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ANNUAL REPORT 2022 to 2023



Published March 2024

www.thegrwdb.org



The Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board and its system partners continue to transform how the work of career development and workforce assistance is accomplished in Hunterdon and Somerset Counties, N.J. Here's a look at what happened in the past program year and what is happening right now.

OUR BOARD AND COMMITTEES

The work of the Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board (GRWDB) is supported by local workforce development system stakeholders – business, education, labor, economic development, and volunteer community leaders. In collaboration with GRWDB staff and system team members, board members analyze workforce conditions, oversee the use of federal and state funds, and set local workforce development policies, goals and strategy. To ensure that workforce investments in Hunterdon and Somerset counties meet business needs, the GRWDB is required to have a majority of local business representation. GRWDB members are appointed by the Board of County Commissioners in Hunterdon and Somerset Counties The full board of the GRWDB meets quarterly and is supported by an Executive Committee which meets as needed.

The GRWDB also has four committees which each meet at least four times throughout the year to help plan strategy and consider new initiatives in specific areas. The Disabilities Committee, the Literacy Committee, the Operations Committee, and the Youth Committee include members of the full Board as well as community members from various constituencies interested in taking part in the conversation. Upcoming meetings and events **can be found here.** All are welcomed!

Board Members 2023

- Chair Joanne Hala, Associate Director, United Way of Northern New Jersey
- Vice ChairMichelle Satanik, Assistant Property Manager, OTG, Newark Airport
- Ram Abarasan, President, Deni Realty LLC
- A.D. Amar, Professor of Business, Seton Hall University
- Laura Begg, Vice President Human Resources, Guidehealth
- Jacki Belin, Vice President of Strategic Partnerships, Raritan Valley Community College
- Todd Bonsall, Superintendent, Hunterdon County Vocational School District
- Adriana Bury, Head of North American Talent Management, Sanofi
- Violet Kocsis, SVP of Corporate Services and Chief Human Resources Officer, Hunterdon Healthcare System
- Danielle Kwan, Manager, N.J. Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services Representative
- Maureen Kurdziel, Vice President, American Arbitration
- Fran Leddy, Adult Adult Programs and Services Supervisor, Hunterdon County Educational Services Commission
- Clay Mason, CEO/founder, East West Group
- Terrell McCain, Manager, NJ Department of Labor & Workforce Development Employment Services

2023 Hunterdon County Board of County Commissioners

Zach T. Rich, Commission Director Jeff Kuhl, Commission Deputy Director John E. Lanza, Commissioner Susan Soloway, Commissioner Shaun C. Van Doren, Commissioner

- Meagan O'Rellly, Director, Hunterdon County Human Services Department
- Jessica Paolini, Manager of Economic Development, Somerset County
- Christopher Phelan, President/CEO, Hunterdon County Chamber of Commerce
- Marc Saluk, Economic Development Director, County of Hunterdon
- Nichelle Santos, CEO/Founder, Legacy's Future Insurance
- Daniel J. Sebban, Council Representative, Northeast Council of Carpenters
- Sejal Dave Sharma, Director of Business Development, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset
- Christina Shockley, Apprenticeship Coordinator, Hunterdon County Vocational School District
- Mark Valli, CEO, NORWESCAP

Ex-Officio Members

- Jeff Kuhl, Commissioner Liaison, Hunterdon County
- Christopher Peake (January-August), Fernandel Almonor, (August-December), Greater Raritan One-Stop Operator
- Douglas Singleterry, Commissioner Liaison, Somerset County

2023 Somerset County Board of County Commissioners

Shanel Y. Robinson, Commission Director Douglas Singleterry, Commission Deputy Director Paul Drake, Commissioner Melonie Marano, Commissioner Sara Sooy Commissioner

Join the **GRWDB**

Community members are invited to explore the work of the GRWDB by attending board meetings and joining one of the GRWDB's four committees. GRWDB staff are also available to meet with potential board members to expand the conversation.

Learn more about supporting the economic vitality of Hunterdon and Somerset counties and becoming a committee member of the GRWDB by contacting info@thegrwdb.org or calling GRWDB Director Paul Grzella at 908-541-5790.

