levels of interaction with their county and other economic development entities and will work together to enhance these.
- In collaboration with employers, Community Colleges, and vocational schools, develop a menu of career pathways common within and across the Region.

**REVIEW OF SUB-GRAANTEE BUDGETS AND REPORT**

WFNJ and Youth program provider budgets are reviewed initially when proposals are submitted and on an ongoing basis when invoices are submitted for payment. This comprehensive review process is to ensure payments are reasonable, allocable, and allowable:

- Submission of monthly customer status reports for ongoing monitoring of levels of service in addition to onsite monitoring
• Expenditures for One Stop program services are reviewed by the WDB Oversight committee on a quarterly basis.

DESCRIPTION OF MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE

Mercer has developed a structured monitoring process that focuses on reviewing vendors for compliance with contractual obligations as well as adherence to our established policies and procedures. In order to accomplish this, appropriate monitoring packets will be utilized for the monitoring of both the ITA’s and the WFNJ and Youth Programs. The revised process includes written notification to the vendor of the findings (both positive and negative). If an issue is raised, it will be addressed with the provider during the visit giving them the opportunity to resolve it. Subsequent to the visit, the vendor will be notified via written correspondence of the final results. If a recommendation or corrective action is required the vendor will be provided with sufficient time to address the deficiency and a subsequent visit will be made.

Monitoring is conducted on all contracts utilizing ITA’s and for all contracts obtained as a result of a Request for Proposal (RFP) process.

INDIVIDUAL TRAINING AGREEMENT MONITORING

ITA monitoring is conducted by WDB staff. All ITA providers are monitored on an annual basis unless there are significant findings. A pre-visit Desk Review is conducted to obtain information on the number of students that have enrolled, their start dates, their training program, expected end date, to see if there have been any complaints from customers, etc. The monitor then contacts the vendor to schedule an appointment for the monitoring visit. The following is included in the on-site review:

- Instructor’s questionnaire which includes a review of the availability of credential attainment, adequate books and materials, number of hours of instruction, testing procedures, etc.
- The student’s questionnaire includes a review of student’s expectations, availability of equipment/books/materials, classroom hours, satisfaction of training, etc.

The monitor summarizes the findings and submits them to the WDB Director. The WDB Director then sends a copy to the One Stop Operator. If issues need to be addressed they are done so by the One Stop staff. Revised monitoring procedures now require that the results of the monitoring visit are sent to the vendor.

The CJP is also planning to consolidate monitoring of ITA providers on the ETPL list. The WDBs share a large number of training providers in common, and currently each monitors them through their own internal processes. Through the building a monitoring team the CJP will develop a shared monitoring calendar and a list of those trainers held in common across multiple WDBs. One monitoring visit can be conducted during a monitoring period with these entities, and the information and monitoring report shared across the Region. CJP proposes in the future to coordinate all monitoring staff activities to create a unified reporting system and better focus on expanding monitoring efforts and visits. This will save significant staff time and effort.

MONITORING OF SUB-GRANTEES WFNJ AND WIOA YOUTH PROVIDERS

Program Monitoring is conducted by the One Stop Deputy Director of Programs. All WFNJ TANF/GA/ABAWD will be visited once during the contract year and WIOA Youth Program vendors will be visited twice during the contract year.
WFNJ TANF and GA/SNAP/ABAWD - The One Stop WFNJ team is in continual communication with our providers via phone, e-mail, onsite visits, and regularly scheduled meetings. This communication gives us the opportunity to address any issue on an ongoing basis before they escalate. A pre-visit Desk Review is conducted to obtain information on the number of customers enrolled, their current status, their start dates, expected end date, etc. The Deputy Director of Programs then contacts the vendor to schedule an appointment for the monitoring visit. The on-site review of TANF and GA/SNAP/ABAWD vendors includes the following:

- Review of their Monthly Customer Status Reports that provide - cumulative statistics focusing primarily on enrollment and placement
- Documentation and customer files - attendance, status change forms, employment verifications, monthly case notes, customer satisfaction surveys
- Attendance - customers in attendance
- Observation of classroom activities - adherence to curriculum, activities, timeline, etc.
- Interview/discussion with customers to get program feedback
- Discussion with Vendor Program Contact to review findings, program enhancements and give immediate feedback

In addition to the onsite visits, TANF and GA/SNAP/ABAWD Program vendors are monitored utilizing the following:

- Review of the monitoring reports provided by the DHS Division of Family Development which has implemented quality assurance procedures to verify the accuracy of client-level employment and work activities data reported to the Administration for children and Families. DFD selects cases from their eTimesheet database for review. Any issues raised by DFD staff are also addressed by the One Stop WFNJ Manager
- Review of the Monthly Customer Status Reports (assist in keeping track of enrollments to ensure vendor is on track to meet their LOS and customer status)
- Vendor attendance at bi-weekly meetings
- Financial review by Fiscal Staff to ensure that expenditures have been made against the cost categories and within the cost limitations specified in the Act.

Youth Programs - The One Stop Youth Team is in continual communication with our providers via phone, e-mail, onsite visits, and meetings. This communication gives us the opportunity to address any issue on an ongoing basis before they escalate. A pre-visit Desk Review is conducted to identify the contracted LOS against the number of youth enrolled at the time of the visit, identification of the WIOA Program Elements provided by the vendor, identification of the type of visit (routine, follow-up etc.), and the listing of any previous or outstanding issues.

On-site review of Youth Providers includes the following:

- Program file content to ensure that appropriate assessments have been administered, ISS development has been initiated, and that all necessary documentation is being gathered to support the attainment of WIOA goals
- Facilities review to ensure the safety of youth
- Attendance records to ensure that adequate records are being maintained
- Observation of classroom activities to ensure that the activities being provided are in accordance with what is stated in the contract and that the program contact staff are aware of their contractual obligations.

In addition to the onsite visits, Youth Program vendors are monitored utilizing the following:

- Eligibility certification on site at the vendor’s site
- Review of the Monthly Customer Status Reports (assist in keeping track of enrollments and youth customer progress)
- Review of Attendance sheets submitted with invoices (usually on monthly basis to keep track of youth progress)
• Review of Program files content – utilized to ensure that projected goals and outcomes have been met and that appropriate documentation is provided and to approve/not approve performance-based payments based on results and
• Financial review by Fiscal Staff to ensure that expenditures have been made against the cost categories and within the cost limitations specified in the Act.

B. ACCESS TO SERVICES THROUGH THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

The WDB facilitates access to services by continuously marketing the workforce development services through the use of available technology currently Career Connections (formerly Jobs for Jersey). As mentioned previously the WDB and MCOTES will market Career Connections to all libraries in the county and make presentations at faith-based and community based organizations. We are exploring utilizing Metrix as a way of providing access to training opportunities through the use of technology.

C. SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 188 OF THE ACT

The WDB ensures that the Mercer One Stop is in compliance with Section 188 of the Americans with Disabilities Act regarding non-discrimination and applicable provisions of the Act. The One Stop ensures physical accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs fully accessible and offers the necessary accommodations to provide jobseekers with disabilities access to all available services. Printed materials advise customers to inform staff if special accommodations are needed.

One of the advantages of the Mercer One Stop is not only the co-location of the DVR office but the level of collaboration between the agencies. The co-location referrals to and from the DVR office are seamless to the customer. The DVR Manager is a full participant in the One Stop Partner meetings and plays a major role on the WDB Disabilities Issues committee.

Changes in WIOA Title IV funding allow for improved services to this population. Major changes include:

• Counselor training in the four priority areas: reemployment to reduce the amount of time individuals are unemployed; opportunity to increase the number of people who are on the path to economic opportunity; alignment to increase the number of individuals receiving industry valued degrees or credentials; increased accountability and emphasis placed on services to youth with disabilities.
• Changes to employment programs from emphasis on integrated employment opportunities to expanding supported employment limitation
• Change to WIOA Title IV in New Jersey’s Combined State Plan which include DVR’s ability to provide group services, increase in counselor (job coach) monitoring of worksites, and increased employer participation.

The WDB Disabilities Issues Committee will “monitor” these anticipated changes to check for progress by the following:

• In the coming year, the need for additional training of non-DVR One Stop staff will be explored to ensure that all staff is sensitive to the needs of individuals with disabilities in order to ensure improved services.
• Explore integration of programs in particular between DVR and WIOA youth programs i.e. after students receive their job readiness skills and short term internships DVR can refer students into WIOA training and/or a longer term internship.
Mercer County ensures that local WIOA staff are compliant with section 188 of the Act regarding non-discrimination and applicable provisions of the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42USC 12101 et seq). The One Stop is fully accessible and offers the necessary accommodations to provide job seekers with disabilities effective and meaningful participation in all job seeker services. The One-Stop Center completed a comprehensive review in 2010 utilizing the Physical Accessibility Checklist for both facilities and services. All signage, lighting and building accessibility were in compliance.

The One Stop will engage the LWD Office of Technical Assistance to help identify and facilitate staff training needs in the use of assistive technology/software for customer accessibility and any additional training needs identifies resulting from the One Stop accessibility Checklist. An Assessment of Programmatic and Physical Accessibility of the One Stop will be conducted within the next few months. Results will be reported to the WDB Disabilities Committee and to the full WDB. DVR is an integral partner in the services delivered in the One Stop. Co-location offers the opportunity for quick and easily accessible access to DVR staff when needed.

