



# NEW JERSEY CENTRAL JERSEY PARTNERS

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Regional Plan for the Workforce  
Innovation and Opportunity Act

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## Introduction

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), signed into law in 2014, requires Local Workforce Development Boards (WDB)s and chief elected officials (CEO)s within each of New Jersey's three WIOA workforce planning regions to participate in a regional planning process resulting in a comprehensive four-year plan which shall be modified every two years. Each Regional Plan is to incorporate input and coordination from each of the local areas within the workforce planning region. Regional plans must comply with the requirements outlined in WIOA and must align with and support the strategies described in the New Jersey Combined WIOA State Plan (State Plan). Additionally, each Regional Plan shall include:

- An overview of the region, including a list of local areas and counties that comprise the region;
- The collection and analysis of regional labor market data (in conjunction with the State)
- The establishment of regional service strategies, including use of cooperative service delivery agreements;
- The development and implementation of sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the planning region;
- The establishment of administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate;
- The coordination of transportation and other supportive services as appropriate, for the region;
- The coordination of services with regional economic development services and providers;
- The establishment of an agreement concerning how the planning region will collectively negotiate and reach agreement with the Governor on local levels of performance for, and report on, the performance accountability measures described in WIOA sec. 116(c) for local areas or the planning region; and
- The establishment of a process to review and modify the plan every two years.

A primary focus of the State Plan relates to the statewide Talent Development Strategy. In New Jersey, the talent development system includes:

1. New partnerships with employers across the state's seven key industries,
2. Strong collaborations between workforce programs, education and higher education,
3. The use of technology to better connect jobseekers and employers,
4. Better labor market intelligence to inform workforce investments, and
5. Innovative partnerships between the state, local governments, community and faith-based organizations and educational institutions.

In an era of global competition and rapid technological change, New Jersey must continue to build on this strong talent development foundation. The State Plan sets a strategic direction for the future and outlines five themes which the state will focus on in order to increase the number of residents with an industry-valued credential or degree through high-quality partnerships and integrated investments.

### **Theme 1: Building Career Pathways with a focus on Industry-Valued Credentials**

Through a common definition of career pathways, a newly created list of industry-valued credentials, literacy standards and a renewed commitment to Employment First for all persons with disabilities, New Jersey will ensure that all workforce investments are enabling individuals to access greater economic opportunity and to build on their skills throughout their careers. These efforts will expand the number of career pathways, at all levels of education and workforce services, which will help more individuals obtain industry-valued credentials and degrees.

## **Theme 2: Expanding High-Quality Employer-Driven Partnerships**

Across departments, New Jersey is focusing investments and programs on building employer-driven, high-quality partnerships that follow a common definition and framework. These partnerships are critical to building new career pathways for jobseekers and students and help increase the number of individuals with an industry-valued post-secondary degree or credential. To further support these efforts, the state's seven industry-focused Talent Networks (TN) will facilitate the development of new high-quality, employer-driven partnerships across the state; investments in new Targeted Industry Partnerships and Talent Development Centers will build a foundation for all of the state's workforce development investments.

## **Theme 3: Strengthening Career Navigation Assistance through One-Stop Career Centers and Broad Partnerships**

New Jersey is committed to supporting One-Stop Career Centers, proud partners of the American Job Center Network (One-Stops), which meet local needs and assist individuals in obtaining new skills and employment. New Jersey will expand the number of jobseekers and students who have access to high-quality career guidance and job search assistance through a new network of One-Stop Career Centers, community colleges, libraries, community-based organizations and faith-based organizations, organized labor and educational institutions.

## **Theme 4: Strengthening Governance through Effective Workforce Development Boards and Regional Collaborations**

Effective Workforce Development Boards are critical to the success of New Jersey's Talent Development system. Led by the private sector but inclusive of key partners, local WDBs engaged in an active governance role ensure that investments are made in effective programs and that local residents can access the services they need for career success.

New Jersey has committed to supporting regional planning, service coordination and resource sharing for all workforce education and training programs, recognizing that labor markets are not constrained by governmental or political boundaries. New Jersey is a densely-populated state and our labor markets are not constrained by state and county boundaries. These efforts will be organized around three regions of the state: North, Central and South.

## **Theme 5: Ensuring System Integrity through Metrics and Greater Transparency**

# Central Jersey Partners WIOA Regional Plan

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To reflect the strategic priorities of the state, New Jersey is adopting an additional set of performance measures and applying these measures, and those required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to broader number of programs. New Jersey will make performance data on workforce development programs accessible to workforce decision-makers and the public. The Eligible Training Provider List and Consumer Report Card are critical tools assisting jobseekers and students making decisions about short-term occupational training programs.

These five talent development themes, coupled with the five primary focus points of the State Plan, create a strong foundation on which to build regional strategies. Each Regional Plan will be designed to help achieve the vision of the State Plan while advancing regional efforts in workforce development, credential attainment, economic development, and the formation of strategic partnerships.

Additionally, the collaborative efforts of the region will be strengthened through the formation of a Regional-Local Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) identifying how each local area will contribute to and collaborate with one another to advance regional initiatives. The MOU will be signed by the Chief Elected Official (CEO) and Workforce Development Board (WDB) chair for each local area within the region.

## I. Regional Overview and Priorities

The regional designations for New Jersey were approved by the State Employment and Training Commission in Fall 2015, with the Central Region to include Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth and Ocean Counties. Though the Central Region has been sharing information for many years, formal initiatives to date are primarily around planning.

The Central Region is the crossroads of New Jersey. Close to both major markets of New York City and Philadelphia, bordering both the Jersey Shore and the Delaware River, and a high volume transportation intersection of the State. High quality of life with both strong economic and recreational opportunities.

### **(A) Provide the following information relating to the composition of the planning region:**

*(i) Reference name for the planning region.*

New Jersey's Central WIOA Region is referred to as the Central Jersey Partners (CJP).

*(ii) Identification of the local workforce development areas and counties that comprise the planning region.*

CJP consists of four Local Areas which directly align with the four counties that comprise the region: Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, and Ocean.

The region is only slightly removed geographically from New York City and Philadelphia. Both cities impact the labor market supply and demand of the region.

*(iii) Provide a description of the workforce development region's priorities for the next 4 years.*

#### **VISION:**

To develop a nationally competitive workforce that retains, grows, and attracts businesses to Central New Jersey.

#### **MISSION:**

To strengthen targeted industry sectors in Central New Jersey by aligning business, education, economic development, and the workforce system.

To achieve both our mission and vision, CJP has adopted the following Strategic Priorities:

- Use data to identify regional strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities
- Identify high potential regional sectors as a focus of workforce efforts
- Develop regional initiatives that meet the needs of each sector and constituency
- Identify and address all regional constituencies, including:
  - Customers (both job-seekers and businesses)
  - Partners
  - Providers

# Central Jersey Partners WIOA Regional Plan

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- Staff
- Workforce Development Boards
- Local Elected Officials

CJP will integrate our strategies and services through the establishment of a Regional Planning Process which will include:

- Monthly Regional Planning Meetings of local WDB staff
- Quarterly Regional Committee Meetings
  - Customer Services (for the purpose of this plan, the term “customer” will refer to both job-seekers and businesses)
  - Data Management
  - Marketing Services
  - Staff Development
- Semi-Annual CJP Summit
  - Partners
  - Staff
  - Workforce Development Boards
  - Local Elected Officials

To integrate these strategies and services, CJP will establish a continuous process of planning, execution, and evaluation. The benefits of this on-going process will be to:

- Generate more effective programming for customers
  - An increase in program effectiveness may be indicated by factors such as an increase in industry-recognized credentials, the quality of job placement activities, etc.
- Realize cost-efficiencies and enact initiatives to utilize such efficiencies
- Share resources, data, and best practices across the region
- Promote greater awareness of regional services among customers
- Improve service delivery to priority populations, including: persons with disabilities, veterans, low-income individuals

*(iv) How do these priorities align to the foundational goals, mission, and strategic themes identified in New Jersey’s Talent Development Strategy?*

Information relating to New Jersey’s Talent Development Strategy can be found in section “Introduction” of this plan; whereas, information relating to the Central region’s talent development strategies and efforts can be found in section “IV: Sector Initiatives: High Quality Employer-Driven Partnerships” of this plan. Alignment will be achieved through regional collaboration of the Local WDBs and the Talent Networks.