OUR MISSION AND OUR WORK

"Through policy, oversight, and planning, The Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board (GRWDB) ensures that workforce training and education are responsive to and meet the needs of employers and job seekers." GRWDB system partners offer in-person, virtual, phone or a combination of these services, depending upon customers' needs. Reflective of this strategy, the Greater Raritan One-Stop Training Services Center offers Monday evening hours while continuing regular operating hours Monday to Friday. Throughout the year, the Training Center team offers a monthly Friday afternoon walk-in Career Cafe in which community members can talk about all available program. Collaboration, flexibility and adaptability are hallmarks of how partners approach their work.

Here are some notable 2023 system accomplishments:

- For the fourth consecutive year, the GRWDB received a Summer Youth Employment Program grant from the New Jersey Department of Labor (NJDOL). The 2023 grant of \$193,500 provided funding for 60 youth from the two counties. In addition, Somerset County, using American Rescue Plan (ARP) funding, supported another 20 youth. In all, 70 participants completed eight-week work experiences with 38 employers and governmental agencies in the two counties; two youth were hired in the fall.
- Somerset County allocated \$50,000 in ARP funding for scholarships for in-demand training programs at Raritan Valley Community College. This was in addition to \$38,000 in ARP funding provided to the program by the county in 2022 and \$12,000 provided by Hunterdon County, also in 2022. Since the program began, 42 individuals in the two counties received scholarships - 35 from Somerset County and seven from Hunterdon County. Scholarships will be available through 2024.
- In the spring, the GRWDB issued Requests For Proposals (RFPs) for One-Stop Operator and Career Training Services vendors. Two vendors responded for Career Training Services, and the Somerset County Human Services Department was chosen to be the vendor for those services. The department had previously been designated as the provider for more than a decade. The four-year contract began in July. Empower Somerset was the sole respondent for One-Stop Operator services, and in August,

Fernandel Almonor, pictured at right, was hired by EmPower as the area's full-time One-Stop Operator. Almonor, a New Jersey native, has more than a decade in workforce development roles for several California agencies. The RFP processes for these vendor contracts, as well as for the vendors of Youth, Work First New Jersey and Workforce Learning Link services, are found at **www.thegrwdb.org**, on the **About - Greater Raritan One-Stop Partners** tab.

• A key deliverable of the One-Stop Operator is the development, of a **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**, developed with all Local Area One-Stop Partners and then signed by each. This is an opportunity for partners to better understand one another's services and identify collaborate for stronger outcomes. After many meetings, Almonor delivered a draft to partners at the end of 2023. The draft was then discussed during an All-Partner meeting on January 18, 2024. The final document will be sent to the state by March 31. From these meetings, a monthly series of Local Team Leader meetings has begun. The MOU and minutes of these meetings are on the **One-Stop Partners** tab.

2023 by the numbers:

SkillUp Greater Raritan had **1,242** new registrants, and participants completed **more than 18,800** training hours during the year.

The mobile text alert system attracted **374** new users; it currently has **737** active subscribers. **Text onestop** to **56512** to subscribe.

The GRWDB Chromebook loaner program, begun in April 2021, has **45** Chromebooks available for loan to WorkFirst NJ customers. In 2023, they were loaned out to **87** people. With a possible state grant, the fleet numbers may double in mid 2024.

Community Outreach Specialist/ Career Coach Jan Goodman led **23** webinars to **465** job seekers.

In addition to **15** individual business Recruitment Events, the GRWDB conducted two big events. The Spring 2023 Job Fair at the Hindu Temple in Bridgewater attracted **68** employers and **325** job seekers. A Fall Life Sciences and Health Care Job Fair at RVCC attracted **53** employers and **350** job seekers.

The GRWDB funded On-the-Job Training and Incumbent Worker Training for **14** *individuals.*

From July 2022 to June 2032, **1,145** Somerset County residents and **534** Hunterdon County residents received funded services.

The GRWDB website had **8,390** visitors and **19,460** page views.



OUR NEW INITIATIVES AND OUR WEBSITE

Expanding literacy services in our communities

The brand-new First Steps Basic English program launched in September in Somerset County with 70 people in five classes. The GRWDB program, supported by Somerset County with \$260,000 in American Rescue Plan funding, was in the planning stages throughout the first half of 2023, with program promotion beginning in July. Funding goes through December of 2024.