The printed material produced by the One Stop contains language requesting customers to inform staff if assistance is required in the form of onsite accommodations. All presentations also request customers to do same.

The One Stop has bilingual staff who can offer language resource assistance in Spanish, French and Creole. The Triage staff has access to Language List that can be used when needed. This list contains languages coded into a platform hosted by Voiance. When a code is entered the call will route to the interpreter queue for that language. Admittedly we have had little experience utilizing this service but are prepared to utilize it if/when necessary.

Both the Resource Room and the Learning Link are equipped with furniture to accommodate wheelchairs and computers that read text and audio for the hearing-impaired.

A directory of Sign Language Interpreters is available at the Triage Desk.

The Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) Transportation program, through the Mercer County WDB and NJ Transit for the Route 130 corridor is fully accessible. The 130 Bus offers a route-deviation service, where the bus is allowed to deviate from the route served for destinations within ½ mile.

The Disabilities Committee will serve as the main vehicle to conduct oversight of the One Stop Center to ensure compliance.

D. ONE STOP CUSTOMER FLOW

The Mercer County One Stop Career Center is a comprehensive site that offers all services of the major One Stop system partners at one location. These are lead by the County of Mercer who administers the WIOA and WorkFirst New Jersey (WFNJ) funded programs. It includes the NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD) Wagner-Peyser funded Employment Services, Unemployment Insurance (UI) Compensation, and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation; Mercer County Board of Social Services (MCBOSS) TANF case management staff; and Job Corps staff. All agencies are located in the One Stop on a full time basis.

One of strengths of the Mercer County workforce development system is the high level of collaboration and cooperation not only among the partners located at the One Stop but extends to the other major partners in the workforce development system - Mercer County Economic Development, Mercer County Community College, Mercer County Technical School, faith and community based organizations, and local employers.
Mercer One Stop partners have created a seamless delivery network enhancing access to program services, and integrating activities enabling individuals and businesses seeking assistance to have access to information and services that lead to positive employment and career outcomes.

Mercer’s customer flow follows the “One Stop Operations Future State” flowchart created by LWD and has been in effect since collocation occurred ten years ago. All customers stop at the Triage/Welcome Desk (currently staffed by WIOA County staff). The customer’s next step is dictated by the reason for their visit. The attached Mercer County One Stop Triage and Customer Flow chart is in the process of being revised and updated by the Partners to reflect services listed below that are currently not listed.

One Stop services include:
- Resource Room use
- Unemployment Insurance Service
- Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment Initiative Orientation
- Job Preparation Workshops
- Job Referrals
- Individual Job Search Assistance
- Training Orientation
- Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) Testing
- WIOA Eligibility Certification
- WIOA Career Counseling initial or follow-up appointment
- Workforce Learning Link
- Positive Recruitments
- Veterans Services
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- GA/SNAP/ABAWD Orientation
- GA/SNAP/ABAWD Case Management
- GA-28 Orientation
- GA-28 Job Search
- TANF Orientation
- TANF Case Management

E. ONE STOP PARTNERS – ROLES AND RESOURCE CONTRIBUTIONS

The Mercer County One Stop Career Center is a comprehensive site that offers all services of the major One Stop system partners at one location. These are led by the County of Mercer who administers the WIOA and WorkFirst New Jersey (WFNJ) funded programs. It includes the NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD) Wagner-Peyser funded Employment Services, Unemployment Insurance (UI) Compensation, and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation; Mercer County Board of Social Services (MCBOSS) TANF case management staff; and Job Corps staff. All agencies are located in the One Stop on a full time basis.

The One Stop Career Center Partners through the current Memorandum of Understanding have agreed to the following:

Each partner will make available to customers the programs or activities in accordance with the regulatory governmental laws (County, State or Federal), the respective regulations, statutes, eligibility policies, procedures and directives of its grantor agency and funding sources, and all partners function in separateness mandated by Federal or State law, rules and regulations that will not be violated or abridged.

Partners will participate in the continuous development of the One-Stop policies, procedures and operational agreements through a team approach to serving and achieving the non-duplication of
services and in meeting all of the performance standards and service goals.

Partners will be responsible for marketing programs of the One-Stop Career Center within the community.
Partners will agree to provide all necessary reports and information and to attend meetings upon request of the WDB and/or its standing and ad hoc committees.

Partners will meet regularly to review and improve workflow, policies, procedures, referrals and delivery of employment and training services.

Partners will support State and regional planning of workforce strategies that provide a pipeline of working with In-Demand skills and drive economic growth and development.

Partners will ensure the delivery of quality labor market and career information that enables workforce professional to provide quality career counseling and to enable the workforce system customers make informed career and service delivery choices.

Partners will agree to respect and comply with each agency’s policies regarding confidentiality. Guidelines and protocol for use of the informational release form shall be developed in an ongoing basis reviewed and continuously monitored to ensure compliance.

In order to offer the best possible services, all partners will participate in a regular and on-going process of program review striving for continuous improvement and customer satisfaction seeking opportunities for further integration and expansion of services. Partners will agree to participate in an on-going and comprehensive system review and process mapping in order to alleviate duplication, unnecessary delay, or overlap and identify gaps in services.

Partners will provide or allow cross-informational training of appropriate staff to ensure staff awareness of each agency’s mission, terminology and eligibility criteria to ensure that customers have access to all workforce programs for which they are eligible.

Partners will agree, subject to confidentiality constraints, to utilize information sharing intake, referral and participant tracking system. The referral process will be reciprocal and partners will retain the right to accept or reject referrals based upon agency eligibility criteria or financial limitations.

Partners will jointly share technology and information, including testing scores, assessments and progress notes.

Each partner agency will cooperate to ensure that the service plans, placements and termination for mutually served participants are coordinated.

Partners will agree to regularly convene to address the needs of our employers and the business community. Partners agree to participate in the operation and evolution of the One-Stop system by:

a) Employing customer satisfaction monitoring activities as directed by WDB policy
b) Guaranteeing to reserve usage of any One-Stop technology exclusively for One-Stop activities
c) Placing computers provided for job-search activities in area(s) accessible to all staff and the public
d) Providing a telephone line and the monthly Internet connection at the agency’s expense
e) Ensuring that all items are insured at replacement value or value depreciation through the partner’s office contents insurance policy, supplying all consumables, such as paper, toner and ink cartridges, and after the warranty period ends, providing maintenance of the computers as needed
f) Agreeing to share all employer job openings within two days of receipt with Employment Services Partner so that all posted jobs are available to all One-Stop customers

h) Agreeing to participate in a computer-based communication system as they are developed

i) Committing to the joint preparation of a document reflective of local unified planning of the One-Stop system.

VII. ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKER EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES

Activities for Adult and Dislocated Workers are provided through the Mercer County One Stop in accordance with the activities outlined in the New Jersey Combined Plan. Services include:

- Orientation to One Stop services – through RESEA and Training Orientations
- Literacy and Occupational skills Assessment – utilizing TABE, Best-Plus, NJ CAN
- Labor Market Information – utilizing Career Connections
- Development of an Employability Development Plan – identification of short and long term career goals & steps necessary to attain those goals
- Opportunity to increase basic literacy skills – through the Workforce Learning Link
- Career Counseling – pre-during-post occupational training enrollment
- Training – through the use of an ITA, Tuition Waiver, OJT, Opportunity 4 Jersey, Specialized Partner programs such as Ready To Work
- Group Job Readiness – i.e. interviewing skills, basic and advanced resume writing, using social media for job search, etc.
- Access to Positive Recruitments & individual job orders generated by the BRC
- Follow-up services – designed to promote job retention and prompt reemployment as necessary

Currently ITA contracts do not include a mandatory employability skills component. The WDB is exploring how best to incorporate this much needed service to not only the ITAs but extend it to include all occupational training provided to better prepare customers for long term employment. The employability skills component will include retention skills training which is critical for career advancement. This becomes even more critical as the WIOA Performance Measures have been extended to include the 2nd and 4th quarters after exit as a measurement of success.

The WDB is also exploring the use of e-learning utilizing Metrix as a way to provide training for those that cannot participate in a traditional in classroom setting due to lack of transportation, child care, learning style, or perhaps the customer only needs one specific skill to be more marketable.

VIII. RAPID RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

NJDLWD assists employers and workers involved in a closing or permanent mass layoff by providing workforce development information and services needed by those employees to be laid off in a prompt, efficient manner at their site. The WDB and One Stop are notified when WARN notices are sent for a business within Mercer County. Currently the Business Representative assigned to the Mercer One Stop is on the Rapid Response (RR) team. Oftentimes they meet with the employer’s management and union personnel to develop a plan to serve the company’s workforce. Resources are made available to the employer and employees to support this difficult transition for both parties.
Additional One Stop staff may attend sessions to assist or to provide specific information in particular as it relates to training. The RR team assists both the employer and the laid off workers by providing on-site assistance during their business hours and at no cost to the employer or employees. Each Talent Network is relied upon to contribute as needed in their specific industry.

At a minimum the following services are provided during a RR session:

- UI information – to include an explanation of benefits and eligibility requirements and on-site assistance in filing claims
- Reemployment Services - One Stop Registration, One Stop Services Orientation, and Labor market Information, Occupational Training information.