## II. Regional Data Analysis

**(A) Demonstrate how the region has collected and analyzed regional labor market information. Regions should consider the following questions when responding to this requirement:**

*(i) What industries, occupations, and skills are in demand and targets of opportunity for the region?*

All data contained in this section was provided by the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD) Office of Research and Information, Workforce Research and Analytics (ORI-WRA) team. Data sources include internal data collection from LWD as well as external sources including the U.S. Census Bureau and Burning Glass Technologies.

This section includes data for resident employment by industry, employment and annual average salary, educational attainment, and the demand for skills and certifications. Understanding the demand and supply for employees can help a region better focus its workforce development activities.

### Industries

The top five industries in terms of net regional employment are 1) educational services, health care, and social assistance, 2) professional scientific, management, administration, and waste management services, 3) retail trade, 4) Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing and 5) arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food service. These five industries comprise 65% of the total civilian employed population age 16 and older.

#### Resident Employment by Industry<sup>1</sup>

INDUSTRY	Resident Employment
Educational services, health care, and social assistance	270,082
Professional, scientific, mgmt, admin, and waste mgmt service	146,453
Retail trade	128,194
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental, and leasing	99,079
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food service	88,923
Manufacturing	86,707
Construction	65,618
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	62,998
Public administration	55,705
Other services, except public administration	47,674
Wholesale trade	37,484
Information	34,143
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	3,085
<b>Total Civilian employed population 16 years and over</b>	<b>1,126,145</b>

Figure 1

<sup>1</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Understanding which industries pay a significant role in regional employment will allow education and training providers the information needed to focus their efforts to achieve maximum efficiency and impact. However, understanding industries is only a portion of the demand-side data and should be coupled with occupational data to fully understand regional demand.

## Occupations

The top five occupations in terms of net employment include: 1) retail salespersons, 2) laborers and freight, stock, and material movers, 3) cashiers, 4) registered nurses, and 5) general office clerks. Salaries for registered nurses are significantly higher than any of the other top ten occupations, paying an average annual salary of nearly \$80,000. General Office clerks, secretaries and administrative assistants except legal and medical, and customer service representatives each have average wages above \$15.00 per hour, while the other six top occupations pay at or below \$15.00 per hour on average (based on a 2,000 hour work year).

### Employment and Annual Average Salary - Detailed Occupations<sup>2</sup>

SOC Code	Occupation	Employment	Annual Salary
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	39,060	\$26,440
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers	29,540	\$27,160
41-2011	Cashiers	27,810	\$21,540
29-1141	Registered Nurses	21,610	\$78,780
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	20,060	\$34,630
43-6014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal and Medical	18,800	\$41,570
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	17,380	\$22,870
43-5081	Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	16,590	\$27,090
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	16,210	\$30,010
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	16,030	\$38,990
<b>Total all occupations</b>		<b>1,060,710</b>	<b>\$55,140</b>

*Figure 2*

In terms of occupational groups, as opposed to specific occupations as identified above, the top five groups include: 1) office and administrative support occupations, 2) sales and related occupations, 3) transportation and material moving occupations, 4) food preparation and serving related occupations, and 5) education, training, and library occupations. Each of the top ten occupation groups, except for food preparation and serving related occupations, pay average wages above \$15.00 per hour.

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<sup>2</sup> Source: Occupational Employment Statistics, May 2015 Estimates

## Employment and Annual Average Salary - Occupational Group<sup>3</sup>

SOC Code	Occupational Group	Employment	Annual Salary
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support Occupations	175,870	\$39,500
41-0000	Sales and Related Occupations	112,570	\$41,300
53-0000	Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	86,040	\$33,340
35-0000	Food Preparation and Serving-Related Occupations	82,020	\$24,440
25-0000	Education, Training, and Library Occupations	80,400	\$59,540
13-0000	Business and Financial Operations Occupations	65,530	\$78,480
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	62,610	\$90,470
11-0000	Management Occupations	54,970	\$140,490
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical Occupations	44,730	\$97,040
51-0000	Production Occupations	40,530	\$37,580
<b>Total all occupations</b>		<b>1,060,710</b>	<b>\$55,140</b>

Figure 3

Collecting and analyzing the demand-side employment data, such as the top industries, occupations, and occupational groups, should be done in tandem with collecting and analyzing supply-side employment data. Only then will the full data-driven picture come into focus, allowing for workforce development initiatives to have their greatest possible impact.

## Educational Attainment and the Demand for Skills and Certifications

Population, labor participation, and the unemployment rate are important for understanding the labor supply of the region and are discussed in section 2.A(i) below. While knowing how many people are available to fill job positions is vital to understanding the labor supply, it is also important to understand the education and skill level of the labor supply. In terms of educational attainment, 10.1% of the region's

### Educational Attainment<sup>4,5</sup>

Level of Education	# of Individuals	% of Pop. age 25 and Over
Less than 9th grade	72,330	4.4%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	92,976	5.7%
No High School Degree	165,306	10.1%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	469,118	28.6%
Some college, no degree	281,859	17.2%
Associate's degree	109,186	6.7%
Bachelor's degree	370,795	22.6%
Graduate or professional degree	241,472	14.7%
<b>Population 25 years and over</b>	<b>1,637,736</b>	<b>110.1%</b>

Figure 4

population aged 25 and over do not have a high school diploma while 28.6% have a high school diploma or its equivalent. Less than half (44%) of this population have some form of a college degree.

<sup>3</sup> Source: Occupational Employment Statistics, May 2015 Estimates

<sup>4</sup> The percentages add up to more than 100% since an individual may fall into more than one category.

<sup>5</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

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Employers not only look for individuals with a specific educational attainment level when filling an open position, they may 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 CJP Region.

## Baseline Skills in Greatest Demand<sup>6</sup>

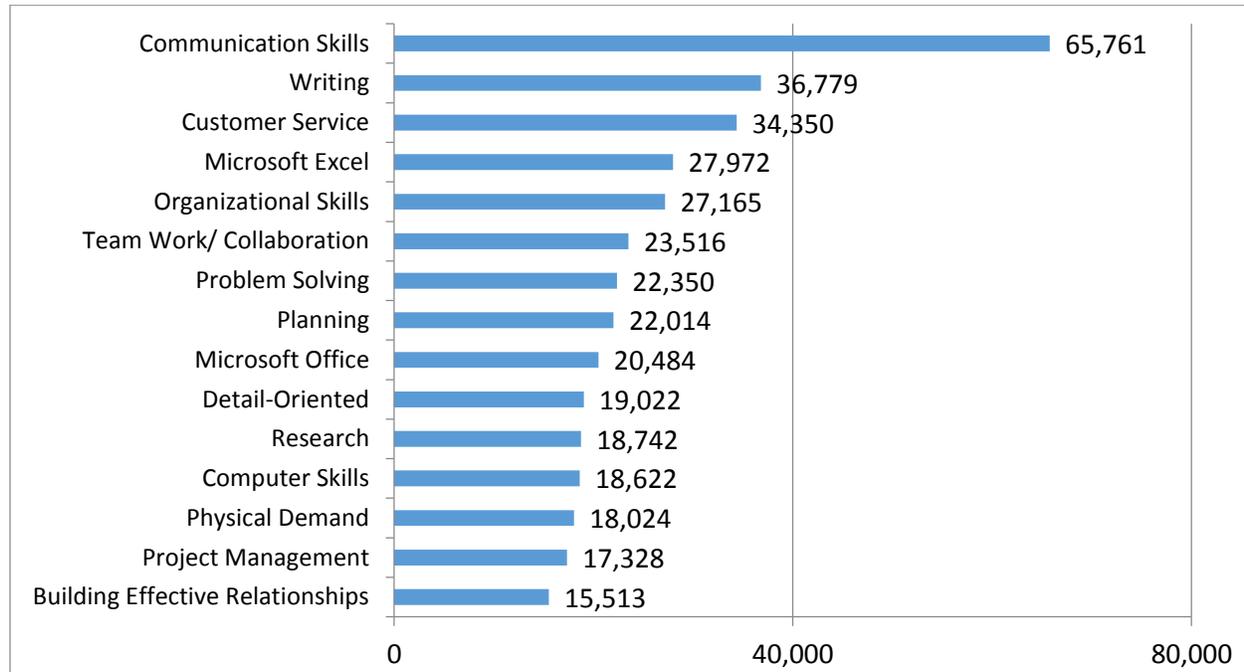


Figure 5

## Certifications in Greatest Demand<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Source: Burning Glass Technologies Inc., Labor Insight