The program is directed to the newest English Language Learners who need basic instruction in rudimentary language skills. The program participants pictured at right are part of a class meeting twice a week, in the evenings, at the North Plainfield Public Library. During a February class which included a visit from Somerset County Commissioners Melanie Marano and Douglas Singleterry, members said that they hope the classes will help with doctors appointments, interaction with their children's teachers, and improve job prospects.



Photo courtesy Literacy Volunteers of Somerset County

One of the four committees of the GRWDB focuses on literacy programs and partners in both counties. This includes GRWDB-funded services offered by the Workforce Learning Link as well as supporting community classes offered by Title II literacy program providers and non-profit community organizations focusing on tutor opportunities. The First Steps Basic English program knitted together the existing partners in new ways, broadening mechanisms for collaboration.

First Steps includes funding for additional literacy classes provided by Raritan Valley Community College and the Hunterdon County Educational Services Commission. The two partners launched five classes in the fall and are adding three more in 2024. Class locations are in Bernardsville, Bound Brook, Franklin Township, Raritan Borough and Somerville, and most of those classes are conducted at county libraries, which are part of this expanded literacy initiative. Individuals interested in literacy classes start with Literacy Navigator Stella Nieves, who works for the Literacy Volunteers of Somerset County (LVSC), the lead partner on the program. Throughout the course of the program, Nieves expects to work with more than 150 class participants.

In addition, First Steps funding supported targeted social media and programmatic requirements to assist with the expansion of tutors volunteering with LVSC, and for a new landing page about the program on the GRWDB website. The page is available in English and Spanish. Visit **www.thegrwdb.org/esl**/.

Enhancing features on www.thegrwdb.org

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Resumes		View:	E + Create A New Resume
V CONSIL FORM	RESUME #1 Medfre 13 0x12021,700		
District of the second secon	Untitled-25-Feb-2021-19-17-39 0	÷	Create a New Resume
American Series (Construction) American Series (Construction)	Download Delete Created 23 Feb 2022, 10:56		your chances of success.

Throughout 2023, GRWDB staff continued to enhance features on the website, the primary source of information about workforce system services in Hunterdon and Somerset Counties. This included:

- New features to make the Resume Portal on the **Resources** tab, easier to use and adding functionality that allows users to improve their resumes by comparing it to a job posting.
- Launching the First Steps Basic English landing page on the **Resources** tab.
- Creating a Success Stories link on the **Resources** tab.

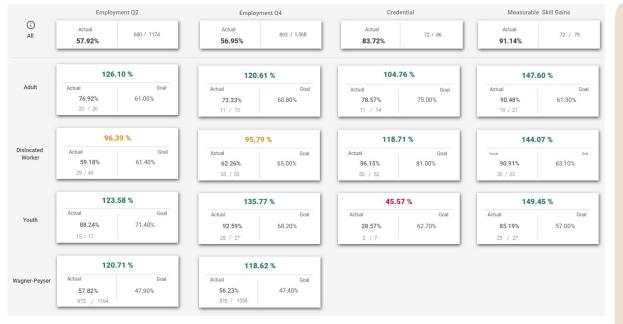
The **calendar** page is updated continuously and the **home page** is refreshed weekly. In 2023, the website had 23,495 page views and more than 10,000 new users.

OUR PERFORMANCE

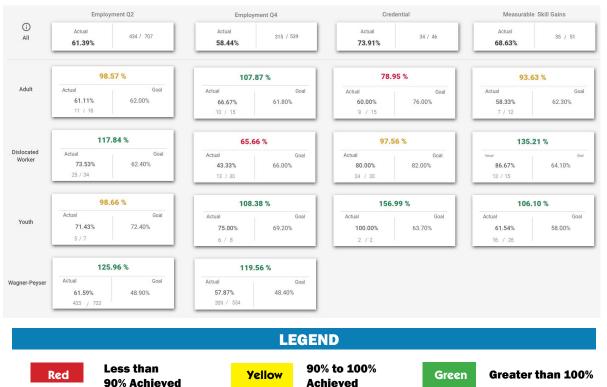
Staff and board members of the GRWDB plan system strategy and direction by understanding local data and outcomes. That's why Performance Matters from Futurework is a key resource for this work.

