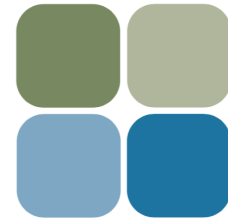


# Greater Raritan

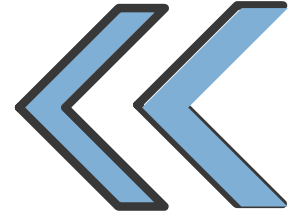
## Workforce Development Board



NEWSLETTER

*Career Resources & News for Employers and Job Seekers in Hunterdon and Somerset Counties*

## Grants for \$277,750 fund training in 3 counties



Residents in Hunterdon, Middlesex and Somerset counties who are unemployed because of COVID-19 have access to a new training grant program through the counties' workforce development boards. The Consortium of the Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board (serving Hunterdon and Somerset counties) and the Workforce Development Board of Middlesex County has received \$277,750 in COVID-19 Dislocated Worker Grants from the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

This first-time collaboration between the two workforce boards aims to serve at least 50 individuals from the three counties through their One-Stop Career Training Services Centers who have lost their jobs or face significant reduction in hours because of the pandemic. Training opportunities in the new program focuses on four industries that are experiencing post-COVID-19 growth:

- Healthcare
- Transportation, logistics and distribution
- Warehousing
- Selected retail sectors (food stores and home centers).

Each workforce board through their One-Stop Career Training Services Center already offers individual training grant programs for the unemployed and underemployed. This new Consortium program expands the number of residents that can be assisted and covers the program's applicants now through August 2021.

"We know that more than 221,000 individuals in the three counties have filed for unemployment since mid-March," said Kevin Kurdziel, director of Middlesex County's Office of Career Opportunity and CEO of the county's Workforce Development Board. "While many have gone back to work, many others are still looking for their next opportunity. The goal of the Consortium is to help out-of-work or underemployed residents displaced by the pandemic obtain industry-valued credentials and employment in sustainable wage career pathways."

*See COVID-19 Grant on Page 2*

## Virtual events are set

As Amazon gets ready to open a new site in Franklin, Somerset County, job seekers can learn more about company opportunities during two upcoming virtual events.

The Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board (GRWDB), serving Hunterdon and Somerset counties, is working with Amazon to organize the information sessions.

Amazon is looking to fill more than 2,000 openings at its facility, which is scheduled to open in mid-December. The virtual sessions, planned for 11 a.m. Tuesday, Nov. 24, and 11 a.m. Tuesday, Dec. 1, will focus on Amazon's application procedure, hiring procedures, benefits and more. Depending upon the level of interest, additional sessions may be scheduled.

To register on Eventbrite, visit <https://bit.ly/Amazon-Info-Session>.

## Help for Those Unemployed by COVID-19



Residents in Hunterdon, Middlesex and Somerset counties who are unemployed and underemployed because of COVID-19 have access to a new Training Grant opportunity through August 2021.

The Consortium of the Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board (serving Hunterdon and Somerset counties) and the Workforce Development Board of Middlesex County has received a \$277,750 COVID-19 Dislocated Worker Grant from the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

Training opportunities in the new program for a minimum of 50 individuals focus on four industries seeing post-COVID-19 growth:

- Healthcare
- Transportation, logistics and distribution
- Warehousing
- Selected retail sectors (food stores and home centers)

Each workforce board offers additional individual training grant opportunities for the unemployed and underemployed.



For more information about the Consortium opportunity:

### HUNTERDON & SOMERSET COUNTY RESIDENTS

Email: [onestop@co.somerset.nj.us](mailto:onestop@co.somerset.nj.us) or call: (908) 541-5780

For more information on all system services, visit [www.thegrwdb.org](http://www.thegrwdb.org), and look on the Calendar and Job Seekers tabs.

### MIDDLESEX COUNTY RESIDENTS

Email: [onestoptraining@co.middlesex.nj.us](mailto:onestoptraining@co.middlesex.nj.us) or call: (732) 745-3601

For more information on all system services, visit the Middlesex Workforce Development Board.

## COVID-19 Grant

*From Page 1*

Eligible participants in this grant opportunity also will have the benefit of earning certificates in SkillUp Middlesex and SkillUp Greater Raritan, free online learning portals for residents in the three counties.

“Workforce boards focus on ensuring residents have access to programs and information that help them get good-paying jobs,” said Paul Grzella, director of the GRWDB. “Training grants are one component of what our One-Stop Career Centers do every day.”

The Consortium’s partners have other ongoing career-related services, including registered apprenticeship programs, personal assessment tools, career counseling, case management, work-readiness training, and more.