<sup>7</sup> Source: Burning Glass Technologies Inc., Labor Insight

# Central Jersey Partners WIOA Regional Plan

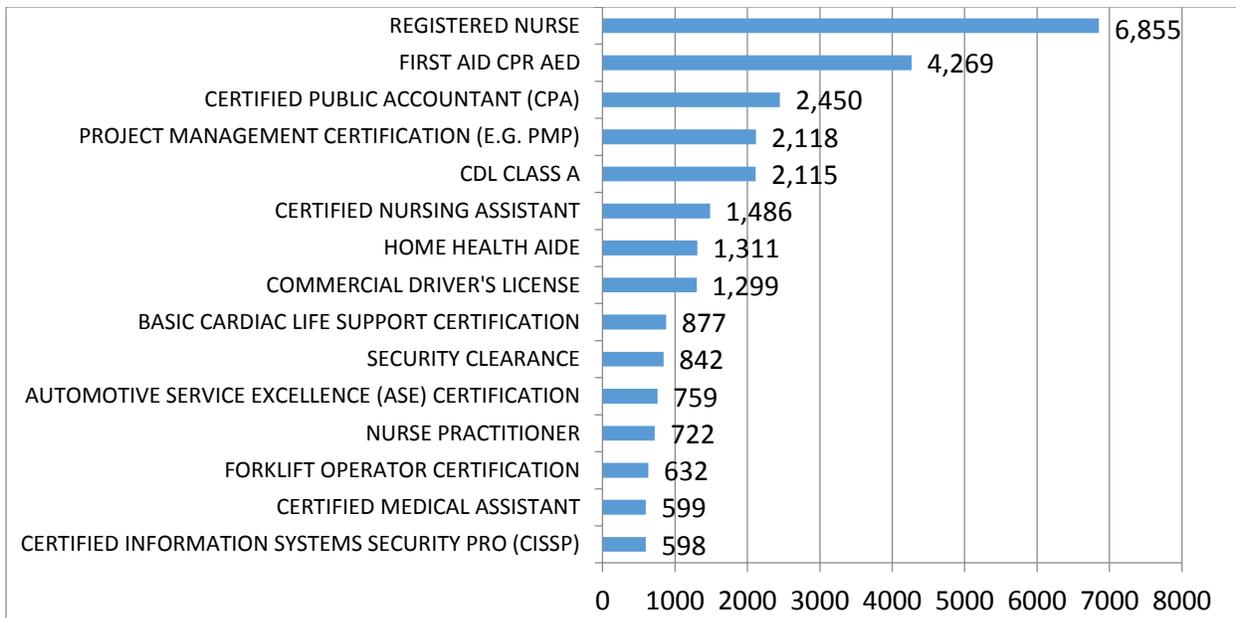


Figure 6

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, CPA, project management, and Class A CDL.

Overall, in-demand skills are focused on interpersonal skills while many in-demand certifications are centralized within the healthcare sector.

*(ii) How is the region changing in terms of population demographics, labor supply, and occupational demand?*

Referenced in the prior section, data on the population and labor supply can be used to help identify the economic health of a given area. Understanding the changing demographics of the population can allow education and training providers, as well as businesses, to adapt to meet the needs of the region. Additionally, labor supply data such as employment and unemployment numbers provide a macro-level view of the current state of the region’s workforce.

For data on the region’s occupational demand please see Section 2.A (i) above.

## Population

### Population Totals and Growth Trends<sup>8</sup>

Local Areas	County	2014	2024	2034	Change: 2014-2024		Change: 2024-2034	
					Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Mercer County	Mercer	371,500	388,900	406,300	17,400	4.7%	17,400	4.5%
Middlesex County	Middlesex	836,300	900,000	965,000	63,700	7.6%	65,000	7.2%

<sup>8</sup> Source: NJLWD, 2014 - 2034 Population Estimates

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Monmouth County	Monmouth	629,300	649,500	665,200	20,200	3.2%	15,700	2.4%
Ocean County	Ocean	586,300	624,200	665,700	37,900	6.5%	41,500	6.6%
<b>CJP Region</b>	-	2,423,400	2,562,600	2,702,200	139,200	5.7%	139,600	5.4%
<b>New Jersey (statewide)</b>	-	<b>8,938,200</b>	<b>9,338,000</b>	<b>9,733,400</b>	<b>399,800</b>	<b>4.5%</b>	<b>395,400</b>	<b>4.2%</b>

Figure 7

The overall population is expected to grow through the year 2034 in each of the region's four counties. The expected growth of the region's population is roughly 11.5% between the years of 2014 and 2034, which is slightly higher than that of the state (8.9%). Middlesex County is expected to experience the largest population growth in both percent change and net increase.

During this same timeframe, the Asian and Latino or Hispanic populations are expected to grow by the largest percentages with the White non-Hispanic population being the only to decrease during this time.

## Population Growth Rate by Race<sup>9</sup>

Race	Total 2014 Population	% Change 2014-2024	% Change 2024-2034
Asian	285,700	25.8%	20.6%
Black or African American	241,000	13.6%	11.8%
Latino or Hispanic	346,200	23.4%	19.8%
White Non-Hispanic	1,546,300	-0.7%	-1.5%

Figure 8

## 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<sup>10</sup>

Local Workforce Development Areas	County	2014			Change: 2014-2024		Change: 2024-2034	
		2014	2024	2034	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Mercer County	Mercer	194,500	194,900	206,100	400	0.2%	11,200	5.7%
Middlesex County	Middlesex	432,100	449,700	487,200	17,600	4.1%	37,500	8.3%
Monmouth County	Monmouth	328,700	334,100	344,800	5,400	1.6%	10,700	3.2%
Ocean County	Ocean	265,300	289,400	321,800	24,100	9.1%	32,400	11.2%

<sup>9</sup> Source: NJLWD, 2014 - 2034 Population Estimates

<sup>10</sup> Source: NJLWD, 2014 - 2034 Labor Force Projections

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<b>CJP Region</b>	-	<b>1,220,600</b>	<b>1,268,100</b>	<b>1,359,900</b>	<b>47,500</b>	<b>3.9%</b>	<b>91,800</b>	<b>7.2%</b>
<b>New Jersey</b>	-	<b>4,518,600</b>	<b>4,744,700</b>	<b>5,018,700</b>	<b>226,100</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>274,000</b>	<b>5.8%</b>

Figure 9

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

### Labor Force Nearing Retirement Age<sup>11</sup>

Category	2014	2024	2034
Total Labor Force	1,220,600	1,268,100	1,359,900
Labor Force Age 55+	292,600	334,000	337,600
% of Labor Force Age 55+	24.0%	26.3%	24.8%

Figure 10

nation. CJP is no different. The percentage of the labor force aged 55 years or older is expected to increase by a factor of 9.6% between 2014 and 2024 (from 24% to 26.3% respectively).

The expected growth in the labor force through the year 2034 is slightly higher than what the region experienced between 2010 and 2015.

During the 2010 to 2015 timeframe, the regional unemployment rate decreased by a net of 3.9%, similar to the decrease

### Labor Market Change<sup>12</sup>

Year	Labor Force	Number Employment	Number Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
2010	1,211,790	1,101,707	110,083	9.1%
2015	1,239,613	1,175,489	64,124	5.2%
Net Change	27,823	73,782	-45,959	-3.9%

Figure 11

experienced by the state and the nation during the same timeframe (3.9% and 4.1% respectively).