This web-based intelligence system, utilized nation-wide, tracks, analyzes and compares localized performance Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I and III data for Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth and Wagner-Peyser (Employment Services) customers. This data can be compiled into individualized reports which help identify trends, including the impact of training programs on career wages. Here are Greater Raritan's key performance metrics in employment, credentialing and skill gains outcomes for Program Year (PY) 2022 and the first six months of PY 2023.

PY22 - July 2022 to June 2023



PY23 - July 2023 to June December 2023



DEFINITIONS:

Adult: A person who is age 18 or older.

Credential: Training resulting in industryrecognized credential for career pathways

Dislocated Worker (DW):

A person who has been terminated or laid off, or who has received a notice of termination or layoff, from employment or was self-employed but is unemployed as a result of economic conditions

Employment Q2: Is working in unsubsidized employment in second quarter after exiting program

Employment Q4:Is working in unsubsidized employment in fourth quarter after exiting program

LWDB: Local Workforce Development Board

Program Year (PY): Runs from July 1 to June 30

Wager-Peyser (WP): A jobseeker utilizing the programs offered by Employment Services in the One-Stop system

Youth:Out-of-school youth 16 to 24 years of age.

Note: In each box under the percentages are two numbers separated by a slash. The first number is the Numerator - the total clients who successfully completed a program. The second number is the Denominator - the total clients in the category receiving services

OUR FINANCES

Federal and state funding provided to the GRWDB supports direct services and outreach efforts to job seekers and businesses in Hunterdon and Somerset Counties. The career services (program) and administrative budgets below were approved by the GRWDB Board at its June 2023 meeting. All budgets and updates are shared at quarterly board meetings, and the the agendas in the **Events-Meeting Packages** tabof the GRWDB site include links to reports.

The chart below on the left details the amount awarded to the GRWDB by the state for Program Year 2023 funding - which runs from July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024. Below that is a chart showing the amount of the previous Program Year 2022 budget the GRWDB carried over for the current program year. On the right are charts showing how the budget allocated costs between program and administrative functions, including contracts for vended services. Throughout the year the board also receives a variety of in-kind support services from its partners.

In addition, in the late spring of 2023 the GRWDB received, for the fourth consecutive year grant funding for the Summer Youth Employment Program. The \$193,500 in funding provided part-time jobs for 60 participants. Somerset County funded an additional 20 positions using American Rescue Plan funding. The program, completed in October 2023, was part of Program Year 2022. ARP funding from Somerset and Hunterdon Counties also is supporting an ongoing RVCC Scholarship program, and another \$260,000 in ARP funding awarded to the GRWDB in July of 2023 by Somerset County is supporting the First Steps Basic English literacy initiative through the end of 2024. Funding received at the beginning of 2022 for a separate New Jersey Department of Labor Pathways to Recovery program ended in June 2023.

FY	Contract Term Start	Contract	Term End
2024	July 01, 2023	June 3	0, 2024
Workforce Deve	elopment Area Contract	Alloca	tions
County		Somerset	Hunterdon
WIOA			
WIOA - Adult and E	Dislocated Worker	\$1,048,491.00	\$352,636.00
WIOA - Youth		\$355,994.00	\$190,517.00
WIOA - Other OJT		\$0.00	\$0.00
	WIOA Total	\$1,404,485.00	\$543,153.00
Workfirst New Jer			
	agement/Work Activities	\$349,302.00	\$148,786.00
(TANF) NBWS		\$0.00	
(TANF) CAVP		\$0.00	\$0.00
(TANF) OJT		\$0.00	\$0.00
(TANF) Work Verifi	cation	\$0.00	\$0.00
	(TANF) Total	\$349,302.00	\$148,786.00
(GA/SNAP) Case N	Management/Work Activities	\$219,735.00	\$94,172.00
(GA/SNAP) NBWS		\$0.00	\$0.00
(GA/SNAP) OJT		\$0.00	\$0.00
	(GA/SNAP) Total	\$219,735.00	\$94,172.00
(SNAP) Case Mana	agement/Work Activities	\$0.00	\$0.00
(SNAP) OJT		\$0.00	\$0.00
	(SNAP) Total	\$0.00	
	orkfirst New Jersey Total	\$569,037.00	\$242,958.00
Workforce Learnii	ng Link	\$70,000.00	
Smart STEPS		\$3,210.00	
WIOA Data Report	ting and Analysis	\$12,971.00	
		\$0.00	
		\$0.00	
		\$0.00	
	Grand Total	\$2,059,703.00	\$786,111.00

