



*A Quarterly Newsletter by the GRWDB*

# Career-Related Services Available Virtually



Greater Raritan One-Stop offices in Somerville and Flemington closed to the public in mid-March due to the coronavirus pandemic. While staff has offered services remotely since mid-March and is in the process of returning to these sites, in-person service will not be available to ensure the health and safety of staff and customers.

Career-related services from Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board partners in Hunterdon and Somerset counties will continue to be available virtually or by phone in the coming weeks and months.

The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development plans to offer an expanded suit of online and telephonic services through its One-Stop Career Centers beginning Aug. 10. Comprehensive support for unemployment customers remains available online and through regional call centers.

“It is important that our One-Stop Career Centers resume their role as a trusted community resource offering much-needed workforce services,” said Labor Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo. “But, we must restart thoughtfully and carefully, so as to maximize our impact to those wishing to start or change careers while the health and safety of our customers and staff remains paramount.”

“Our county partners and Workforce Development Boards have shown us the meaning of partnership during this public health emergency; the Labor Department thanks them for their continued cooperation and understanding as we navigate through these uncharted waters together.”

For more on GRWDB's virtual services, see these related stories:

- GRWDB's community programs, **Page 2**
- GRWDB's committees at work, **Page 3**
- GRWDB's Job Match program, **Page 4**

## Our services right now

*Greater Raritan One-Stop Career Center, 75 Veterans Memorial Drive, Somerville, Center staff members have restarted virtually the Re-Employment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program which helps unemployment claimants find work before they exhaust their benefits. Other available virtual services include career planning, assessment of training needs, career services for individuals with disabilities, and career-development online workshops, with services expanding around Aug. 10.*

*Greater Raritan One-Stop Career Training Center, 27 Warren St., Somerville, Career and training services and career workshops have been provided virtually, by phone and by email for the past three months by team members of the One-Stop Career Training Center, and will continue in these formats until further notice.*

*Greater Raritan One-Stop Career Center, 6 Gauntt Place, Flemington, Career and training services will continue to be offered virtually, by phone and by email.*

*Unemployment Services, 75 Veterans Memorial Drive, Somerville, In-person unemployment services and lobby phones will not be available for the foreseeable future. All claimants should go to <https://myunemployment.nj.gov> or call 732-761-2020.*

## Greater Raritan Unemployment Tracker

In order to better understand the impact of COVID-19 on our local workforce, the Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board has launched an Unemployment Tracker for Hunterdon and Somerset counties. The site was developed by Somerset County Geographic Information Systems using data compiled by the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development's LMI Bureau within the Office of Research and Information. The data used for this site comes from self-reported



Go to [www.thegrwdb.org](http://www.thegrwdb.org) and click on the Resources tab to view the tracker.

unemployment claims and not all claimants fill out all available fields. The tracker helps create a picture of which sectors have been impacted most heavily in the past four months, and provides directional guidance for programs from the board and its partners.

## Webinars connect with community

The free online learning portal, SkillUp Greater Raritan, offers residents of Hunterdon and Somerset counties access to a vast catalog of courses reflecting marketable skills businesses in the region say they want their employees to have. SkillUp Greater Raritan is also a way to introduce more residents to GRWDB services and provide them with a 24/7 resource for personal and professional development.

GRWDB staff members have introduced SkillUp to hundreds of new participants through introductory webinars. The webinars, which have been offered weekly since April, begin at 9 a.m. every Thursday in July and will continue at 2 p.m. every Thursday in August.

Collaborating with community partners is a GRWDB priority. Toward that goal, the GRWDB has partnered with the library systems in Hunterdon and Somerset counties by offering the Learn About SkillUp webinars to their memberships. Upcoming webinars are scheduled with Franklin Township Library on Aug. 4 from 2 to 3 p.m. and Aug. 18 from 10 to 11 a.m., and more are planned.

SkillUp sign up is available at [thegrwdb.metrixlearning.com/](http://thegrwdb.metrixlearning.com/). The link also can be found under the resources tab of [www.thegrwdb.org](http://www.thegrwdb.org).