*(iii) What geographic factors impact the regional economy (e.g. proximity to other labor markets, commuting patterns)?*

### Work-Based Commuting<sup>13</sup>

Place of Work	CJP Region	New Jersey (statewide)
Total Resident Workers	1,096,517	4,122,554
New Jersey	991,599	3,588,171

<sup>11</sup> Source: NJLWD, 2014 - 2034 Labor Force Projections

<sup>12</sup> Source: Local Area Unemployment Statistics

<sup>13</sup> Source: New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Office of Research and Information

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Worked Out of State	104,918	534,383
New York	86,548	384,279
Pennsylvania	12,451	120,386
Connecticut	526	3,519
Delaware	435	8,106
Maryland	470	1,912
Other States	4,488	16,181
% Worked In State	90.4%	87.5%
% Worked Out of State	9.6%	12.5%
Live & Work in Same County	653,224	2,244,703
Work In State & Live Out of State	55,265	295,759
% Live & Work in Same County	65.9%	64.2%
% Work Outside County	34.1%	35.8%

Figure 12

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.

*(iv) What special populations, including people with disabilities, are present in the region, how many individuals are there in each category, and what are the policy and service implications to meet the needs of these individuals?*

The total population of individuals with a disability in the region is slightly less than a quarter million and comprises 10.1% of the total regional population. This is in line with the statewide total of roughly 10% of the state population identifying as having a disability. Of the prime working-age population (18-64 years of age) 7.2% have a disability.

### Individuals with a Disability Population<sup>14</sup>

Category	CJP Region	New Jersey
Total Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population	<b>2,378,918</b>	<b>8,766,669</b>
Total with a Disability	240,743	893,672
Under 18 years	547,484	2,031,951
With a disability	18,735	72,997
18 to 64 years	1,470,895	5,524,850
With a disability	106,523	421,718
65 years and over	360,539	1,209,868
With a disability	115,485	398,957

Figure 13

<sup>14</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Of the regional population, 5.2% identify as civilian veterans, 9.8% speak English less than “very well”, and 2.3% are SNAP recipients. While regional percentages for the number of civilian

### Special Populations<sup>15</sup>

Identifier	CJP Region	New Jersey
Total Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population	<b>2,378,918</b>	<b>8,766,669</b>
Civilian Veterans	126,791	416,037
Speak English less than "very well"	233,950	1,034,428
SNAP Recipient	55,785	272,130

*Figure 14*

veterans and SNAP recipients vary only slightly from the overall state percentages, the region does see a slightly lower percentage of the population with limited English skills as compared to the state (9.8% and 12% respectively).

Across the region, the priority has been directed to preparing youth to transition into employment. The In-School Youth population (in Mercer & Monmouth only) is for youth in their Senior Year of High School. CJP’s contracted Out-of-School Youth programs prioritize youth that do not have a High School Diploma or have low basic skills. The programs’ goals are the attainment of the High School Equivalency along life skills, job readiness, and financial literacy training in order to prepare them for the transition into employment.

CJP also actively focuses on Positive Recruitment outreach to Employers about the benefits of hiring the special population of ex-offenders.

Preparing the Individuals who are receiving the WorkFirst NJ benefits have also been a priority in the CJP Region. The contracted services are to prepare this population to transition off of benefits to receive the skills to become employed.

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<sup>15</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## III. Integration of Strategies and Services

**(A) Describe the regional service strategies including use of cooperative service delivery agreement(s). Regions should consider the following questions when responding to this requirement:**

*(i) Which existing service delivery strategies will be expanded and how?*

In the past, the Central Jersey Partners (CJP) member WDBs have worked together informally in sub-groups or as a group based on particular projects. The four counties have worked together as “The Quad” since the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) period, as well as since the start of Workforce Investment Act (WIA) implementation in the early 2000s, and continue to have a strong working relationship.

Monmouth and Ocean Counties share a labor market, so are most closely aligned through a range of economic and workforce development activities.

The Quad, which was the predecessor of CJP, was an informal partnership among the Region’s WDBs and WIA providers, formed to ensure that customers could access services easily between the four areas. The procurement process was perhaps the most formal aspect of the Quad, with a single RFP for occupational training (JTPA), which was released for all four areas. Contracting with specific providers was conducted by the individual areas based on responses to the shared RFP. With the advent of WIA that practice was discontinued, but monitoring reports continued to be shared since all four areas used many of the same providers. Job seeker customers have always had the benefit of accessing all services at any of the locations within the counties.

Under the Quad there was one RFP issued for all occupational training programs to include Job Skills Training, Job Assistance. Once the vendor had accepted the contract each area was able to use one or any of the vendor services offered. All responsibilities for writing and releasing the RFP were also shared. In WIOA, Regional procurement will be addressed as appropriate. "

Now known as Central Jersey Partners, the group have been meeting since November to prepare for regional planning. This work has focused on operational processes and outreach to additional partners in regional planning including community college, vocational schools, community-based and faith-based organizations, and businesses from key industry sectors in the Region.

Looking forward, the group 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.

- **Develop a common Regional Business Service Team.** Under the direction of the WDB’s, the business service representatives within each workforce development area and additional relevant staff at the WDBs and, CJP’s system partner organizations (such as Talent Networks and Community Colleges), will work together as one team in relation to all employer interactions, business development and job placement activity. They will:

- share ideas and insights on the needs of companies and industries within the region
- share job leads through a “single point of contact (SPOC) method. When a One-Stop brings a large employer or any employer with a significant hiring or training need to the CJP, they become the Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for that firm, and disseminate job orders or other information to the entire region’s BSRs in order to maximize the system’s ability to serve the employer and link candidates from across the region to that employer.
- **Replicate 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.
  - Middlesex County has developed a master agreement for vendors which other counties plan to adopt, 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. This 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 “Middlesex Individual Training Account Master Agreement for WIA, WDP and WFNJ Contracts”:
    - outlines roles and responsibilities for the County and each provider,
    - details curriculum requirements,
    - addresses funding sources including guidance on how Pell Grants are to be utilized,
    - details payment conditions and documentation requirements,
    - provides guidance on monitoring and program/fiscal auditing requirements, and
    - includes a copy of each trainer’s curriculum and other required training program materials as evidence of the commitment to provide the training.
- **Consolidating monitoring of 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. By building a monitoring team, similar to the Regional business service team, the CJP will develop a shared monitoring calendar and 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.
- **Credentials:** Building on the State list of Industry Recognized Credentials, the region will work with employers and TNs 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. The Region’s WDBs have varying levels of interaction with their county and other economic

development entities, so will work together to enhance these. See Section VII for more on Economic Development partnerships

- In collaboration with employers, Community Colleges, and vocational schools, develop a menu of career pathways common within and across the Region.
- **Professional development for Workforce Staff.** Create 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:
  1. Customer Service skills
  2. Time Management skills
  3. Effective and Efficient note taking
  4. Cultural Diversity training
  5. Computer skills
  6. Staff to become more knowledgeable of local resources, training services and opportunities, and grants available for training (other than NGO WIOA)
  7. Resource opportunities of services in the community

A subcommittee 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.