Cost Category			
5	Amount		
Total Staff Salaries	\$	641,549.95	
Total Fringe Benefits	\$	360,150.25	
Total Adult/DW Participant Services	\$	978,569.92	
ITAs	\$	550,000.00	
TLO	\$	100,000.00	
Incumbent Worker Training	\$	100,000.00	
Supportive Services	\$	20,000.00	
Hunterdon County Rent	\$	11,576.32	
Somerset County: Rent	\$	96,993.60	
Procured One-Stop Operator Services	\$	100,000.00	
Total Youth Participant Services	\$	274,401.00	
Hunterdon County Polytech Youth Outreach	\$	80,000.00	
Middle Earth Youth Outreach	\$	80,000.00	
Middle Earth WIOA Work-Based Learning	\$	114,401.00	
Total WFNJ Participant Services	\$	535,369.00	
HCSEC-HC	\$	218,024.00	
HCESC-SC	\$	246,345.00	
Somerset County Board of Social Services: Rent	\$	63,000.00	
Other-Describe	\$	432,307.63	
Futurework	\$	12,971.00	
Workforce Learning Link	\$ \$	70,000.00	
Staff Training Literacy Initiative – First Steps Basic English		49,336.63	
		260,000.00	
Grand Total	\$	3,222,347.75	

Cost Category	Amount		
Total Staff Salaries	\$	115,759.62	
Total Fringe Benefits	\$	65,427.34	
Total Non-Personnel Costs	\$	111,016.24	
Rent	\$	12,036.00	
Equipment	\$	10,000.00	
Information Technology	\$	10,000.00	
Professional Development	\$	11,826.99	
Travel	\$	3,000.00	
Other	\$	64,153.25	
Grand Total	\$	292,203.20	

Title I Adult	PY22 Carryover		PY23 Allocation		PY23 Budget	
	\$	194,967.00	\$	482,391.00	\$	677,358.00
Title I Dislocated Worker	\$	478,164.00	\$	918,735.00	\$	1,396,899.00
Title I Youth	\$	76,729.00	\$	546,513.00	\$	623,242.00
TANF	\$	27,581.00	\$	498,088.00	\$	525,669.00
GA/SNAP	\$	15,047.00	\$	313,907.00	\$	328,954.00
Smart Steps			\$	3,210.00	\$	3,210.00
WLL			\$	70,000.00	\$	70,000.00
FutureWorks			\$	12,971.00	\$	12,971.00
	\$	792,488.00	\$	2,845,815.00		
ΤΟΤΑ					ć	3 638 303 00



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OUR SUCCESS STORIES



The partners of the Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board regularly share stories about the small and large steps their customers take as they walk their career paths. These stories are highlighted in two ways on **www.thegrwdb.org**: One-Stop Operator Fernandel Almonor highlights several success stories in monthly One-Stop Operator Reports, which are found on the **About - Greater Raritan's One-Stop Partners** page. In addition, select stories are now highlighted in a newly added **Resources - Success Stories** tab on the website. Here are two stories to consider.

Training grant process leads to growing career pathway



An unemployed resident came to the One-Stop Career Training Services Center after being laid off three years ago during the height of the pandemic. She had been working as a medical assistant but was finding it difficult to find employment that allowed her the flexibility she needed as a single parent to adequately care for her young child.

The customer met with her Career Navigator and shared her dream of one day owning a hair salon. She not only had a passion for the hair-styling industry, but also had significant skills in hair design. Despite never having any formal training, she had been braiding the hair of friends and family for years and designed silk wigs, which she was able to sell for a small profit. The customer and Career Navigator crafted an employment plan that would lead to sustainable employment, financial stability, and flexible hours in an industry for which she had a deep passion.

Using a training grant provided by the One-top Career Training Services Center, the customer enrolled and completed a cosmetology program. Her instructors were impressed by her natural flair for hair design and commented that she was a standout student that served as a role model for others enrolled in the program.