The WDB director will work closely with the MCOTES director, the RR team and other entities as required to coordinate the local/regional area RR activities. The current information provided at the sessions will be reviewed to assess if there is a need to add information and/or services to the presentations. These may include support services available through the workforce development system and/or community resources to assist during the employees’ transition from this job to the next i.e. assistance with heating/air conditioning bills, local food banks, foreclosure assistance programs, etc.

IX. YOUTH SERVICES

A. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES AND PROCUREMENT

The Youth Investment Council set the priorities for the youth programs by establishing that a minimum of 75% of youth funds would be targeted to serve out-of-school youth. The WIOA Youth budget was prepared in accordance with that mandate. The One Stop ensured that a minimum of 75% of the funds available for contracting were targeted to and awarded for OSY services. Less than 3% of youth staff was allocated to ISY programs. The OSY programs solicited were designed to provide job readiness and HSE attainment. Contracts were awarded to the following: Mercer County Community College (who also operates one of the Youth Corps), Isles (who also operates a YouthBuild program), and Latinas Unidas (under the auspices of the YWCA Princeton). All programs include transportation assistance, payment for HSE testing fees, and stipends to assist youth to offset their training expenses.

In addition to the awarded contracts, services to OSY are provided by the One Stop’s Youth Career Connection (YCC) staff. Services include assessment, job readiness, occupational training, case management, paid internships, and job search assistance. The internships are for a 3-6 month period and include the provision of bus passes for the first three months. These are vital components for program success. They also address the 75% OSY expenditure and the 20% work experience expenditure requirements.

The overall services for youth programs provide the 14 WIOA elements listed below. The services are provided by the OSY and ISY service providers in addition to the YCC Team at the One Stop.

1. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that leads to completion of the recognized high school equivalent credential or for a recognized postsecondary credential.
2. Alternative secondary school services or dropout recovery services.
3. Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.
4. Leadership development opportunities
5. Supportive services
6. Adult mentoring for the period of participation
7. Mandatory 12-Month Follow-up services
8. Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral
9. Financial literacy education
10. Entrepreneurial skills training
11. Labor market information and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area
12. Preparation for transition to the One-Stop Youth Career Connection Program for internships, on-the-job training and/or postsecondary education and training.
13. Summer employment opportunities that are directly linked to academic and occupational learning
14. As appropriate, paid and unpaid work experience, including internships and job shadowing.

IN-SCHOOL YOUTH SERVICE PROVIDER PROGRAMS

The in-school youth programs focus on youth who are in the last year of high school between the ages of 16 - 21. The primary goal of In-School Youth (ISY) programs is the attainment of a High School Diploma credential. The secondary goal of these programs is to prepare the youth for entry into post-secondary education or employment after program completion. Youth should also be prepared for future employment by learning life coping skills, work readiness skills development, financial literacy training, and the acquisition of the skills needed to successfully navigate their future in the job market.

The goals of the ISY programs are to assist youth who are at risk of dropping out of school to remain in school and attain their high school diploma and to enter into post-secondary education or employment. The current providers are Mercer County Community College and the Mercer County Special Services School District. Both programs provide summer employment opportunities.

The One-Stop requires that providers design their program to include a summer employment component with strong linkages between the academic instruction they receive (based on State academic content and student academic achievement standards) and work readiness skills. Throughout the program the provider will work with the youth to identify career preferences and a career pathway so that at program completion the youth will be able to immediately transition into an internship, on-the-job training, or full time employment, or into a post-secondary school or occupational, vocational or apprenticeship training program. In-School Youth Providers are also required to include the following work readiness skills components:

1. Goal Setting, i.e. educational, career, employment, personal
2. Intensive Life-coping Skills, i.e. decision-making, self-esteem building, resisting peer pressure, acceptance of constructive criticism, supervision and guidance, personal hygiene, stress reduction and management, time management, etc.
3. Work Readiness Skills, i.e. effective communication and listening skills; appropriate behavior, language and attire for the workplace; interviewing skills in preparation seeking employment, and learning relevant questions to ask at job interviews particularly for those entering the workforce after graduation
4. Job Search Skills, i.e. resume preparation, job search techniques and sources, employer research, online applications, follow-up, etc., particularly for those entering the workforce after graduation
5. Fiscal Literacy, i.e. budgeting, money management, consumerism, etc.
6. Job Retention Skills, i.e. attendance and punctuality, accepting supervision, working with colleagues, following directions, etc.
7. HSPA and SAT Preparation (if applicable).
OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH SERVICE PROVIDER PROGRAMS

The Out-of-School Youth programs will focus on individuals between the ages of 18 – 24 years old. Through a partnership with the One-Stop’s Youth Career Connection Program (YCC) (information detailed below) and the providers who have been competitively selected to provide the OSY program. Out-of-School Youth programs will include the following services:

- Orientation to program services
- Comprehensive assessment of academic, career and job readiness
- Labor Market Information
- Career exploration
- Career counseling
- Occupational training programs
- HSE preparation and testing
- Paid Internship opportunities
- Job search assistance
- Referral to other appropriate services for OSY, i.e. Youth Corps, Job Corps, YouthBuild
- Preparation for Summer employment opportunities
- Follow-up Services.

The intent and purpose of the out-of-school youth programs is to secure the attainment of a High School Equivalency (HSE) credential and to acquire the work readiness skills necessary to prepare the young adults for meaningful employment. Additionally the youth will be equipped with valuable life skills, career exploration and job readiness skills. The Mercer County Workforce Development Board (WDB), in concert with the Youth Investment Council (YIC), and the MCOTES are committed to building a system of high quality services that will provide needed education, training, and mentoring opportunities to enhance future overall employment prospects for the youth of Mercer County.

Providers target youth who have dropped out of high school and do not possess a High School Diploma or its recognized equivalent and who are not currently attending any school. The youth targeted have many barriers to education and employment. They will require individualized and intensive long-term services to improve their job and career options in the expectations of supporting the development of a strong regional economy.

All programs are designed to help the youth succeed as adults and to meet the needs of employers and businesses through inclusion of the following:

1. Preparation and testing for a High School Equivalency (HSE) credential
2. Attainment of life skills required for success on the job
3. Attainment and training in work readiness skills and attitudes necessary for employment
4. Attainment of job search skills and preparation for seeking and attaining employment
5. Introduction to current Labor Demand Occupations as well as career ladder options
6. Attainment of knowledge of financial literacy and responsible attitudes and practices for managing income
7. Development of leadership skills through group and community activities
8. Individualized case management throughout the program
9. Provision of mentoring opportunities for character growth and development
10. Knowledge of community services and programs in order to avail themselves of those services when necessary.

The goals of the out-of-school youth program are the attainment of the HSE and for the youth to be able to immediately transition into employment or further post-secondary, vocational, occupational or apprenticeship training programs. If the provider is not making the connection to employers themselves they can refer the youth to the One-Stop’s Youth Career Connection Program. The One-Stop has the resources to place the youth into an internship, on-the-job training or employment. They also have funding to place the youth into further post-secondary, vocational, occupational or apprenticeship training programs.
MERCER COUNTY ONE STOP YOUTH CAREER CONNECTION PROGRAM (YCC)

Mercer County has designed and launched this program in response to the areas employer’s needs to hire young adults who are ready to work and to prepare the youth to be competitive and attractive to prospective employer in the current economic conditions.

Through this initiative Mercer County will partner with businesses, the community and faith based agencies and the career connection program will prepare young adults to enter the workforce. The YCC will provide an orientation, comprehensive assessment, occupational training and case management while participating employers will provide relevant, valuable work experiences through internships. This program will serve youth ages 18 - 24 years old that are economically disadvantaged and have barriers to employment including a lack of education. The program is provided by One-Stop YCC staff and our partners and it is outlined in the three (3) phases below:

**Phase I** - is for youth who have a HSD or HSE and are basic skills deficient and those who do not have a HSD or HSE. Those who have a HSD or HSE will enter an intensive 3-week job readiness component designed to prepare youth for internships. The curricula will include career exploration and goal setting, application and resume development, presentation and interviewing skills, employer expectations, job retention strategies, money management, leadership development and if applicable referrals to supportive services (childcare, transportation assistance, etc.)

Youth who do not have their HSD or HSE will be referred to one of the OSY programs that have been competitively selected and their main emphasis is on an academic education that will lead to the attainment of a HSE credential and the acquisition of job readiness skills.

**Phase II** - will provide options for job matching to the youth. They may choose an occupational training track where a credential for an in-demand vocation is obtained. If the profession of choice does not warrant a credential the targeted employer recruitment will begin.

**Phase III** - begins the internship that is paid by the One-Stop. Youth are paid $9.00 an hour to start with the possibility to increase their wages based upon the acquisition of new skills and/or to meet the comparative wage of a similar position. The internships will be for a 6-month period with the expectation that the host employer will continue the youth’s employment. If a position is not available an intensive, targeted job development will begin to ensure that all youth secure career building employment.

Mercer County has outlined the overall program goals for the YCC:

- To provide employers with the opportunity to impact a young adults employability and consequently their future
- To provide job readiness skill training enabling youth adults to acquire knowledge on how to successfully obtain and retain employment
- To provide academic instruction leading to the obtainment of the HSE
- To provide exposure to a real world working environment
- To provide young adults with relevant and valuable work experience
- To strengthen partnerships with the private sector as well as community and faith based organization in Mercer County
- To strengthen the local economy by providing job opportunities.