*(ii) What service strategies will be used to address regional workforce needs, such as education, training, work-based learning, employment, and job matching?*

Strategies for training and employment services include some efforts noted above including coordinating business service representatives and sharing and coordinating work and oversight of area eligible training providers. Additional plans with regard to education, training (classroom and work-based), employment and job matching include:

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- Build a Regional incumbent worker training strategy based on forthcoming guidance from the State Employment and Training Commission and Department of Labor and Workforce Development.
- Develop common strategies for business outreach and identification of potential business customers from among the Region’s businesses. CJP’s WDBs will together target sectors based on a priority of business needs and available funds as determined through data analysis, surveys and business forums.
- Use common business outreach materials to present to companies and industry entities. The Regional Business Services Team will prepare a common packet of information for business customers outlining CJP’s services and be prepared to distribute these materials to firms that any WDB or other partner identifies. In particular, firms that have multiple sites or a presence throughout the region will be introduced and come to know the wider Region, CJP, as well as the individual WDB that may make a first contact or with which they may already be familiar.
- The region will develop a Regional standard for delivery of On the Job Training (OJT). The Region will design an OJT framework that will be approved by each County, then marketed to businesses across the Region.
- The Region will work to consider setting a minimum education/skill level for training and working to prepare workers with Adult Basic Education (ABE), English as a Second Language (ESL) and other services to reach that level through pre-training or contextualized Bridge programming to reach that level.
- See also several training related items in the sub-section above, with regard to industry-valued credentials, sharing monitoring of trainers, etc.
- Work-based learning options will be explored, including OJT, Apprenticeships, and Incumbent Worker Training.
- The Region will develop a strategy to improve access and success in training among the “hardest to serve” populations with significant barriers to success. A committee will be convened to lead this effort to deliver on the region’s commitment to provide quality services.
- CJP is committed to expanding out of school youth programs that provide paid internships to youth. To implement this, the WDBs are building relationships with a number of businesses across all sectors but more specifically entry level occupations in health care, advanced manufacturing, transportation/ logistics/distribution, retail/hospitality/tourism, and technology. Some of the planned training and internships will be in the following:
  - Customer service
  - Administrative support
  - Food Service/ServSafe

**Essential skills** are a critical need in all training, and weaving these skills into all curriculum is a goal of the CJP.

CJP supports delivering contextualized essential skills along with the academic and job skills being taught in the curricula. A few examples of early work on this:

- Monmouth County: Has begun work on blending the essential skills into curricula. All vendors are now building in job search skills and soft skills modules into their training curricula, particularly with some of the Community College's Healthcare programs such as Certified Home Health Aide (CHHA) and Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), and Administrative programs such as Business Office Support Specialist (BOSS).
- Middlesex County: Their Master Agreement for ITAs, which can serve as a model for the entire Region, and potentially statewide, includes a requirement that all training programs deliver at least 20-hours of work readiness essential skills within the curricula of each trainer and training. It can be delivered up front, but preferably is woven within the courses.

The Region is committed to engaging employers across industries to understand their needs in relation to essential skills, and as part of employers' vetting of curricula, to help CJP develop a Work Readiness Credential that will be accepted and acknowledged by employers throughout the Region.

*(iii) How did the planning region arrive at these strategies? What is the rationale for regional coordination on these service delivery strategies?*

The Region's WDB partners meet on a monthly basis at the Monmouth County WDB. The Board representatives of the Central Jersey Partners (CJP) attend. The present agenda is targeted to the development of the regional plan, which includes the development of strategies for services to businesses and job seekers over the next 6 to 9 months. As the strategies are implemented and operationalized, the designated sub-committees will have specific goals and tasks. Broader socializing of the best practices that will emerge from the partnership could be showcased through regional forums and symposiums with all regional partners.

Additional partners such as community colleges and other system partners join these meetings at least quarterly. The CJP has begun a process through these meetings, to identify best practices from outside sources, models underway in one county that can be replicated by others, and group dialogue to come up with new promising models for service delivery.

The CJP has formed several sub-committees on several of the training topics outlined above including the consolidated monitoring, minimum education level for training and on business services.

Business Service Representatives from across the One-Stops in the region will meet quarterly as part of the ongoing training and sharing among functional groups outlined above.

The community colleges meet quarterly among themselves as well as part of the statewide "New Jersey Community Colleges Workforce Consortium." Leadership of the CJP and the consortium interface regularly to share agendas, discussion topics and insights gleaned from the separate meetings and between-meeting interactions of both groups in order to build common themes and strategies across these partnerships.

In addition to other processes, each Region met for a full-day session with a consultant firm during July 2016 for a facilitated discussion of the topics of this Plan and used that time to build on prior dialogues, formalize key recommendations and Plan elements and strategize for future implementation of various components of the Regional Plans.

*(iv) What formal and informal cooperative procedures will the core partners and other required partners establish to align services and coordinate delivery?*

Some common collaborative efforts among the CJP members and in collaboration with outside partners in the public workforce system include:

- Development of common forms and processes for service delivery. In addition to the “master agreement” and vendor monitoring processes, the group is considering development of common Intake, Eligibility and Assessment forms and assessment procedures (including use of common assessment instruments and tests) across the region to facilitate smoother transition of customers from one One-Stop to another across Regions.
- Each partner will bring to the table an active Employers list that is used for Job Fairs, Positive Recruitments, upcoming events.
- The CJP will work to identify all partners in common among the WDBs and those partners of one WDB that have a regional footprint or that can be a value to the other CJP members.
- Collaborations with the educational community on the development of programs of study and curricula to meet regional business needs.
- Collaborations with regional community organizations to identify and leverage supports for job seeker customers.
- Collaborations with regional business organizations to target business development.

Future collaboration ideas not in place but anticipated or planned include:

- Continuing the current WDB regional planning meetings
- Starting regional Board Meetings
- Starting regional contracts/monitoring meetings
- Establishing a regional marketing committee
- Establishing a regional procurement process

## IV. Sector Initiatives: High Quality Employer-Driven Partnerships

Key work on sector-driven and high-quality employer partnerships are led by the CJP and the individual WDBs with support from the State's Talent Networks and Talent Development Centers. Some key efforts are described below, followed by the specific initiatives and relationships underway within this Region.

### ***Talent Networks***

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 state's key industries. Now the region with the support of the Talent Networks are focused on building new employer-driven partnerships. These Targeted Industry Partnerships will have developed plans for meeting the skill needs of employers and building new pathways to economic opportunity.

The Talent Networks are focused on three key tasks:

1. Development and Dissemination of Industry Intelligence to Inform Workforce Investments: Each Talent Network works closely with LWD's Labor Market Analysts to inform the understanding of key industry workforce trends and of the workforce needs of employers. The Talent Networks engage employers and industry associations to provide input into the development of the list of industry-valued credentials and degrees. Each year, the Talent Networks will host an Industry Summit to inform key workforce stakeholders of employer needs. The Talent Networks will also partner with LWD Labor Market Analysts to produce an Annual Workforce Report for their industry that combines quantitative data and feedback from employers.
2. Development of High-Quality Employer-Driven Partnerships: Each Talent Network will work intensively with employers, local Workforce Development Boards, educational institutions and other stakeholders to develop Targeted Industry Partnerships in three geographic areas of the state. Collectively, the Talent Networks will develop 20 such partnerships. For each partnership, the Talent Network will engage employers and identify industry workforce needs, assemble workforce and education stakeholders to assess capacity and facilitate the development of a workforce plan for the industry for the specific area. LWD will work with each Talent Network to identify possible funding sources for implementation of promising programs.
3. Assist in Rapid Response Efforts: Each Talent Network will contribute to rapid response efforts in their specific industry, using their knowledge of industry need to help inform services and assistance to impacted workers.

### ***Talent Development Centers***

New Jersey is investing in the development of three Talent Development Centers at community colleges and universities focused on the Advanced Manufacturing, Health Care and

Transportation, Logistics and Distribution industries. 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.

**(A) Describe the development and implementation of sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the planning region. Regions should consider the following questions when responding to this requirement:**

*(i) What industry sectors and occupations have been prioritized and why?*

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
- Leisure, Hospitality and Retail Trade

As noted above, workforce development efforts in each industry are centered in the existing Talent Networks, grantee organizations that focus statewide effort on developing industry intelligence and high quality employer partnerships within each industry. The Central Region workforce boards work independently and together in conjunction with the Talent Networks in a number of ways outlined below.

An important note to understand about the region and its employment and industry focus is that, due to 1) the Region’s proximity to major metropolitan areas and 2) a lack of sufficient higher paying jobs at a level many residents need to afford housing within the Region, Central New Jersey can be considered a commuter region. When CJP and our partners think about the economy, training, occupational and employment picture, we do not think of just our Region, but focus on the entire State of New Jersey and surrounding metropolitan areas in New York and Pennsylvania. As noted in some of the details below, up to half of the residents of some communities do not work in the community, but rather travel to New York, Philadelphia, or even other cities in New Jersey. As a result, often an industry being targeted is not based solely on the

businesses in the Region, but those in surrounding Regions and surrounding metropolitan areas, as well as the skills and interests of workers within the region who may and do commute outside the region for work.