Residents of Hunterdon and Somerset counties can find more information about the Consortium opportunity by emailing [onestop@co.somerset.nj.us](mailto:onestop@co.somerset.nj.us), or by calling 908-541-5780. For more on all system services, visit [www.thegrwdb.org](http://www.thegrwdb.org), and look on the Calendar and Job Seekers tabs.

Middlesex County residents can email [onestoptraining@co.middlesex.nj.us](mailto:onestoptraining@co.middlesex.nj.us) or call 732-745-3601. For more on all system services, visit the Middlesex Workforce Development Board.

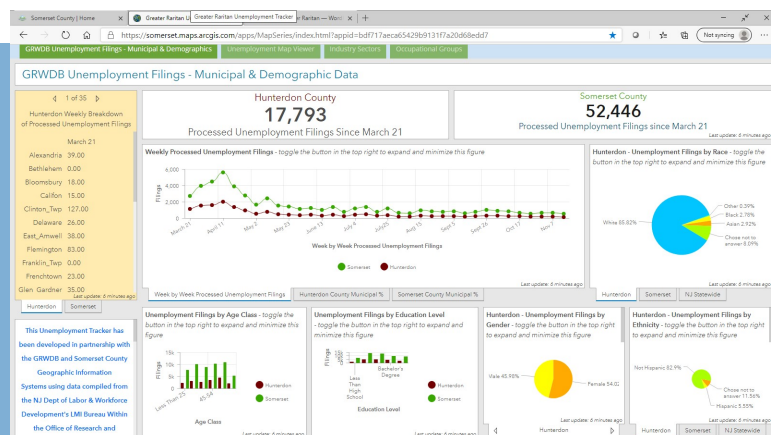
## Skills survey available for employers

To understand what employers in Hunterdon and Somerset counties are thinking and experiencing during unprecedented times, the GRWDB has launched a new survey that is designed to help the board consider how it can direct local resources. The brief survey focusing on hiring and job skills is designed to be answered by all types of employers of all sizes.

“Our workforce is experiencing record unemployment,” said Violet Kocsis, board chair of the GRWDB and chief human resources officer for Hunterdon Healthcare Systems. “As we plan our service strategies, it is important for us to have an accurate reflection of the needs of the employers in the two counties. We have already done two business focus groups, and this survey is another tool the board, its committees and staff can use to develop policy and skill-training programs for those returning to work.”

The survey is open now through December. Respondents can go to the [www.thegrwdb.org](http://www.thegrwdb.org) and click on the Resources / Employers tab to access the survey, which should take about five minutes to complete.

Partners of the GRWDB offer a variety of virtual services to employers, including recruitment assistance, job matching, job fairs, apprenticeship programs, on-the-job training, layoff aversion and incumbent worker training. Visit [www.nj.gov/labor/employer-services/business/](http://www.nj.gov/labor/employer-services/business/) or email State Business Representatives Amanda Modale or Jessica Johannesen.



### New features on Greater Raritan Unemployment Tracker

The **Greater Raritan Unemployment Tracker** is updated weekly with detailed data sets on those unemployed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Begun as a GRWDB staff project and supported by Somerset County GIS Coordinator Michael Stepowyj, the platform was recently expanded to include additional demographic information on the newly unemployed. Job seekers can see which industries and occupations have been impacted most heavily in the past months, while government officials, planners and decision-makers can see details on the backgrounds and talents of these workers and develop strategies to support the workers in the future. The Tracker, found on the [www.grwdb.org](http://www.grwdb.org)'s Resources / Labor Market Information Research and Analysis tab of will continue to be updated weekly. For questions or suggestions about the tool, email [info@thegrwdb.org](mailto:info@thegrwdb.org).

# Summer Youth Employment Program offered opportunities during COVID

The Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board's (GRWDB) Summer Youth Employment program was one of 10 summer youth employment program proposals to receive new funding from the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

In mid-June, the GRWDB was notified that it received \$105,600 in grant funding for the summer program, which included stipends for youth from Hunterdon and Somerset counties to work over eight-week periods between the end of July and Oct 31. In the program, each participant, between the ages of 16 and 24, worked 25 hours per week, including four hours per week doing work-readiness training.

The original mission of the state's summer youth employment program was to supply participants with on-site work experience and workforce readiness training. With the uncertainty of COVID-19, the state asked that the program be built as a work remotely opportunity. The program was able to contract with three employers, Atlantis Maintenance and Janitorial Services, Ascend Hot Fitness and Upper Rung Center, offering internships for eight youth. While there could be some limited outdoor and on-site job offerings that abided by CDC guidelines, three other employers with six internship opportunities were not filled because none of the applicants were comfortable with a working on-site option.