**Benefits to Employers:**

- Train prospective employees their way at no cost to the company
- Provide a young adult with an opportunity to get started on a career path
- Work with youth who are motivated and eager to learn
- Opportunity to influence a young adults future by instilling good work habits
- Help to mold the future workforce
Benefits to Youth:
- Earn the High School Equivalency
- Opportunity to gain hands-on work experience
- Opportunity to prepare for a future career
- Earn a paycheck
- Learn marketable skills
- Receive valuable feedback on work performance
- Acquire good work habits

EMPLOYABILITY WORKSHOPS FOR YOUTH

These Workshops are offered to youth in preparation for employment. They are given by the YCC staff and are held at the One-Stop.

Be Your Best Self!
This workshop is given all year around but the demand increases seasonally and more specifically for the holiday season or for summer employment. Topics covered in this workshop are:
- Learn how to properly complete an employment application online
- Learn how to conduct an effective job search
- Learn how to impress employers during your interview
- Learn the Do’s and Don’ts of keeping your job
- Learn what documents you will need to have if offered employment*

Interviewing Techniques
Youth will learn the basic Do’s and Don’ts needed to confidently interview for employment. They will also learn how to strengthen their interviewing skills, become familiar with interview questions to increase their confidence and chances of getting hired.

Mock Interviews
The youth will be introduced to interviewing techniques in individual mock interviews. They will receive constructive feedback and practice to better prepare them for the interview.

Options
The youth will learn about the Mercer County services that are available:
- General services: application, resume and interviewing assistance
- Career Pathways
- Youth Career Connection Program- focuses primarily on vocational training and internship opportunities
- Job Corps
- Six Flags Great Adventure Transportation Program for summer employment

B. MEETING 75% OUT-OF-SCHOOL FUNDING REQUIREMENT

The Youth Investment Council set the priorities for the youth programs by establishing that a minimum of 75% of youth funds would be targeted to serve out-of-school youth. The WIOA Youth budget was prepared to meet that target. The One Stop ensured that a minimum of 75% of the funds available for contracting were targeted to and awarded for OSY services and less than 3% of youth staff was allocated to ISY programs. The OSY programs solicited were designed to provide job readiness and HSE attainment.

In order to meet not only the 75% requirement but the 20% work experience requirement, additional OSY funds were budgeted for internships administered by the One Stop’s Youth
Career Connection staff, and for the provision of bus passes/tickets during the first three months of the six month internship.

The Workforce Development Board has ensured that the WIOA funding requirement is being met. The YCC staff at the One Stop works primarily with the OSY population. An RFP was issued for services to the OSY population as previously described. The RFP resulted in the contracting with three entities - Mercer County Community College, Isles Youth Institute, and Latinas Unidas under the auspices of the Princeton YWCA. Youth completing these programs will be referred to the YCC for entry into occupational training and/or internship opportunities. They will continue to receive case management services during the training and/or internships and will receive job search assistance upon completion.

C. DESIGN FRAMEWORK FOR YOUTH PROGRAMS

The chart on the following page demonstrates the framework for youth programs in Mercer County, and how the 14 program elements required in § 681.460 are to be made available within that framework. The YCC staff will provide leadership development activities, supportive services, work experience and comprehensive guidance and counseling. All other program elements have been competitively procured.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Elements</th>
<th>One Stop</th>
<th>Youth Vendor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tutoring and Study Skills Training leading to completion of secondary School, including dropout prevention</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternate Secondary School Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid/unpaid work experiences, internship or job shadowing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Summer employment</td>
<td>√</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Pre-apprenticeship programs</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Internships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Job shadowing</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational Skills Training</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education offered concurrently with work preparation activities</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Development Opportunities including community service, peer centered activities, and other positive social behaviors</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Services</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult mentoring for a total not less than 12 months</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive guidance and counseling</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Literacy Education</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial Skills Training</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of labor market, employment information and Career Awareness</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities to prepare for transition to postsecondary education &amp; training</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up services for 12 months after completion</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
X. COORDINATION WITH SECONDARY - POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Our secondary and postsecondary partners include the Mercer County Community College (two campuses) and the Mercer County Technical School (three campuses). These educational institutions have representatives on all WDB committees. WDB staff and One Stop staff also attend their meetings and advisory boards. These relationships allow for a valuable exchange of information, all focused on offering our customers the support they need to make informed decisions about their career and employment future.

XI. COORDINATION OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES AND TRANSPORTATION

Whenever possible the Mercer WDB attempts to assist with the transportation needs of both customers and employers and has done so with much success.

**NJ JARC** - The WDB has received funding for several years under the Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) initiative. The WDB does this through a partnership with the County Department of Economic Development and Sustainability and NJ Transit. NJ Transit will provide funding and the County provides matching funds. This service offers transportation to the Route 130 corridor with the purpose of increasing access to the many employment opportunities along that route for customers in Trenton, Hamilton and East Winsor.

**Amazon Z-Line** - At the time Amazon decided to build a one million square feet distribution facility in Mercer, the County, the Greater Trenton Transportation Management Association, and Amazon partnered to provide easy transportation to the facility by providing direct access via vans from a central point at the Hamilton Marketplace to the Amazon facility at no cost to the employee. New Jersey adjusted its routes and hours to accommodate the three shifts at Amazon.

**Six Flags Great Adventure** – for the past four years, the County has provided transportation services to youth employed at Six Flags Great Adventure – once again at no cost to the youth. The One Stop assists in their job application and once hired, the County provides van service to the park by offering three trips in the mornings and three return trips in the evening. Large majorities of the youth participating in this program are from the city of Trenton and would not be able to work at the park if this transportation was not provided.

XII. COORDINATION WITH WAGNER-PEYSER ACT SERVICES

The Wagner-Peyser funded staff providing workforce development services represent one of the primary partners co-located at the One Stop. Services are integrated with those of the WIOA funded staff to provide services in an effective and coordinated manner. The manager attends all One Stop partner meetings where issues/complaints are addressed and collaborative solutions are implemented.

XIII. COORDINATION WITH ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY

The Mercer County Consortium will continue to provide comprehensive, county wide services for Levels I, II, and III in Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education (ABE/ASE), English as a Second Language and Civics. Partners will provide instruction in adult education and literacy
services, including workplace literacy, preparation for the High School Equivalency (HSE) exam and sector specific contextualized instruction; instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, civic participation, and US history. Program participants will gain the skills and knowledge needed for employment and self-sufficiency and prepare for their roles as workers, family members, and American citizens. The Consortium will provide services that expand the state’s adult education programs beyond basic skills literacy and HSE acquisition to a pathway leading to postsecondary education, occupational training, and certified credential attainment (i.e. American Red Cross First Aid/CPR/AED certification, NRF Certification).

The Mercer County Consortium, with the Mercer County Community College as its lead agency is providing adult education and literacy and civics services to 723 adults. The Consortium consists of 6 partners: Mercer County Community College, Literacy Volunteers NJ in Mercer County, Lutheran Social Ministries Refugee and Immigration Services, Mercer Street Friends, St James AME Church, Trenton Area Soup Kitchen and YWCA of Princeton. Member agencies will continue to collaborate to help Mercer County residents become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency. The Consortium will ensure that at risk populations are prepared to succeed as responsible, productive citizens in a global society. Instructional activities and limited wrap around services will be provided to individuals enrolled in Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education, English as a Second Language, and ESL, Civics programs.

Member agencies will recruit, assess, support, and provide effective, relevant, and engaging instruction in the classroom and through alternative delivery systems such as hybrid or blended learning opportunities. Instructional offerings and support services are designed to help students reach pre-established benchmarks: demonstrated improvement in Education Functioning Levels (EFLs) as set forth in the National Reporting System (NRS); attainment of a secondary school equivalency diploma; attainment of an industry recognized credential or certification; placement in postsecondary education or occupational training; placement in unsubsidized employment or retention of employment; demonstrated improvement in English language proficiency; acquisition of citizenship skills; increased involvement in community activities and voter registration and voting.

The Consortium and the Mercer County One Stop Career Center entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to ensure that the following principles of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, in relation to the WDB be implemented:

- **Universal and Equitable Eligibility** – all customers, including those with special needs and barriers to employment, shall have access to a core set of services with each provider named herein. Services are designed to provide information so that all customers can make informed career decisions that coincide with the current labor market. Core literacy and language and support services shall be made available through multiple locations throughout Mercer County and at the Mercer County One Stop Career Center.

- **One Stop Approach** – All customers may explore work preparation and career development services and have access to information for a range of employment, training, and adult or occupational education programs. Services shall be made available through the One Stop Career Center and/or at the Consortium locations.

- **Individual Choice** – Customers shall have access to a multitude of literacy, career, skill, employment, and training information to obtain the services and skills they need to enhance their employment opportunities based on their individual needs.

The purpose of the MOU shall be to have the Consortium linked with the One Stop so that through the collaboration there will be a comprehensive provision of services, including needs assessment, recruitment, student assessment, counseling, and referral with the following:

(a) A One Stop delivery system that shall be available to the customers for self-service or assisted service with access to current labor market and career development services.
Both electronic access and personal service delivery choices also shall be choices of provision.

(b) A process for delivery system review and continuous improvement to offer the best possible services and to create opportunities for further integration as provided through the partnership outlined herein, including through referral efforts with the MCOSCC partner agencies capable of providing supplemental services such as the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Division of Developmental Disabilities, etc.