To schedule a SkillUp webinar for your business or agency, email Paul Grzella at [grzella@co.somerset.nj.us](mailto:grzella@co.somerset.nj.us).

The Greater Raritan Training Center also has career webinars planned on July 29 (How To Thrive During Transition and Change), and Aug. 17 (Mastering the Interview). For information on these and other webinars, go to the calendar tab of [www.thegrwdb.org](http://www.thegrwdb.org).

**Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board Summer Youth Employment Program**

The Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board is looking for interested employers to help provide paid internships for 40 young people in Hunterdon and Somerset counties, as well as candidates to fill those positions.

**The Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM DETAILS:**

**DURATION:** Eight week period between the end of July and Oct. 31

**AGE:** Candidates must be between the ages of 16 and 24 and can be in school or out of school

**REQUIREMENTS:** Interns accepted into the program will work 25 hours per week, including four hours per week of different work-readiness training led by staff and system partners, and must complete online courses offered through SkillUp Greater Raritan.

**EMPLOYERS:** Any employer in Hunterdon and Somerset counties with available non-union part-time positions can apply to be part of the project. The internship opportunities can be in any sector in the two counties, from office or web support to nonprofit work. Request for Applications (RFAs) for the program can be found at <https://www.co.somerset.nj.us/Home/ShowDocument?id=38218>. The deadline for applications is July 21.

**CANDIDATES:** To obtain an internship application, visit [www.thegrwdb.org](http://www.thegrwdb.org). The deadline to return material is July 20.

Anyone with questions can contact GRWDB Job Developer Jeanne Cassano at: [jcassano@co.somerset.nj.us](mailto:jcassano@co.somerset.nj.us) or call 908-541-5785.

Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board

The **GRWDB's Summer Youth Employment Program** for young people in Hunterdon and Somerset counties is looking for interested employers to help provide paid virtual internships for 40 young people in the two counties, and candidates to fill those positions.

The GRWDB has received \$105,600 in state grant funding for the summer youth program, which includes stipends for 40 youth from the two counties to work over the course of an eight-week period between the end of July and Oct. 31. In the program, each participant, who must be between the ages of 16 and 24 and can be in school or out of school, will work 25 hours per week, including four hours per week in work-readiness training.

# GRWDB committees at work

The GRWDB has four committees which meet throughout the year to help plan strategy and consider new initiatives while offering opportunities for outreach for partners programming. These are the Disabilities, Literacy Committee, One-Stop and the Youth Committees. The committees include members of the full Board as well as community members from various constituencies interested in taking part in the conversation and have transitioned to meeting via GoToMeeting.

At its May meeting, the **Disabilities Committee** was presented with The Disability Employment Services Resource Directory. It has been distributed to members to upload to their websites and highlighted on the GRWDB site. All member organizations reported that while there have been challenging, they have continued to provide services and are embracing the new way of working.

**One-Stop Committee** met in May and learned that the One Stop Career Training Center staff has been working remotely since mid-March, with the most challenging issue being the influx of calls from people with unemployment insurance issues. Staff continue to offer trainings via webinars in partnership with libraries and other organizations. Work First NJ reported that while there continues to be barriers for employment the staff is keeping in touch with customers, providing referrals as needed. The One-Stop reported that the staff has been able to work through customers' technology challenges, and has remained nimble and flexible.

Before the COVID pandemic closed agencies, a group of **Youth Committee** members began hosting focus groups with current clients to get their view on services. At its June meeting, the committee decided to continue this effort and will develop the questions specific to the audience that can be presented remotely or in person as allowed. One-Stop Youth Employment Services remain in

touch with their clients, often via text, and are working flexible hours as they get ready for an anticipated increase in clients.