Interns assisted businesses and organizations with data entry, mailing lists, marketing, file management, research, website development, creating basic reports and projects specific to the organization's needs. The interns and employers had the support of the GRWDB Job Developer Jeanne Cassano, who was the summer youth employment program coordinator. Cassano worked faithfully with the employer and youth participants to ensure a successful experience for all. This included running weekly virtual workforce readiness trainings using

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*Eight youth took part in internship opportunities. Six other applicants declined because they were not comfortable with working on site.*

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content from a variety of state and local sources. At the end of each session (there were three intern cohorts), program participants were given an exit interview so they could provide feedback about the program. Responses include:

- *When I first joined the program, I was nervous, but I quickly became comfortable because everyone was so helpful and friendly. The help and support that the GRWDB provides for interns was so helpful and made the experience enjoyable. Intern*
- *Thank you, especially for accepting me into a remote position. That thoughtfulness of enabling students to work remotely to make a bit of cash at this pressing time, goes a long way. Intern*
- *The program staff worked hard to make sure I was doing good with my tasks. I have learned to reach out for help whenever I'm in need. I am very grateful for this internship experience. Intern*
- *Thank you for this opportunity to host three youth interns for the second half of the summer. Although it was tough for the students to maneuver the trials of working through a pandemic and college courses and homework assignments, they were able to achieve 90% of the goals set and were able to hit 100% of my top priorities. I really appreciate the support you provided and would like to have the pleasure to do this again next year. Juanita Painson, Upper Rung Center, Intern Host*

GRWDB staff learned a lot during this first-time opportunity, and look forward to putting what was learned into practice for youth in summer 2021.

## *We're ready for our close-ups, Mr. DeMille!*

Three team members of the Greater Raritan workforce area worked together with the Somerset County Public Information Office to create videos highlighting the system's service and program offerings in this time of COVID. Chris Peake, direct services coordinator for the Greater Raritan One-Stop Career Training Center, Teresa Edwards, the center's office manager, and GRWDB Director Paul Grzella, represented the system's partners. Two videos were produced, one focusing on **business services** and the other on **job seeker services**. The videos can be viewed on the home and resources pages of [www.thegrwdb.org](http://www.thegrwdb.org).



### ***First Drive-Thru Job Fair was a success***

More than 240 job seekers from around Central Jersey attended Greater Raritan's Drive-Thru Job Fair conducted on Thursday, Oct. 15, at the TD Bank Ballpark in Bridgewater. The free, first-time event was presented by the Somerset Patriots and the Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board. Job seekers picked up packets (pictured above) with more than 80 flyers from employers, along with flyers about other related programs.

The event was one of four Drive-Thru Job Fairs conducted on the same day and time by Central Jersey Workforce Development Boards. The others were in Middlesex, Monmouth and Ocean counties; more than 1,200 job seekers drove through the four job fairs. The events' regional strategy was to connect job seekers and employers.

Additional packets were distributed to groups throughout Greater Raritan's area, and a PDF of the packet is on [www.thegrwdb.org](http://www.thegrwdb.org). The boards plan to collaborate on similar events in 2021.

**Click here to  
read One-Stop  
Operator  
reports**



### **Virtual programming continues**

For the past eight months, Greater Raritan system partners, working in the office and remotely, have offered all services through online platforms, telephone and email. As pandemic conditions continue to evolve, here is a look at future webinars:

- **SkillUp Greater Raritan Introduction:** Dec. 2, 9, 16, 23 and continuing weekly in 2021
- **Creating a Dynamic Job Portfolio:** Dec., 2, Jan. 6, Feb. 10
- **The Art of Effective Communication:** Jan. 13
- **How To Thrive During Transition:** Jan. 15
- **Understanding Online Applications:** Jan. 19
- **Defeating Unconscious Bias:** Feb. 5
- **Making Your Job Search Work For You:** Feb. 16
- **Using SkillUp Greater Raritan to Advance Your Career Goals:** March 16 and May 4
- **Career Connections with the GRWDB:** April 14
- **Job Search 101 for ELL:** April 28

All programs are free and open to all, and the schedule is constantly updated. For details, go to the Events/Calendar tab of [www.thegrwdb.org](http://www.thegrwdb.org). To work with us to schedule a presentation for your organization, email [info@thegrwdb.org](mailto:info@thegrwdb.org).

### *More Resources for Your Consideration*

- Workforce GPS Resources
- Federal Reserve Bank Racism and the Economy series
- American Enterprise Institute Remote Work Report
- NJBIA Coronavirus Resource & Recovery
- Focus NJ Future of Work in NJ series
- COVID-19 Jobs and Hiring Portal
- Somerset County Business Partnership
- Hunterdon County Chamber of Commerce

### **Thanks for reading!**

Past issues of the GRWDB newsletter can be found on the Events / Stay Informed tab of [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:

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