(c) Attendance of the Consortium Lead Agency at the monthly WDB Literacy meetings and attendance of the WDB representative at monthly Consortium meetings.

A. TITLE II REFERRAL PROCESS

The referral process is currently being reviewed to ensure customers are directed to appropriate services, either at the Mercer County Workforce Learning Link or Consortium partners, based on their academic and literacy needs.

B. LITERACY SERVICES

The Mercer County Workforce Learning Link (WLL) provides adult learners and young adults (18 - 24) with short-term computer assisted basic skills education and literacy services designed to: 1) improve customers’ basic computer skills; 2) assist customers in increasing their education levels; 3) build customers’ English language skills; 4) assist customers in entering postsecondary or advanced occupational training; and 5) assist customers to secure or improve their employment opportunities. As referenced in the MOU description above, we work in collaboration with our Consortium partners to ensure that the services provided in the WLL will supplement and expand existing basic skills and programming and will not supplant other State or local public funds for this purpose. Services in the WLL are targeted to individuals who are at or above the fourth grade reading level and individuals who already have a high school diploma (or its equivalent) that are in need of additional academic remediation.

C. LITERACY REFERRAL PROCESS

In accordance with WIOA and the New Jersey and the New Jersey State Combined Plan, Mercer County will strive to ensure that our literacy programs result in high quality outcomes by promoting better coordination between the One Stop programs and services, programs and services of other workforce development partners and our Title II providers. This will allow the strengthening of service delivery across programs, leveraging of available resources and professional and curricula development.

In an effort to strengthen the link between the One Stop and the Title II Consortium partners, the Director of the MCOTES attends the Literacy Committee and Title II Consortium partner meetings. One Stop services are shared to ensure that the Consortium partners have a clear understanding of all the services offered at the One Stop. A new referral form is being created with input from both Consortium and the One Stop to ensure that all relevant information is captured, that appropriate referrals are being made and to facilitate the accessing of needed services by our customers.

Customers attending One Stop orientations participate in a brief assessment to determine their next step i.e. occupational training or job search. Those expressing an interest in training are assessed and administered the TABE. Customers requiring adult basic education, ESL and/or computer basics are referred to the Workforce Learning Link or the appropriate Title II provider. Once the customer reaches their targeted remediation goal, customers are referred back to the
One Stop for occupational training and/or job search assistance.

Presentation of the One Stop services is presented on a regular basis at Consortium meetings. The first presentation by the Business Services Rep provided not only the vast network of employers utilizing the One Stop through Positive Recruitments but also information on Federal Bonding, which can prove vital to some of the Title II population served through the Consortium. All Consortium partners have been added to the Positive Recruitment and employment opportunities notification list. Information on re-entry services was also provided.

Future presentations include occupational training opportunities, job readiness workshops, job search assistance, and specialized youth services.

Listed below are the major changes for adult literacy programs as required by WIOA and referred in the State Plan and how they will be addressed.

- Performance accountability measures focus primarily on employment outcomes, not basic skills.
  - By strengthening the collaboration between the One Stop and the Consortium Partners, particularly in the sharing of employment opportunities and the provision of job search assistance, it is anticipated that the employment outcomes will be improved.

- Career pathways are emphasized as the way to move learners through adult literacy to postsecondary education and family-sustaining employment.
  - Customers that are referred back to the One Stop will receive labor market information and career guidance to assist them to make informed decisions regarding their future training and educational needs. The growth sectors in Mercer County i.e. health care, advanced manufacturing, and transportation, distribution and logistics, etc. have clearly defined career pathways. Coupled with knowledge and use of the Industry Recognized Credentials List, customers will be able to make informed decisions leading to family-sustaining employment.

- It will be necessary for adult literacy to establish and maintain working partnerships with a variety of other programs and organizations if it is to achieve its goals under WIOA.
  - The collaboration with the One Stop will facilitate the establishment and maintenance of working relationships between the Consortium Partners and the myriad of organizations and services that comprise the Mercer County workforce development system. These organizations provide educational, job readiness, employment, and social services.

- Emphasis changes from enrolling students in “siloed” programs to transitioning them into postsecondary education and family-sustaining employment.
  - Collaboration with the One Stop will provide the Consortium Partners with more direct access to the workforce development system partners thereby facilitating the transition of customers into post-secondary education (occupational training or entry into two/four year college program) and/or family-sustaining employment. Through this collaboration customers will have access to an expanded job search assistance universe increasing their chances of attaining employment.
The Title II Consortium application will be forwarded from LWD to the WDB Director. The WDB Director will review and summarize content for review and approval by the WDB.

The Adult Basic Education and preparation for the attainment of a High School Equivalency includes the following expectations:

- All participants must be TABE tested prior to beginning the program and TABE tested again at completion
- All participants are expected to gain a minimum of one grade level after each 100 hours of instruction
- Attainment of a High School Equivalency Credential
- Providers of ABE are required to be Eligible Training Providers (ETPL)

The One-Stop competitively selects WFNJ literacy programs that include:

- Adult Basic Education, High School Equivalency Preparation and English as a Second Language (ABE-HSE-ESL)
- ABE, HSE combined with a Community Work Experience Program (CWEP)
- ABE and ESL combined a Community Work Experience Program (CWEP)

WFNJ GA/SNAP/ABAWD Programs for Adult Basic Education (ABE), High School Equivalency (HSE) preparation, and English as a Second Language (ESL) will be for 30 hours per week. The expected timeframe is determined by the case manager and the individual's progress. The goal of the program is Completion with documented measurable increases in grade levels and if applicable, attainment a High School Equivalency credential.

These programs are specifically geared to a recipient who has never graduated from high school and has not received a high school diploma or a high school equivalency credential. Work activities reported under ABE, HSE & ESL are defined as education directly related to a specific occupation, job, or job offer as the individuals career goals require.

**ABE and HSE Goals** - The expected outcomes and goals of the ABE and HSE program are:

- All participants must be TABE or BEST tested prior to beginning the program and TABE or BEST tested again at program completion
- All participants are expected to gain a minimum one grade levels per every 100 hours of instruction
- Participants of HSE are expected to attain a High School Equivalency credential
- Participants of ESL are expected to reach at minimum the ESL Low Advanced Level (below).

**ESL Goal** - All participants taking ESL are expected to reach at minimum the ESL Low Advanced Level as outlined below:

1. Speaking and Listening: Individual can converse on everyday subjects and some subjects with unfamiliar vocabulary; can speak creatively but with hesitation; has control of basic grammar; can comprehend abstract concepts in familiar contexts.
2. Basic Reading and Writing: Individual can read simple texts on familiar subjects or from which new vocabulary can be determined by content; can write simple narrative description on familiar topics; has consistent use of basic punctuation.
3. Functional and Workplace Skills: i.e., customer service, basic computer skills, telephone skills, etc. Individual can function independently to meet most survival needs; communicate on telephone on familiar topics; can interpret simple charts and graphs; can use basic computer software applications and select correct technology in a new situation.

**XIV. SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES**

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVR) is one of the Partners co-located at the One-Stop. They provide employment and training services that enable individuals with disabilities
to find jobs or to keep their existing employment. Some of the services provided are as follows:

- Vocational counseling and guidance
- On-the-Job Training opportunities
- Job Placement services
- Job Seeking Skills
- Supported Employment
- Time limited placement and coaching
- Job Accommodation Services
- Skills Training
- College Training
- Technology Assistance
- Transition from School to Work Programs
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services

The WDB Disabilities committee is a strong participant in the advocacy for services for this population. The committee identified many of the strategies needed to identify the gaps in services and propose solutions. These include the following:

- Actively finding ways to connect all of the partners to the programs available
- Working on implementing and improving the "It's All About Work" program with LWD
- Working on a draft letter to all of the schools
- Special Education program for Partners with DVR
- Involvement with the Joint Council on Aging Transportation and Network

The new coordinator of services for Mercer County on the NJ Aging and Disability Resource Council (ADRC) is committed to improving outreach and will increase the committee knowledge of programs and services available by including updates as part of an on-going agenda item at the WDB Disabilities Committee meetings and will make sure that this information gets onto the Mercer County website.

The Disabilities Committee will implement the recommendations for the future that were discussed at the planning meetings:

a. To recruit new members to participate on this Committee
b. To more actively reach out to other entities who contribute daily to the employment and training development of our workforce
c. To create linkages and communicate services for facilitating access to these services and to increase awareness of programs and services available
d. To increase under-utilized internship development programs by taking to the next level for the students
e. To increase the committee’s knowledge of available programs by inviting presenters with successful program to the meeting
f. To follow the DVR funded pilot program between a Mercer and Essex for careers and credentials.

XV. FISCAL AGENT

The fiscal agent for the County of Mercer is the Director of the Treasurer’s Office who is the Chief Operating Officer. In accordance with the MOU between the County and the WDB, the County of Mercer is the administrative entity and fiscal agent for all WIOA, WFNJ, WLL, and any other funds awarded the WDB and/or County for employment and training programs. The Mercer County Office of Training & Employment Services is the designated county entity responsible for carrying out these activities.
XVI. COMPETITIVE SELECTION OF ONE STOP OPERATOR

WIOA requires the local workforce areas to competitively select the One Stop Operator based on eligibility requirements and criteria outlines in Section 121 (d)(2). WIOA requires each State to provide their local workforce areas with policy guidance and technical assistant that will assist in the competitive selection of the One Stop Operator. WIOA defines the minimum role of the One Stop Operator as a convener, coordinator and manager of the One Stop Delivery System in a local area. Eligible entities to serve as a One Stop Operator include government agencies, institutions of higher learning, community based organizations, private for profit entities, employment service State agency established under the Wagner-Peyser Act, or another interested organization or entity which may include a local chamber of commerce or other business organization, or a labor organization.