The **Literacy Committee** meeting in April concentrated on how different partners had transitioned services to virtual/remote models. The group also discussed a Notice of Grant Opportunity that was to be released by the state. In a subsequent meeting in early June, the group reviewed the details of this opportunity. The grant is a continuation of current funding and non-competitive; the committee voted to allow email voting should there be a need for additional input from the committee to complete the grant process. Outreach continues to be a need for the members and staff

of the GWDB offered to assist in their efforts by developing an inclusive flyer (shown in English and Spanish versions above) of the services available in the coming months, issuing a press release of upcoming services and compiling a Literacy Services Resource Directory which can be uploaded on members' websites as well as on the GRWDB website. During the Committee's July meeting, the group reviewed the WorkFirst and Learning Links contract responses which had been submitted to the GRWDB and approved by the board. Members also discussed how they continue to provide services remotely and how they are adapting as needed. The discussion centered on current service models, and how these literacy providers can more effectively work together to service residents.

All committee meetings are open to the public. The schedule is on the committee's tab on the website. To join a committee, email [info@thegrwdb.org](mailto:info@thegrwdb.org).

# System partners work on Job Match project

Tens of thousands of job openings are being sent out weekly to job seekers in Hunterdon and Somerset counties thanks to the engaging efforts of state Business Representatives Amanda Modale and Jessica Johannesen.

The two, supported by GRWDB Job Developer Jeanne Cassano and Jersey Job Club Coordinator Richard Peterson, spearheaded this new state Job Match project which began in late April. Using the state's One Stop Operating System (OSOS), the team has been sending out job-opening emails directly to job seekers who match the jobs' requirements based on their individual OSOS profile.

Since they began this work, more than 500 people in the two counties have responded positively, saying they will apply for the positions. While building relationships with these customers, the project is also allowing us to show how businesses can make connections using the services in the state system. Based on these positive outcomes, Modale also has been training other state partners in how to implement job matches in local areas.

As an outgrowth of this project, Johannesen began aggregating the weekly job openings coming into the state system. This content is shared out weekly to all partners and is available on [www.thegrwdb.org](http://www.thegrwdb.org).

## Timely business resources:

- **NJ COVID-19 site for Businesses**, powered by [Business.NJ.gov.team](http://Business.NJ.gov.team) and **NJ Jobs Portal**
- **Somerset County Business Partnership**, COVID-19 Business Resources
- **Hunterdon County Chamber of Commerce**, Business Resources During Coronarvirus
- **New Jersey Business & Industry Association** Resources, Recovery Toolkit and more
- **Heldrich Center For Workforce Development**, Business and Nonprofits Survey Insights
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**, COVID-19 page for Businesses and Workplaces -- **U.S.**
- **Department of Labor**, OSHA, COVID-19 Resource page

### *One-Stop Operator Reports online*

The Somerset County Department of Human Services was the sole respondent in this spring's procurement process for One-Stop Operator services. Details of how this federally mandated process works can be found on a new section of [www.thegrwdb.org](http://www.thegrwdb.org). The "One-Stop Partners and One-Stop Operator" section also details the federally required One-Stop Partners Memorandum of Understanding and related agreement.

In this section, links also have been added to all One-Stop Operator monthly reports filed by Monica Mulligan. This is another way to reflect the expansive work being done by system partners.

## Don't forget to fill out Census 2020. Click here!

### Thanks for reading!

Visit [www.thegrwdb.org](http://www.thegrwdb.org), follow the GRWDB on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, or contact us directly for more information. We are happy to meet with any business, community agency or public body in Hunterdon and Somerset counties to explain how our services work. We work directly with job seekers, too. Contact:

**Paul Grzella**, Director, 908-203-6044,  
[grzella@co.somerset.nj.us](mailto:grzella@co.somerset.nj.us)

**Saundra Addison-Britto**, Business Finance Manager,  
908-541-5723, [addison@co.somerset.nj.us](mailto:addison@co.somerset.nj.us)

**Jeanne Cassano**, Job Developer, 908-541-5785,  
[jcassano@co.somerset.nj.us](mailto:jcassano@co.somerset.nj.us)