Within weeks of completing training, the participant received a job offer as a sales representative in an upscale salon, earning more than she did in her previous job as a medical assistant. She went on to study for her cosmetology exam; once certified and licensed, she will be able to move into a hair design position with her current employer, which will continue to increase her income. The customer credits her Career Navigator with providing her the knowledge, guidance and encouragement needed to start a new career journey. While she is truly enjoying what she is doing right now, she still has plans to one day open and operate her own salon.

Workforce Learning Link gives individuals career focus

Greater Raritan's Workforce Learning Link assists with basic literacy and computer skills and high school diploma equivalency work. Learning Link has locations in Somerville and Flemington, and both offices can be used by individuals looking to take their General Education Development (GED) certifications. Here is how two participants used the services.

A young man came to the Somerville Workforce Learning Link program through Greater Raritan's Youth Employment Services (YES) Program. He was interested in becoming an electrician or plumber. He obtained his GED certification in two months, with all four of his exam grades in the 170s range. Two of his grades were high enough to possibly receive college credit. He went on to join the area's Visions Program through Middle, and completed his Job Readiness Group.

A young mother enrolled in the Workforce Learning Link. While working towards obtaining her GED certificate. the participant increased her National Reporting System for Adult Education (NRS) score which gave her an Educational Functioning Level (EFL) gain. In four months, she passed Science and Math. She went on to enroll at Raritan Valley Community College in Branchburg, with the goal of becoming a Medical Assistant. She aims to graduate at the top of her class., and go on to attend R u t g e r s University. She would like to become an Ultrasound Technician.

OUR PARTNERS

The mission and vision of the Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board are built on collaborative partnerships. System partners connect employers and job seekers to the services offered by a variety of local, county and state public and private entities, resulting in a system which is flexible, seamless, robust and proactive. Here are some current workforce system partners. If your organization isn't on the list, and would like to see how to become involved, reach out to GRWDB staff.

Business Services Partners

New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, including Business Services Representatives, Employment Services, Veterans Workforce Program, the New Jersey Office of Apprenticeship, and the Industry Partnership Initiative

New Jersey Department of Children & Families, Division on Women

New Jersey Business Action Center

New Jersey Economic Development Authority

Raritan Valley Community College Workforce Training Center

Hunterdon County Chamber of Commerce

Hunterdon County Economic Development

Somerset County Business Partnership

goHunterdon; RideWise

Educational Institution Partners

Raritan Valley Community College

Hunterdon County Educational Services Commission

Hunterdon County Polytech Career & Technical School

Somerset County Vocational and Technical Schools

Healthcare Partners

Hunterdon Healthcare

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset

Special Populations Partners

NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development, including Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, National Farmworkers Job Program / Pathstone, Senior Community Services and Unemployment Insurance

Hunterdon County – Division of Senior, Disabilities and Veterans Services, Division of Social Services, Youth Services Commission Center for Educational Advancement,Hunterdon Helpline, Prevention Resources, StarThrower Group, United Way of Hunterdon County

Somerset County – Board of Social Services, Community Development Block Grant, Office on Aging and Disability Services, Youth Services Alternatives, Community in Crisis, Empower Somerset, Healthier Somerset, Literacy Volunteers of Somerset County, Matheny School, Middle Earth, United Way of Northern NJ

Government Partners

Somerset County, including Board of County Commissioners, Department of Human Services, Economic Development Division, Planning Division

Hunterdon County, including Board of County Commissioners, and Department of Human Services

Libraries, including Somerset County Library System of New Jersey, Hunterdon County Library System, Bernards Township Library, Bernardsville Public Library, Franklin Township Public Library, Raritan Public Library

Garden State Employment and Training Association New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission North Jersey Partners

Learn more

This **2022-2023 Annual Report** and past reports are housed on the **About - Annual Reports** tab of **www.thegrwdb.org** Visit **www.thegrwdb.org**, follow the GRWDB on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, or contact GRWDB staff directly for more information. Staff members are happy to meet – in person or virtually – with any business, community agency or public body in Hunterdon and Somerset counties to explain the work being done and how this work benefits different stakeholders. Contact:



Paul Grzella, Director 908-203-6044, grzella@co.somerset.nj.us

Chika Okoye, Business and Finance Manager 908-541-5723, cokoye@co.somerset.nj.us

Jeanne Cassano, Contract Compliance and Engagement Specialist 908-541-5785, jcassano@co.somerset.nj.us