State law N.J. S.A 34:15D-4.7 and 21 also requires that all counseling services in One Stop Career Centers must be either provided by a job counselor hired and employed by the State pursuant to N.J. S.A 11A or hired and employed by a political subdivision of the State with the exception of those One Stop Centers grandfathered under P.L. 2004,c.39. State law further requires that all staff who are hired and supported by monies from the Workforce Development Partnership Fund or the Supplemental Workforce Fund for Basic Skills, including any of those staff located at any One Stop Career Center, will be hired and employed by the State pursuant to N.J.S.A 11A or hired and employed by a political subdivision of the State with the exception of those One Stop Centers grandfathered under P.L. 2004 c.39.

The WDB is currently beginning the process and will identify the necessary firewalls to comply with both the federal and State law. The WDB will select the One Stop Operator through a competitive process. The process used will clearly delineate the role of the prospective One Stop Operator. The WDB will identify the procurement requirements, selection process, roles and responsibilities and the standards and outcomes required of the One Stop Operator. The Mercer WDB anticipates having the procurement completed and the One Stop Operator selected and in place for the PY 2017 program year that begins July 1, 2017.

Under WIOA the law more clearly defines the role of the OSO as separate from the provider of direct workforce development services. WIOA mandates that the WDB select the OSO through a competitive process at least once every 4 years. The State Plan requires two years.

Local WDB’s must use a competitive process based on local procurement policies and procedures and the principles of competitive procurement in the Uniform Guidance.

WIOA states that at a minimum the OSO must coordinate the service delivery of required OS partners and service providers. The WDB and the local elected official may establish additional role of the OSO including but not limited to: coordinating service providers within the center and across the OS system; coordinating service delivery in a multi-center area; provide some of the services within the center; be the primary provider of services within the center.

The local elected official and the WDB determined the procurement for the OSO to be for the minimum role of coordinating the service delivery of required OS partners and service providers. They further approved the Mercer County Office of Training and Employment Services (MCOTES) to continue to be the primary provider of WIOA and WFNJ workforce development services.

The WDB will competitively procure the OSO by utilizing the Request For Proposal process. The acting WDB director will coordinate and facilitate the process in accordance with WIOA procurement and contracting guidelines and local contracts law. The RFP was issued on April 18, 2017. A Technical Assistance session was held on May 3, 2017 and a LWD monitor was in attendance. The proposal due date was May 18, 2017. The review committee met the week of
May 22nd to review the one proposal received and to make the recommendation to the County to accept or reject the proposal. If accepted a contract will be created between the WDB and the entity which will include all expected outcomes. The contract must be approved by the Mercer County Board of Chosen Freeholders. The effective date of the contract will be July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018 with an option to renew. If the proposal is rejected the RFP process will be repeated. In the event that a new One Stop Operator cannot be selected and approved by July 1, 2017, the WDB has determined that the MCOTES as the current One Stop Operator will continue in that role until a new One Stop Operator is selected. The new One Stop Operator should be selected and in place no later than October 1, 2017.

The WDB Chair appointed the WDB Executive Committee to review and select the OSO. The Executive Committee consists of the chairs (all business representatives) of the following committees: Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare, Youth Investment Council, and Oversight. The two at-large members (representing the business community) appointed by the Chair are the remaining review committee members. In accordance with conflict of interest and firewall guidelines, the chairs of the Literacy and Disabilities Issues committees were not selected as they were possible applicants (Mercer Community College and Mercer Technical School respectively).

All review committee members signed a conflict of interest statement. Firewalls are in place as the WDB is issuing the RFP and no county entity is an applicant.

The RFP process for procurement of a One Stop Operator had to be repeated due to the rejection of the sole proposal received from the initial procurement.

As stated previously, the Mercer WDB initially released the RFP on April 20th and fully anticipated receiving several proposals and expected at least one viable one. The RFP was due on May 18th at which time we only one proposal was received. That proposal was reviewed on May 23rd by the WDB Executive Committee. It was rejected as not having met the criteria outlined in the RFP. The rejection and request to release another RFP had to be presented to the Freeholders which due to their summer schedule was not approved until July 13th. At that time they approved the rejection and the WDB’s recommendation to name the Mercer Office of Training & Employment Services (MCOTES) to continue as the OSO until one was procured. The 2nd RFP was released on July 26th. It is due on August 24th – it will be reviewed August 25 – 30 and presented to the Freeholders on September 28th (which is the earliest time available).

At the July 25, 2017 Full Board Meeting the members authorized the Executive Committee to act on behalf of the full board when reviewing and making a decision on the selection of the One-Stop Operator.

Timeline for 2nd RFP Activities
A timeline was established for the Procurement of One Stop Operator Services as follows:

- RFP release – July 26, 2017 (at minimum allow 20 business days not counting holidays)
- Technical Assistance Session – August 2, 2017 (LWD monitor & LWD Technical Assistance Chief in attendance)
- Addenda or Q&A from technical workshop to be posted on County web site - (minimum 7 days prior to RFP due date)
- RFP Due Date – August 24, 2017
- WDB Proposal committee review and evaluation – August 25 - 30, 2017
- Freeholder Approval (Anticipated) – September 28, 2017
XVII. PERFORMANCE TARGETS

New Jersey utilizes the performance measure system outlined in Section 116 of the WIOA as well as additional metrics adopted by the SETC for federal and state employment and training programs. After negotiating with the U.S. Department of Labor the SETC proposed performance goals for our local area’s WIOA Title I and Title III funded programs for PY 2016 (July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017) and for PY 2017 (July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018). The local area performance goals will be available on the county website after negotiations are finalized. The WDB assesses program performance by a quarterly review of the following goals:

WIOA Adults & Dislocated Workers:
- Employment Rate 2\textsuperscript{nd} Quarter After Exit
- Employment Rate 4\textsuperscript{th} Quarter After Exit
- Credential Attainment 4\textsuperscript{th} Quarter After Exit
- Median Earnings 2\textsuperscript{nd} Quarter after Exit

WIOA Youth
- Employment Rate 2\textsuperscript{nd} Quarter after Exit
- Credential Attainment 4\textsuperscript{th} Quarter after Exit (includes HSE)
- Employment Rate 4\textsuperscript{th} Quarter After Exit

Wagner-Peyser (Employment Services)
- Employment Rate 2\textsuperscript{nd} Quarter After Exit
- Employment Rate 4\textsuperscript{th} Quarter After Exit
- Median Earnings 2\textsuperscript{nd} Quarter after Exit

The WDB Oversight Committee and the Youth Investment Council review the performance in more detail and report to the WDB. Areas of concern are investigated by the One Stop Operator and recommendations for improvement are made.

The WDB Oversight Committee reviews expenditures at a minimum on a quarterly basis. In the future the results of program monitoring will be summarized and presented to the committee for their review and input.

XVIII. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEMBERSHIP

A. BOARD MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>James Purcell</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Technical Director</td>
<td>NJ Asphalt Pavement Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Scott Clemmensen</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>VP Human Resources</td>
<td>Capital Health Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Hagemann</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>General Manager</td>
<td>Express Pros</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ayesha Hamilton</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Attorney</td>
<td>Hamilton Law Firm PC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denalarie J. Johnson-Faniel</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Human Resources and Non Profit Consultant</td>
<td>3D Management Consulting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diana McNeil Brown</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Regional Client Account Manager</td>
<td>Educational Testing Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nina Melker</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Senior Vice President</td>
<td>Berkshire Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott Needham</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Princeton Air</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Perkins</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>General Manager</td>
<td>East Windsor Hilton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keith Secrest</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Kinetics Industries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Tootell</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Administrator of Talent Development</td>
<td>NJ Manufacturers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pending Replacement</td>
<td>Business</td>
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<td>P.S.E. &amp; G.</td>
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<td>Business</td>
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<td>KNF Neubeger</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Maher-Muoio Economic Development</td>
<td>County Office of Eco. Development &amp; Sustainability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charles Whalen Organized Labor</td>
<td>Organized Labor Council VP/Building Trades</td>
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<td>Michele Recia-Liebtag Economic Development</td>
<td>MC AFL-CIO Central Labor Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connie Mercer CBO</td>
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<td>Nancy Thomson CBO</td>
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<td>Mary Gay Abbot-Young CBO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Margaret Gould Title II Adult Education</td>
<td>Assistant Director</td>
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<td>Dr. Jianping Wang Higher Education</td>
<td>President</td>
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<td>Dr. Kimberly Schneider Education-Vo-Tech</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Veronica Jones Govt. Partner-ES</td>
<td>Manager</td>
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<td>Marygrace Billek Govt. Partner - MCHS</td>
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<td>Pending Appointment Govt. Partner-DVR</td>
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<td>Alan Edenzon Other</td>
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**B. MEMBER RECRUITMENT**

As the Chief Elected Official for Mercer County, the County Executive is responsible for appointing members to the WDB. The County Executive in collaboration with the WDB Chair ensures that the membership process is in accordance with the State Employment and Training Commission’s (SETC) Policy #2015-01 regarding Member Appointments and Process. This includes representation from the following categories:

- **Business** minimum 51%
- Organized labor and community-based organization minimum 20%
- Economic Development minimum one
- Title II Adult Education and Literacy Provider minimum one
- Higher Education Entity minimum one
- County Vocational-Technical School minimum one
- State Employment Service (Wagner-Peyser) minimum one
- State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services minimum one

The WDB Chair and Director will continue their efforts to recommend appointments that are relevant to the needs of the Board, local and regional employers, and jobseekers.