CJP will generate labor market information regarding commuting patterns and the jobs to which Central New Jersey residents commute. This data can help CJP better understand the dynamics and guide both worker preparation and economic development efforts:

- CJP must work closely with economic development entities to retain, grow, and attract business to the Region, with an aim to industries in which residents have skills and experience.
- CJP and regional partners must focus further training for people in this Region to prepare them for the jobs available in other surrounding areas. Until business attraction can result in workers being able to stay within their communities, it is critical to secure good workforce intelligence regarding employment opportunities in surrounding areas and build training that is responsive to those needs.

Given these considerations, the Central Region is prioritizing the following industries, based in large part on the real experience of the CJP members and the data presented above in Section II. For industries and occupations within each of the following sectors please refer to the data outlined in Section II above. The Section II data were developed through close analysis of Labor Market Information data. In particular, the number of jobs and earnings per employee for key occupations within each industry were analyzed based on factors such as occupations, short-term and long-term growth.

#### **ADVANCED MANUFACTURING:**

Central New Jersey has a significant Biopharma industry in some areas, a field that crosses between the advanced manufacturing and life sciences industries. CJP will continue to focus training effort on key occupation sin this industry, as well as the wider advanced manufacturing field. The Region is home to many small manufacturers, but few of the major multinational businesses or major factories or plants.

#### **HEALTHCARE:**

Healthcare is a primary industry throughout the region with a number of existing workforce partnerships on training and education that are outlined in the following sub-section.

#### **FINANCE:**

The Finance industry is a large force within the Region. Many residents work in the industry but work for employers outside the region. CJP seeks to identify methods to keep these people working within the Region.

#### **TRANSPORTATION/LOGISTICS/DISTRIBUTION (TLD):**

Transportation is a focus area for CJP. To help advance transportation-related issues, the region is collaborating with the TN in its efforts to serve the TLD industry across the state. Some statewide activities of this TN include:

- Organizing and hosting a one-day TLD Industry Summit to gather and share information on the needs, challenges, opportunities and trends in TLD.
- Crafting an Annual State of the TLD Industry report, Targeted Industry Partnership (TIP) Industry Plans outlining future potential activities, and an Industry Summit Action Report.

## **TECHNOLOGY:**

The Region will focus on Technology as a key industry sector. CJP 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. Because IT functions are ubiquitous across all industries, worker preparation in IT is a major priority for the region. There are many high growth companies in the region which operate in the IT space. These companies also drive the economy by attracting support services and businesses. CJP will focus efforts to capitalize on future opportunities within this sector.

## **RETAIL/HOSPITALITY/TOURISM:**

This industry is a major focus in Ocean and Monmouth Counties, the areas of the region near the Atlantic shore. Much of the economy in this industry is seasonal, a “summer economy” of tourism and hospitality jobs and the many related occupations that are driven by the increase in population during the summer months. Throughout the year, retail is the major industry sector throughout the Region.

*(ii) What strategies will be implemented to ensure that corresponding industry-recognized credentials will be delivered within these sectors?*

*What is the capacity of existing education and training providers to offer these credentials?*

Within the Region, the CJP is leveraging the Targeted Industry Partnership process to build a number of high quality employer partnerships in various industries, in partnership with the Talent Networks. Building on the State Industry Valued Credential list in development, the region is working to identify a sub-list of priority credentials that are most lucrative and valued by employers in the region and surrounding communities to which residents can and do commute.

Middlesex, Monmouth and Ocean Counties held a vendor meeting of eligible training providers, and explained the new expectation related to providing industry-valued credentials in line with the State priority list. CJP staff encouraged the trainers to work to ensure that training curricula and credentials are valued by industry and to be prepared to justify the industry demand and value of credentials for which they train, as this will impact their ability to have training be funded. The Region’s WDBs are planning to work toward a goal of 80% of training funds leading to the successful acquisition of credentials by trainees/participants. In the CJP Master Agreement used with trainers, the WDBs require that placements of workers be training-related.

Some employers are focused on essential skills and not as concerned about specific credentials for which they believe they can provide training once an individual is hired.

**Capacity of existing education and training providers to offer targeted credentials:**

All training providers are generally delivering training that is responsive to economic conditions, but as noted above, CJP is working to ensure that trainings lead directly to an industry-valued credential.

CJP will continue to work with colleges and employers to cross-walk actual needs of employers with the curricula currently available, and support improvements and customization of curricula to meet industry needs.

Essential skills are a critical need in all training, and weaving essential skills into all curriculum is a goal of the CJP, as noted above in Section III. The Region is committed to engaging employers across industries to understand their needs in relation to essential skills, and as part of employers' vetting of curricula, to help CJP develop a Work Readiness Credential that will be accepted and acknowledged by employers throughout the Region.

*(iii) What sector strategies will be implemented and/or scaled throughout the region?*

As noted above, sector strategies will be implemented throughout the region and led by the WDB's.

**ADVANCED MANUFACTURING:**

Ocean and Brookdale Community Colleges are delivering a welding training in conjunction with the vocational schools. This is one of the first such collaborations between the colleges and these separate vocational training institutions. The classes in both areas have so far accomplished 100% job placement. This is groundbreaking that the colleges and the vocational schools are working together in such a collaboration, bringing together the WDBs and employers into a fully-formed sector initiative. The other counties/WDBs are anxious to become involved and work to replicate this, and the colleges are interested in identifying other occupations/credentials where this collaboration can also be replicated.

**HEALTH CARE**

Healthcare is a primary industry in the region and is the primary industry with a number of developed sector-driven efforts in place:

- The Healthcare TDC is located at Rutgers University in Middlesex County. The Region is working to ensure the CJP members are in close touch with the TDC to support sector efforts.
- The region has in place a healthcare employer coalition made up of business and educators. Several WDB members are part of this Coalition and have put the Healthcare Talent Network in touch with this group in order to connect to the coalition's membership as part of the TN's wider employer advisory work.

**RETAIL, HOSPITALITY & TOURISM**

This industry is a major focus in Ocean and Monmouth Counties, the areas of the region near the Atlantic shore. These entities have interacted more with the Retail/Hospitality/Tourism TNs. The Central Region will be served by both of the two distinct TNs, one located at Farleigh Dickinson University for North, the other at Stockton University for the South. The Central Region will work

to collaborate with both, and expects that both TNs will also share ideas, structures and systems in order to facilitate smooth collaborations and interactions with the WDBs and Regions.

In relation to the “summer economy” challenge outlined above, CJP’s coastal Counties (Monmouth and Ocean) have an innovative solution that it is beginning to develop with the industry’s TN, and to discuss and begin to test with employers. This solution is to identify pairs or cohorts of businesses that, respectively, have summer spikes in employment and others that have fall or winter spikes, and build methods to share workers, simplify or regularize their hiring processes, and bridge gaps between the seasons efficiently. Collaborative groupings can be made based on the transferability of skills from employer to employer within the sector. One example could be food service that could transfer skills from one establishment to another based on seasonal closing. Another example at the lower level of occupations might be a group of retail establishments along a shore community, and other major retailers that increase need for sales associates during the holiday season. Individuals, on their own efforts, are able to piece together several seasonal jobs into something approaching a year-long livelihood, but these efforts are hindered by the fact that each employer has a brand new hiring process each year and workers can only occasionally be certain of what job will be “waiting” for them when the next season comes. Instead, CJP envisions innovative business relationships where a worker can work uninterrupted from seasonal/summer at one firm to holiday-season at other firms, with methods to bridge the gaps in between the peak seasons of each. CJP knows that access to better real-time, hyper-local labor market data and surveys of regional employers, as well as on-the-ground relationship building, will be necessary to develop responsive strategies, but are committed to the effort in order to resolve one of the largest economic challenges faced by the region.

*(iv) How are core partners and non-core partners involved in supporting or scaling these sector strategies?*

See prior sub-sections and Section III for collaborations with community colleges on sector efforts.

