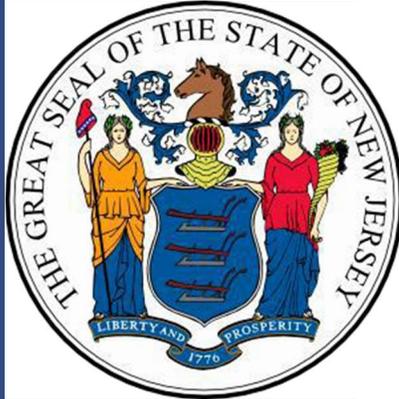


Regional Plan for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

March 31, 2023

Updated March 15, 2026



New Jersey Northern Region

North Jersey Partners WIOA Regional Plan

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North Jersey Partners WIOA Regional Plan

Introduction

This document (2023 Northern Region Plan), is being submitted by the North Jersey Partners, LLC (NJP), on behalf of the North Jersey Consortium. It represents the regional four-year strategic plan prepared in compliance with the directive/guidance provided by NJSETC and NJDOL in the Regional and Local Planning Guidance and Framework directive of September 29, 2022 and the requirements outlined in WIOA Section 106.

North Jersey Partners (NJP) is a regional consortium of workforce systems, businesses, and educational institutions dedicated to ensuring the economic vitality within Northern New Jersey. This innovative and strategic private-public collaboration, a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization, strives to ensure economic growth across New Jersey's Northern Region service area through the development of a skilled and talented workforce.

As part of the Plan Development Plan process, NJP conducted a thorough review with technical support from NJDOL Office of Research and Information and supported by a series of weekly partner conversations which included all WDBs from the Northern Region counties except Hudson County; A representative from the Hudson County LWDB was not available. The following LWDBs participated in the regional planning process: Bergen, Essex, Greater Raritan (Hunterdon and Somerset Counties), Newark, Morris-Sussex-Warren, Passaic, and Union. Documentation of these meetings is available in a regional shared folder. Once completed the regional plan is distributed to the LWDBs who will publish it, for the 30-day comment period, on their website and through their public-comment process. Input from all stakeholders is welcomed.

The Northern Region represents over half (52%) of the state's population and generates 53% of NJ's private sector wages. The region includes some of the most affluent and some of the poorest communities in the state. It has a very diverse population and a very diverse economy. Despite an overall highly educated population, the region also has a disproportionate amount of the state's least educated (less than high-school diploma).

The strategies and priorities identified in this plan are designed to address employers' needs for skilled labor by assisting residents and jobseekers gain in-demand skills and overcome their barriers to becoming and staying employed.

Populations which require extensive supports to be able to enter and stay in the workforce are present in all of our counties regardless of the overall level of affluence. However, the concentration of low-income, overburdened/underserved communities, who do not have access to resources commonly available to others, is primarily in the Newark/Essex area where the poverty rate is more than twice the poverty rate for the state (25% vs 10%).

We are committed to providing the opportunity to succeed to all, including those who experience barriers to employment (access to transportation, referrals to physical and mental health assistance, housing assistance, child and dependent care, and income supports). To this end, we will continue our search for community partners who can provide supportive services and seek additional resources and funding (e.g., Needs Based Work Supports funding).

We look forward to closer collaboration with the State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) and the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDOL) in the implementation of regional and local strategies.

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Strategic Vision, Goals, and Priorities

The Northern Region plan supports the strategies outlined in the NJ state plan and the priorities outlined in NJDOL's Workforce Strategy:

- Integration of required One Stop partners and services into One Stop Career Centers
- Customization of services for employers and jobseekers
- Strengthening local governance

Vision

Northern Region's vision is to align and connect successful regional strategies and organizations to ensure that individuals and industries become and remain competitive, inventive, and innovative in the ever-changing demographic, socioeconomic, and technological environment and to create an inclusive regional workforce system that proactively adapts to the needs of businesses and residents and collaborates with educational institutions and community partners.

Goals

- Transform the public workforce system so that it is not only more valuable, but also easier to access by, both residents and businesses
- Ensure that all residents have access to information and the education/training/skills and additional supports necessary to access high-quality employment, i.e., Equitable access and the opportunity to succeed
- Ensuring businesses and employers that are offering high-quality employment in New Jersey can quickly and efficiently fill their talent needs
- Create of a demand-driven system that aligns workforce development efforts with employer needs
- Educate stakeholder on the importance and relevance of workforce issues

Strategic Priorities

To achieve the Vision and Goals, The Northern Region has adopted the following Strategic Priorities, in support of the State's priorities and in alignment with WIOA regulations:

- Expand outreach to residents and access to support services, including and especially in overburdened/underserved populations; These are the same communities, especially communities of color that were most impacted by the pandemic and who have had lasting impacts and are still struggling to recover. [NJDEP | Environmental Justice | What are Overburdened Communities \(OBC\)?](#)
- Expand support services to ensure continued workforce participation by the working poor and identify career pathway initiatives and other similar training programs to help incumbent workers transition to living-wage occupations
- Increase efficiency of the services provided to residents/jobseekers and businesses by strengthening the integration of Stop Career Centers partners and services, expanding relationships and functional alignment/seamless transition/coordination through co-enrollment and, for effective communication, through use of technology (e.g., texting apps for Youth)
- Ensure alignment of workforce training with Industry Needs by customization of services (for employers and jobseekers); focus on Career Pathways, Industry-Valued Credentials, Apprenticeships program for non- college-bound students; Raise awareness of opportunities in skilled trades and other traditional vocational and technical programs
- Continue to identify workforce needs at every level and provide services to help develop regional businesses, and convene partners to promote/enhance the adequate flow of information between partners
- Develop deep, strong and effective partnerships with the business community, and a thorough understanding of their workforce needs; Support the state Industry Partnerships and their connection to educational institutions, workforce development, economic development, and community partners