**C. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT**

The WDB Director will work with the WDB Chair to revise and update the WDB member training packet to provide new members with an orientation to the Board and to the workforce system. Subsequent updates will be implemented as required/needed.

**D. BOARD PERFORMANCE**

The WDB closely monitors the performance of the One Stop and the workforce system. The WDB meets its oversight responsibility with strategies as detailed in Section VI. One Stop Delivery
System How the local board will ensure the continuous improvement of One Stop Operator/providers of services.

**XIX. STAFF AND PARTNER DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES**

The Central Jersey Partners have outlined a regional approach to Professional Development for Workforce Staff. The staff development and training will include the Workforce Development Boards and the One-Stops and other WIOA system partners. Professional development may also be extended to staff working in similar roles of case management, career guidance, business services, and at regional education partners, community colleges and collaborating institutions. As with business services representative and monitoring collaboration, CJP will engage all staff in common functions together for best practice development and shared learning. The CJP will bring the various common role/function groups together regularly through annual conferences and/or training workshops to share insights and learn together.

The approach to staff development will include an individual assessment of each staff member's needs. Training will include technical and job specific modules. The region will focus on Professional Skills Development to include: Assessment, Career Counseling, Career Pathways, and Job Development. In addition training for staff will include a comprehensive list of topics as follows:

1. Customer service skills
2. Time management skills
3. Effective and efficient note taking
4. Cultural diversity training
5. Computer skills
6. Training for staff to become more knowledgeable of local resources, training opportunities, and grants available for training (other than NGO WIOA)
7. Resource opportunities of services in the community

CJP has been established and a subcommittee will develop specific shared strategies to serve Out-of-School Youth. A Youth Planning Conference that will include key regional partners may be an outcome of that committee.

The overall strategy is to meet the WIOA requirement of 75% Out-of-School Youth by increasing resources that will provide High School Equivalency program, paid work experiences, apprenticeships and internships. The CJP will focus on increase outreach in building community and business partnerships. The long-term goal of this staff training will be continuous improvement of youth programming.

On the local level workforce partners are encouraged to attend the annual Garden State Employment and Training Association (GSETA) conference which presents information and training on current strategies, programs and initiatives being implemented throughout New Jersey and the country. Information on specialized training offered through the GSETA Institute is also made available. Past offerings include how to effectively engage and service business, how to work with the re-entry population, etc. Training is also provided at the bi-monthly WFNJ Partners meetings that have included Talent Network presentations, new and/or expanded community resources, updated initiatives from the Board of Social Services, etc.

Staff development is also accomplished through training provided by both county and LWD. Most (if not all) training provided to Wagner-Peyser staff is usually open to county staff.
XX. TRAINING SERVICES

Training of all One Stop staff will be conducted in the coming months to assist them to become conversant and knowledgeable regarding the IVCL. We will be reviewing all current training providers and the programs they offer to ensure that the majority of customers completing training will have attained an industry recognized credential. We will add that criteria to the research that customers must complete prior to being referred to training. We will also ensure that any training program that does not offer an industry-valued credential provides effective training that will lead individuals to find viable sustainable employment. We are encouraging all current providers to ensure that they look towards providing Industry recognized credentials if they do not do so already.

Customers visiting the One Stop in search of employment and/or training services are generally referred (RESEA) or from faith/community based organizations or are walk-ins. The Mercer One Stop utilizes ITA’s which must be in labor-demand occupations preferably leading to an industry valued credential. Prior to being considered for training customers will be required to:

- Attend RESEA (if required by UI)
- Attend an Training Orientation & Participate in an Individual Brief Assessment session If determined appropriate for training, TABE is scheduled; if determined job ready, referral to an Interviewer for job search assistance
- Take TABE
- Post TABE counseling interview. If determined training ready – begin research; if determined to be in need of remediation – referral to WLL
- Perform labor market research
  o Research current labor market trends
  o Research current vacancies – job growth
- Perform career exploration
  o Explore careers of interest
  o Research criteria for employment in identified areas of interest
  o Research educational requirements for training in areas of interest
  o NJ CAN (Career Advancement Navigator) Interest Profile
- Attend Certification & Counseling Appointment
- Receive Training Research Document (TRD) and visit possible schools
- Submit TRD for Approval
- Receive approval and Referral for Training
- Begin Training
- Continued counselor contact during training
- Participate in One Stop and/or training provider led job search activities
- Report employment information
- Provide follow-up information

The WDB through the Oversight Committee reviews ITA provider performance on a quarterly basis and makes recommendations as needed as to their continuation based on their outcomes.

XXI. LOCAL AREA PLANNING

A. WORKGROUPS

In the beginning of the planning process one of the WDB member asked the question “In Mercer County are we steering people’s careers or just putting people into training programs?” This
question led to the Workforce Development Board kicking off a series of meetings with all of the WDB Committees and Local Area Partners. The intent of these meetings was to get as much input from our partners and to gather as much information as possible for developing the strategies that will drive the Mercer County into this new chapter of workforce development.

The WDB Committees are in the process of strengthening the connections to the Talent Networks with the goal of increasing the development of the high quality partnerships with the area employers and businesses. Representatives from the Healthcare and Advanced Manufacturing Talent Networks have attended some of the WDB meetings. They have shared valuable information and offered assistance for increasing contact with employers to identify the skills that will be needed in the future. Mercer will actively pursue the Talent Network’s resources and input moving forward.

Many of the meetings with partners focused on how to improve on building Career Pathways. The process uncovered a need for strengthening communication amongst the partners about the programs that each has available. These meetings resulted in identifying the need to keep the One-Stop and other partners not only informed but to make them active partners in the process of planning the programs and services.

Healthcare is one of the leading areas of growth in Mercer and the committee meetings have included employers from Hamilton Continuing Care, Capital Health, Robert Wood Johnson, St. Lawrence Rehabilitation, and Brandywine Senior Living among others. Other committee members are the Community College and the Technical School. Both schools are eager to work with these employers to define what jobs will be needed in the future, committing to developing new curricula, and to work with the employers on incumbent worker training programs.

Advanced Manufacturing is another area of high growth in the County. This committee invited the representative for the AM Talent Network to the meeting to familiarize the committee with what services and programs can be introduced in Mercer County. There was a lengthy discussion regarding the need to increase awareness of the numerous jobs available in advanced manufacturing both by the career counseling staff, jobseekers, and youth. This theme was discussed in other committee meetings as well. Another need identified was the need for increase apprenticeships. Employers participating included KNF Neuberger, Kinetics Industries, Princeton Air, and PSE&G. Educational entities participating included MCCC and MCTS.

The Community College is currently building an Advanced Manufacturing Lab on its West Windsor campus. In the interim the College has an articulation agreement with the Technical School for a number of certifications and 4-year apprenticeship programs. The Community College and the Technical school are both are strong partners who are in the position to design and implement new training programs that can be aligned with employer needs and who are developing valued industry-credential programs.

The Technical School has partnered with the manufacturer KNF Neuberger on a Machinist Apprentice Program. They have plans with a local employer to identify employees for a program for upgrading skills training. In 2017 they expect to open the Home Owner Construction Program to meet the needs of the community.

In the area of Retail, Hospitality & Tourism, the Technical School offers a Culinary Academy apprenticeship program to 9th grade students. At completion of this program the youth will have earned 39 college credits at MCCC and will have the ability to transfer into the culinary program at Fairleigh Dickinson University at 40% of the cost of tuition.

Mercer County is moving to strengthen the collaboration and governance between the WDB and the active partners. Through this planning process the WDB will work on targeting membership that can focus on creating a new committee for Hospitality and Retail.
The WDB received participation from the Literacy Committee to identify the needs of individuals requiring adult literacy services and through the YIC to identify that activities and needs of local youth.

The WDB is committed to improving services to Mercer County residents with disabilities. In preparation for this Plan, the Disabilities Committee has been very active in expanding employer contacts and services in an effort to attain the goals and strategies being set for the future. The committee identified many of the strategies needed to identify the gaps in services and propose solutions.

Mercer County Special Services Regional Day School is also a leader among the partners for the development of employment programs that benefit the youth and adults with disabilities. The school has had a very successful In-School Youth program with the One-Stop over the past number of years with almost a 100% success rate of the youth getting job training and employment after graduation. They have a very committed employer base who works with them on placing the youth into employment. The Regional Day School is in the 2nd year the STEM Academy program. This program benefits the youth who want to go to college and after completing high school the youth will have attained 35 college credits and are able to move directly into college courses.