*(v) How will New Jersey’s Talent Networks and Talent Development Centers be engaged in regional strategies to support target sectors?*

### **Talent Networks:**

As outlined in *New Jersey’s Blueprint for Talent Development*, New Jersey will use the High Quality Partnership framework as the pre-requisite criteria for determining workforce education and training collaborations and investments. The State will build and expand on high quality industry partnerships by refocusing and re-aligning key partners and staff; re-engineering the Talent Networks to be focused on high quality partnership development and to link and leverage existing programs to the High Quality Partnership Framework.

To keep pace with the rapidly changing, knowledge-driven, global economy, New Jersey is investing in the development of a skilled workforce that will drive the growth of the state’s key industries. New Jersey is also making investments that will help ensure that all individuals have

the skills, abilities and connections to find a job and a career. To meet these interconnected goals, New Jersey is aligning its workforce investments to increase the number of individuals with an industry-valued post-secondary degree or credential through the development of high-quality employer-driven partnerships that provide career pathways for New Jersey students and job seekers.

The Talent Networks are a foundational component of this effort. Each Talent Network will gather and disseminate intelligence about the workforce needs of employers, develop high quality employer-driven partnerships in three regions of the state, and support the state's efforts to provide rapid response services.

### **Talent Development Centers:**

The State's Talent Development Centers (TDCs) conduct several key roles in relation to the delivery of training that provides industry-recognized credentials. The three TDCs:

- Develop a Menu of Available Dislocated and Incumbent Worker Training programs in the Industry and Conduct Outreach to Industry Employers. In conjunction with Business Service Representatives and Labor Market Analysts, conduct surveys of industry employers on an as needed basis to further inform curricula decisions. TDCs conduct outreach to employers in the industry, to raise awareness of the availability of dislocated worker and incumbent worker training.
- Provide Incumbent Worker Training in conjunction with area businesses. WIOA funds are used to pay tuition and a portion of wages of workers in training, with employers required to pay a minimum of 50% of the costs of training.
- Provide Dislocated Worker Training to help them to meet workforce and skill needs of the target industry.
- Participate in Capacity Building / Partnership Corps. New Jersey is investing in professional development to strengthen the capacity of key partners in the region to develop and sustain high-quality employer-driven partnerships.

### **Advanced Manufacturing Talent Network:**

The industry continues to face an image problem rooted in decades-old perspectives of "old manufacturing" and finds insufficient numbers of people trained for these jobs and others.

CJP will continue to help industry promote careers in the field.

### **Healthcare Talent Network:**

This TN encompasses all of New Jersey with three regional sub-components. The TN team have worked with the WDBs and colleges statewide to conduct a review of labor market and training data, and is working to identify the gaps and what training is needed, with particular focus on entry- and lower-level occupations and the career pathways that can grow from them. The CJP members are beginning to work collaboratively with the Healthcare Talent Network

### **Financial Services Talent Network:**

With new and more intricate regulations facing the banking industry, there are needs for skills training for all workers to meet particular needs. Currently there are no clear or simple lists of

the credentials needed in the industry. Every bank or CPA firm has its own needs. There are some similarities. For example, there is, in general, not as much an emphasis on hard skills, but on a combination of hard and soft skills. The TN and WDBs will work with employer partners to gain access, confidentially, to their internal training tools, such that the system can neutrally compare and draw out the common elements of both hard-skills and essential-skills that all demand. This will allow the public system to build worker preparation and training that can best prepare candidates for opportunities in general, which should be a true benefit to the industry.

## **Retail, Hospitality, Tourism Talent Network**

Information on this TN pending at time of submission.

## **Technology Talent Network**

This sector is unique as it cuts across industries with a focus on IT occupations that are common in all industries. With increase in cloud computing, increasing cyber-security demands, and mobile applications being the norm, skills must update regularly and even individuals trained a few years ago may lack critical skills. The TN and CJP can work with employers to codify the credentials they need, and train workers to those credentials.

## **Transportation/Logistics/Distribution Talent Network**

The Region is collaborating with this TN in its efforts to serve the TLD industry in New Jersey. Some statewide activities of this TN include:

- Organizing and hosting a one-day TLD Industry Summit to gather and share information on the needs, challenges, opportunities and trends in TLD.
- Crafting an Annual State of the TLD Industry report, Targeted Industry Partnership (TIP) Industry Plans outlining future potential activities, and an Industry Summit Action Report.

*(vi) What other public-private partnerships exist in the region that could support sector strategies and what is their role in planning?*

**Partnership with public libraries:** Middlesex WDB works closely with their libraries. Every year, the WDB sends to the librarians a request for workshops they would like offered that the region's system can offer. The WDB provides a menu of available trainings from which they can choose, as well as works to develop additional ones that are desired. This helps drive services outside the One-Stops to other community locations where workers, particularly unemployed workers frequent and has begun to serve as a solid outreach method as well as a value to the communities.

## V. Administrative Cost Arrangements, Including Pooling of Funds

**(A) Describe the coordination of administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate. Regions should consider the following questions when responding to this requirement**

*(i) What administrative cost arrangements have been agreed upon by all members of the planning region?*

It is not a requirement to pool any funds for administrative costs, nor coordinate any cost arrangements. The Region is in the process of exploring shared funding moving forward, should any needs arise.

*(ii) How will these administrative cost arrangements support regional workforce development objectives?*

As CJP works to better link and align workforce strategies with economic development, educational institutions, and business, we will be mindful of the options to combine funding for joint efforts. If pooling administrative costs or coordinating funds among the region becomes a critical piece in the future to better accomplish its objectives, the CJP would develop arrangements to do so.

*(iii) What process was used between regional partners to reach agreement on cost sharing arrangements?*

An administrative cost arrangement was not yet necessary for the region through discussion and reaching a consensus that the region would explore the options if the needs of the region evolved.

## VI. Coordination of Transportation and Other Supportive Services

Supportive services for adults and dislocated workers include services such as transportation, child care, dependent care, housing, and needs-related payments that are necessary to enable an individual to participate in activities authorized under WIOA. Local WDBs, in consultation with the one-stop partners and other community service providers, assessed these services regionally to ensure resource and service coordination throughout the region.

**(A) Describe how transportation and other supportive services are coordinated within the region. Regions should consider the following questions when responding to this requirement:**

*(i) What regional organizations currently provide or could provide supportive services?*

Each county in the region has a county-wide resource guide that lists the available supportive services to be accessed on a local level. The resource guides are kept up to date and are made available to all staff members.

*(ii) How can gaps in service be addressed regionally?*

Most of the services will continue to be delivered locally. The county resource guides are available for anyone in the region to access, and if a county needs to access services from outside of their county in the region, the region's taskforce will address any region-wide policies or procedures at that time, if needed.

*(iii) What policies and procedures will be established to promote coordination of supportive services delivery?*

Supportive services will continue to be delivered on a local level, and according to the local policies in place. If any supportive services were needed to be accessed on a regional level, the region's taskforce will create or update any needed policies at that time.

## VII. Coordination with Economic Development

CJP as a workforce development effort coordinates closely with existing economic development efforts within the region, including those of each of the local economic development areas/regions as well as several other larger regional efforts. These efforts are described in the following subsections.

The Office of Business Services has dedicated a special statewide initiatives coordinator to serve as the liaison with the Lt. Governor's Business Action Center and local economic development agencies. Successful coordination of economic development funds, tax credits, and training grants has facilitated economic development opportunities in several depressed urban areas with high concentrations of unemployed and underemployed workers including Asbury Park. Further similar efforts will be targeted in other high density areas in the region facing economic challenges including New Brunswick, Perth Amboy, Toms River, Lakewood, and Trenton.

Some examples of key Regional entities involved include:

- Chambers of Commerce: In each county and local workforce area, there are Chambers that play a key role in economic development and bringing businesses together. The Region's member WDBs each interact with them. These chambers include:
  - Monmouth-Ocean Development Council (MODC)
  - Eastern Monmouth Chamber of Commerce
  - Northern Monmouth Chamber of Commerce
  - Greater Monmouth Chamber of Commerce.
  - Greater Toms River Chamber of Commerce
  - Lakewood Chamber of Commerce
  - Brick Chamber of Commerce
  - Long Beach Island Southern Ocean Chamber of Commerce
  - Point Pleasant Chamber of Commerce.
  - Woodbridge Chamber of Commerce
  - Old Bridge Chamber of Commerce
  - Edison Chamber of Commerce
  - Mid-Jersey Chamber of Commerce
  - African-American Chamber of Commerce
  - Princeton Chamber of Commerce
- Hispanic Business Council: In Middlesex, about 5 years ago a group of business leaders from the Hispanic community worked through the Middlesex County Regional Chamber of Commerce to create the Hispanic Business Council. This entity provides networking opportunities throughout the year and its work annually culminates with a Hispanic business expo attended by more than 1000 people and 150 exhibitors, to link businesses to partner among themselves and with other key entities. The Council's work will also have a jobs component.