The WDB Committees are well represented by the major stakeholders in the Mercer County workforce development system. Participating stakeholders in the development of the Local Plan included: Educational Partners representing Mercer County Community College (credit, non-credit, certificate programs), Mercer County Technical School, Mercer County Special Services School District; Business Partners representing Advanced Manufacturing, Health Care, Transportation, Logistics and Distribution, and the Financial sectors; Community/Faith Based Organizations providing services to youth, public assistance recipients, individuals with disabilities, individuals in need of literacy services; Government Partners representing Employment Service, Vocational Rehabilitation, NJ Department of Children and Families. Stakeholders that participated in the development of this Plan are listed on Addendum 1 on page 65.

The Plan was available for review and comment from December 15, 2016 until January 25, 2017. A notice was published in the local newspaper and posted on the County website. No comments were received.

B. PLAN ACCESSIBILITY AND PUBLICITY

The Local Area Plan and the Central Jersey Partners Plan was released for Public Comment on Wednesday, December 14, 2016. The WDB has made the proposed plan readily available and accessible to all stakeholders in the workforce development system. The plan was accessible electronically through the County website, and by contacting the WDB Director’s office for an electronic copy. Notice of the Plan’s availability for review and comments was printed in local newspapers via a public notice. Notice was also sent to the following:

- The Trenton Times newspaper
- Posted on the NJ Press Association Public Notice website
- WDB Members
- Mid Jersey Chamber of Commerce
- Princeton Area Chamber of Commerce
- NJ African American Chamber of Commerce
- NJ Business & Industry Association
- Other Mercer County Economic Development Business Partners
- Municipal Economic Development Offices
- Local elected officials
• Human Services Advisory Council Membership
• Faith-based & community organizations
• Individuals and organizations on the One Stop RFO Notification List
• Individuals and organizations on the Mercer County Human Services List Serve

C. PUBLIC COMMENT AVAILABILITY

As required by the New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission and the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the Mercer County Workforce Development Board released the Mercer County Local Area Plan and the Central Jersey Partners Regional Plan for Public Comment for a thirty (30) day period. The RFP was released on December 14, 2016 and the 30-day public comment period was effective until January 25, 2017. The WDB did not receive any public comments.

Both Plans were available for view online at http://nj.gov/counties/mercer. The WDB requested that all Public Comments be made in writing and directed to Virgen Velez, Acting Director of the Mercer County Workforce Development Board and sent to the following email address: cdoolan@mercercounty.org.

All Public Comments were to be considered. At the end of the Public Comment period, all public comments were to be posted on http://nj.gov/counties/mercer/commissions/investment/ with a public comment summary report. As stated previously, no public comments were received.

XXII. TECHNOLOGY

As stated in the Combined State Plan the current AOSOS system is the vehicle used to collect, evaluate, and report customer data. LWD is continuous updating the system increasing its functionality. The WDB also utilizes the reporting system provided by Futureworks allowing for a detailed and customized reporting.

XXIII. PRIORITY OF SERVICE

In accordance with Section 134(c)(3)(E) of WIOA, the WDB/One Stop provides priority of service in utilizing Adult funds to veterans and their eligible spouses, recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient in the provision of individualized career services and training services.
Veterans and eligible spouses continue to receive priority of service for all WIOA job training programs.
Priority will be provided first to veterans and eligible spouses who are also included in the groups given statutory priority for WIOA adult formula funds i.e. public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient; and secondly to public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals and individuals who are basic skills deficient.
Recipients of Public Assistance include those individuals and families who, receive or have received in the past six months, assistance through TANF, SNAP, SSI, or another state or local income-based public assistance.
Other low-income individuals include individuals and/or families whose family income does not
exceed the higher of the poverty line or 70% of the lower living standard income level; are homeless; receive or are eligible to receive a free or reduced price lunch; foster child; have a disability whose own income meets the income requirement but who is a member of a family whose income does not meet this requirement.

Basic-skills deficient individuals include individuals who are unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual’s family, or in society; has English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level; lacks a high school diploma or high school equivalency and is not enrolled in secondary education; or an adult literacy program.

All Mercer County One-Stop Career Center customers with an interest in training are referred to our weekly Training Orientation for introduction to the services of the One Stop (excluding public assistance recipients). Immediately after the Orientation, each customer meets with staff for a brief assessment to determine their next steps.

Public assistance recipients who express an interest in occupational training are referred by their case manager (who are co-located at the One Stop) to a separate weekly Training Orientation where their responsibilities in relation to WFNJ are reviewed. The TABE is administered to all interested individuals. If they meet the required scores required by the specific training program in their area of interest they are guided to complete the enrollment process. If they do not have the minimum scores required they are referred to the Workforce Learning Link (if they score above a 5.0 in reading and math) or to one of our Title II Consortium partners for remediation.

The TABE is administered to all WIOA and WFNJ interested individuals. If they meet the required scores required by the specific training program in their area of interest they are guided to complete the enrollment process. If they do not have the minimum scores required they are referred to the Workforce Learning Link (if they score above a 5.0 in reading and math) or to one of our Title II Consortium partners for remediation. Once they attain the required TABE scores for the training program they wish to pursue they are referred to a WIOA counselor for enrollment.

Veterans and eligible spouses receive first priority referral to all job and training opportunities for which they qualify. Staff specialists are assigned to within the One-Stop Career Center to help veterans find suitable jobs and opportunities. Services include Job search workshops, resume development assistance, Career training guidance and assistance with the many benefits available through the Veterans Administration and state and local government agencies.

Veterans Services: The process of effectively and uniformly implementing priority of service begins with the Triage staff ascertaining at time of entry into the One Stop of their veteran status.

Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists provide intensive services to meet the employment needs of disabled veterans and other eligible veterans, with the maximum emphasis directed toward serving those who are economically or educationally disadvantaged, including homeless veterans, and veterans with barriers to employment.

The Mercer One Stop no longer has LVERS (Local Veterans Employment Representatives Specialist) stationed at our site. Throughout the State there are four (4) Veterans Business Representatives, and their responsibility is to outreach to businesses on behalf of Veterans in an effort to get veterans employed.
A. SERVICES TO PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AND LOW-INCOME POPULATIONS

Services to public assistance recipients, low-income individuals, and those who are basic skills deficient continue to be the priority population for adult career and training services. Expenditures according to funding are continuously reviewed by the One Stop Operator to ensure that these priority populations receive the needed services.

B. SERVICES TO VETERANS

Veterans and eligible spouses receive first priority referral to all job and training opportunities for which they qualify. The One Stop has Veterans’ specialists that work in collaboration with all staff to ensure that this policy is followed.
ATTACHMENT 1

MERCER COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD STAKEHOLDERS

Advanced Manufacturing
Princeton Air: Committee Chair
Mercer County Economic Development
Kinetics Industries, Inc.
KNF Neuberger
Mercer County Technical School
NJ Institute of Technology
Mechatronics
Advanced Manufacturing Talent Network
Mercer County Community College
UAPP Local 9

Disabilities
Superintendent Mercer County Technical School: Committee Chair
Mercer County Special Services School District
MC Human Service, Office for the Disabled
NJ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services
NJ Aging and Disability Resource Council
Progressive Center for Independent Living
Advancing Opportunities
Mercer County Advisory Committee
ARC Mercer

Healthcare
Capital Health Systems: Committee Chair
Brandywine Senior Living
Mercer County Community College
Mercer County Technical School, Health Careers Center
Rescue Mission of Trenton
Wonderful World of Women Working for Empowerment
NJ Health Care Talent Network

Literacy
Mercer County Community College: Committee Chair
Educational Testing Center
Mercer Street Friends
HomeFront
St. James AME
Lutheran Ministries
Rescue Mission
Princeton YWCA
Literacy NJ
Mercer County Technical School

Youth Investment Council
Berkshire Bank: Committee Chair
Anchor House
NJ Department of Children and Families
East Windsor Hilton
NJ Asphalt Pavement Association
AFL-CIO CWA Local 1036
Youth Parent
## Attachment 1 A

### WDB Committee Meetings Held September 2016 – December 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>September</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Literacy</td>
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<td>September 21, 2016</td>
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<td><strong>October</strong></td>
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<td>Full WDB General Membership</td>
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## Attachment 2

**NEW JERSEY LOCAL WIOA PLANNING GUIDANCE – PARTNER SERVICES MATRIX**
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<th>Youth Build</th>
<th>Title II</th>
<th>Wagner Peyser ES</th>
<th>DVRs</th>
<th>SCSEP</th>
<th>Perkins C+T</th>
<th>Trade Act</th>
<th>Vets</th>
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**INDIVIDUALIZED CAREER SERVICE**

<p>| Comprehensive and Specialized Assessment for Adults and Dislocate Workers |        |         |        |          |             |         |                  |      |       |             |           |      |         |         |         |     |       |      |       |        |
| &quot;Development of Individual Employment Plans                             |        |         |        |          |             |         |                  |      |       |             |           |      |         |         |         |     |       |      |       |        |
| Group and Individual Counseling and Mentoring                           |        |         |        |          |             |         |                  |      |       |             |           |      |         |         |         |     |       |      |       |        |
| Career Planning and Case Management                                     |        |         |        |          |             |         |                  |      |       |             |           |      |         |         |         |     |       |      |       |        |
| Short Term Pre-Vocational Services                                      |        |         |        |          |             |         |                  |      |       |             |           |      |         |         |         |     |       |      |       |        |
| Internships and Work Experiences                                        |        |         |        |          |             |         |                  |      |       |             |           |      |         |         |         |     |       |      |       |        |</p>
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