- **Other Activity and local relationships:**

- Mercer County's workforce department division is within the County Department of Economic Development. Mercer is furthest along on being engaged when there is an economic development or business attraction effort. Mercer is prepared to offer insights and guidance to the other county workforce development-economic development partnerships.
- In Ocean County, the WDB has a close relationship with Lakewood Development Corporation, the administrator of the Urban Enterprise Zone. Lakewood's head is chair of the Ocean County Workforce Development Board. The Business Development and Tourism division at the County level is mostly focused on tourism, and less involved in wider economic development.
- Middlesex County Office of Workforce Development is part of the Division of Economic Development, within the "Business Development and Education" department.

*(ii) How are regional workforce development strategies aligned to economic development priorities in the region?*

As a Region, CJP sees economic activity to be related to helping grow current businesses. 80% of job growth is expansions and growth internally, not new firms or firms moving into the Region. Workforce Development has a key role in economic development when the region provides workers/individuals with training that prepares them for in-demand occupations and industries and when we conduct and facilitate incumbent worker training and work-based learning, in that we help those companies upgrade, update, become more competitive, and be most able to grow and expand in the region and beyond.

Economic Development is also about cultural heritage, arts, education institutions and other valuable assets. The Region is committed to working directly with a range of cultural and educational institutions to support their own growth and that of their stakeholder institutions. The workforce system is primarily focused on supporting businesses and job seekers. Building a strong workforce must be a collaboration between the workforce system and the educational system. Cultural heritage, arts, and other assets are then driven by the economic health of the region.

**Some methods that regional members have undertaken to align with economic development efforts include:**

- Develop a process whereby each county/local WDB identifies, documents and formally engages with all of the potential drivers of economic development activity in their community. WDBs know their governmental peers in economic development and have relationships with Chambers of Commerce, unique/smaller neighborhood/community Chambers, industry groups, ethnic/racial-driven chambers or business associations (such as the Hispanic Business Council mentioned above) or others. The region is considering a process of bringing all these groups together with workforce development entities to share wisdom and energize collaboration.

- As outlined before, strengthen CJP’s cross-area interactions among the ED/WD pairings, given that so much economic activity is Regional rather than within a county or community, and CJP can best attract and strengthen business with a regional approach.

## **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS):**

Economic development planning happens at various levels in various areas of the Region. There is not one coherent Regional economic development strategy and most economic development activity is more local at the city or county level.

Several of the Counties or communities have formal economic development priorities outlined in their Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS). WDB involvement in this planning varies by County. CJP hopes to build a stronger relationship with Economic Development going forward. Following are some of these, their key priorities and opportunities for alignment.

- Monmouth County CEDS (2013). The County targets Healthcare, IT/Telecommunications, Professional/Technical and Business/Finance, and Tourism/Visitation industries as regional priorities. Some key goals that CJP can capitalize on include:
  - Provide Start-Up and Small Business Support
  - Address seasonality in Tourism Retail and other fields. The idea outlined above in Section IV.A.(iii) to build methods to support individuals’ stitching together several seasonal jobs and bridging the gaps between the seasons, and to support the seasonal employers in retaining, over multiple years, is a key workforce response to this challenge.
  - Make IT/Telecommunications a targeted industry in business expansion and attraction efforts
  - Promote the availability of the toolkit under the Grow Monmouth initiative, which offers firms key labor market information and links to a range of services that can include workforce services.
  - “Housing for People with Demand Skills”: Encourage the development of housing for people whose skills and presence are critical to the county’s economic success but have difficulty affording the current housing options.” This has a clear workforce component and more investigation into these efforts can be made.
- Ocean County CEDS: The CEDS is part of a larger Master plan for the County. It is under review for revision. It includes components related directly to provision of workforce development services and partnerships with workforce and other entities. The CEDS institutes a One-Stop Committee and Welfare-to-Work Committee that will support alignment with workforce efforts. It promotes developing a “one stop shop” that will include both WIOA/workforce services and provision of business financing resources and other business tools.
- Lakewood is part of a larger CEDS plan.
- Some counties don’t have a CEDS, and the WDBs in the region are concerned that in the past, workforce development has not been a significant part of the development or goals and strategies in regional economic development planning. Efforts will be made to build upon promising efforts and continue outreach to those Counties without as much activity.

- (iii) How will economic development organizations be engaged in strategies to align supply and demand within the labor market?*
- (iv) How will the region engage economic development organizations in an ongoing, sustained way?*

See above and prior sections for content related to CJP's focus as a commuter region, with a strong recognition that many of the workers trained by the region take jobs in other communities surrounding ours.

As outlined above, CJP is continuously working to secure labor market information about the region to make worker training more responsive. While not yet fully engaging economic development institutions (our local city/county economic development departments, chambers and the many other institutions listed in the section above), the CJP goal is to increase this engagement and involvement to ensure that this important perspective is brought into all such planning.

Economic development entities will be part of the ongoing process in the region to secure a constant "feedback loop" between employers and training institutions. In this model, CJP secures insights from firms about training needs, deliver those insights to trainers (ideally through firms directly reviewing and commenting on curricula as they are being developed) and then, once trainings have completed and partner employers have interviewed or hired graduates, seek their input again on skills, credentials, qualifications, in order to improve and update curricula for subsequent cohorts. Economic developers as key outreach points to business can often be a primary ongoing contact with firms to help maintain their involvement with regional systems to support this feedback process. The Apprenticeship programs through the Joint Apprenticeship and Training Councils are the perfect model of this, which we in workforce intend to replicate alongside all partners.

### VIII. Performance Negotiations and Other Requirements

**(A) Document how the planning region will collectively negotiate and reach agreement with the Governor on local levels of performance for, and report on, the performance accountability measures described in WIOA sec. 116(c) for local areas or the planning region.**

*(i) What process will be used to determine regional performance goals?*

CJP will not be establishing any performance measures beyond the Local Area Performance Measures which will be negotiated independently of one another with the state.

## IX. Coordination with Other Regional Efforts

**(A) Describe the coordination which exists (if any) with other regional planning efforts, such as municipal planning boards, Mayors' Associations, grant initiatives, and New Jersey Transit?**

*(i) What additional regional planning efforts exist and how do they play into regional WIOA planning efforts?*

In addition to the initiatives previously listed in this plan, regional coordination among members also exists in the form of grant initiatives that are either pending or currently underway. Many of the current grants are statewide or Community College Consortium grants. The region will explore Regional Grants as the region moves forward in this new structure. Current grant initiatives existing within the region include:

- Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grants
- America's Promise Grant
- Health Opportunity Partnership (HOP) Grant
- TRIO Grants for displaced workers and homemakers
- Community Health Worker Training
- Perkins Vocational Grants for Education

In addition to grant initiatives, CJP partakes in the Sisters in the Brotherhood program. In 2013 the United Brotherhood of Carpenters made a decision to invest in a 5 year Strategic Plan to increase the number of female apprentices in their registered apprenticeship program. The goal is to educate local areas regarding the registered apprenticeship opportunities within the Carpenters Union, and then more specifically seek their assistance and expertise in marketing the opportunities, and identifying potential referrals of women interested in this non-traditional career pathway. The partnership, while still developing in some local areas, has gained traction in others. SIB has received referrals to both the registered apprenticeship program as well as their pre-apprenticeship programs through the local workforce system. SIB publicizes their opportunities at area One-Stop Career Centers and Workforce Development Boards, with a goal of reaching all areas by end of 2016.

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New Jersey State Employment  
and Training Commission