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- Increase efficiency and effectiveness by use of technology to improve internal and external communications and data/information sharing
- Enhance professional development opportunities for workforce development professionals in the region
- Advocate and set policies that remove “internal system barriers” and enhance and improve results within the regional workforce network.
- Strengthen local governance, to ensure operations comply with WIOA regulations and maximize the impact of resources, by creating a Regional Workforce Team that will work to collaboratively establish best practices and standards that LWDBs and One-Stop Career Centers (OSCC) will deploy throughout the region

Major Themes for the Northern Region

Our regional strategies will be guided by the following:

- Planning regionally and spending locally
- Leveraging resources, including technology, through regional activities (e.g., outreach, communications)
- Regional partnership with NJ Industry Partnerships, NJ Employer Association (NJEA), Consortium of Community Colleges), and others
- Communicate, Connect, Advocate
- Increase OSCC accessibility beyond virtual services by meeting customers “where they are” both physically and psychologically and increase focus on populations with barriers
- Focus on, and ensure, Equity and Inclusion in the delivery of services
- Increase focus on the needs of the working poor who require full-time, skilled jobs and also access to supportive services (e.g., Transportation)
- Financial Literacy and Empowerment for low-income residents
- Focus on services for Youth, underrepresented and low-income population

Currently, North Jersey Partners (NJP) is the mechanism for coordination of regional strategies; All Northern WIOA Planning Region LWDB are members of NJP; NJP is coordinating the process and writing the WIOA Regional Plan.

North Jersey Partners WIOA Regional Plan

I. Regional and Local Workforce Strategies

This section presents the economic and demographic data and the resulting regional strategies for aligning workforce development programs to the needs of employers and support for economic growth. In developing and implementing these strategies, the Region and the LWDBs will build on the demonstrated strengths and work to address weaknesses.

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

Understanding the trends in labor demand and labor supply in the region was the first step in the development of regional workforce strategies. The data includes current and projected region demographics and employment data (e.g., employment by industry/occupations educational attainment) and employers' needs (projected growth and job openings, skills and certifications). In view of the difficulty of making projections due to the pandemic shock to the system, LMI data will need to be monitored carefully to ensure we have the most up to date information. Sources of data/information also include: direct observations by staff, employers' input, partner organizations (e.g., economic development, employer organizations, DVR, Veterans, etc.)

Labor Demand:

- Industries needs
 - Existing industries and occupations
 - Emerging industries and occupations
- Education, Skills, Certifications in greatest demand

Labor Supply:

- Workforce and Unemployment
- Population, including Special Populations:
 - Veterans
 - Individuals with disabilities (incl. mental health, addiction)
 - Re-entry
 - Youth
 - Individuals with limited English proficiency
 - No high school education
 - Low-income individuals (*who need supports in order to continue to be part of the workforce*)
 - Older workers

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The pandemic brought into focus the Region and LWDBs strengths and weaknesses.

Strengths:

Ability to adapt services to the needs of employers and job seekers as demonstrated during Covid-19 pandemic

Weaknesses:

Limited capacity to support low-income workers and to provide support for underserved communities

Limited public transportation and/or other transportation options

Minimal funding for supportive services

While we have been able to adapt to many of the pandemic challenges, barriers to job-seeking continue to be difficult to overcome. Housing, mental/behavioral health and transportation barriers continue to negatively influence our levels of service and our ability to serve those most in need, including youth.

1. Please provide a description of your regional labor market and share specific labor market information (LMI) data from your region

The Northern Region is comprised of 10 Counties (Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Morris, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, Union, Warren), including Newark, Jersey City, and Paterson (three largest cities in New Jersey) and 10 of the 19 urban major cities/towns. As of 2022, per Lightcast:

- Population increased by 5.7% since 2017 and is expected to increase by 7.3% (360,854) in the next four years
- Total jobs in 2022 (estimated at 2,242,405) had 1.3% decline since 2017 but are projected to increase to 2,339,690 by 2027.
- While the unemployment rate reached 3.1% (below the pre-pandemic low), Labor Force Participation rate declined to 62.3% in 2022 from 65.1% in 2017

Labor Demand

Industries

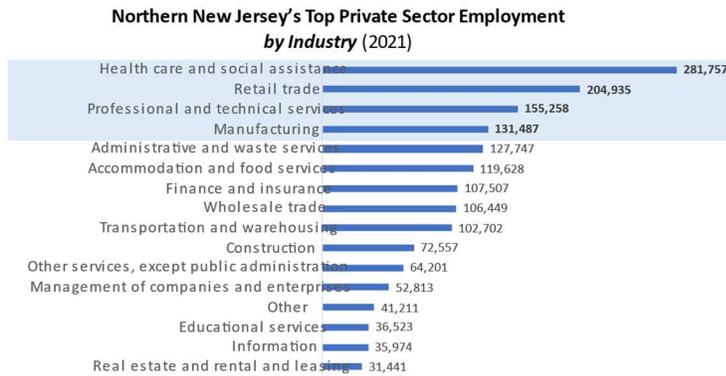
The top four private industries in terms of regional employment are:

- Healthcare and Social assistance,
- Retail Trade,
- Professional and Technical Services, and
- Manufacturing

As shown below, these four industries represent almost half of the total region's private employment. Other industries with significant employment include Administrative and Waste Services, Accommodations and Food Services, Finance and Insurance (especially in Hudson) and Wholesale Trade (especially in Bergen) and Transportation and Warehousing.

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Nearly 50% of Northern New Jersey's employment was identified within the top 4 industry sectors



SOURCE: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2021
Prepared by: New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development,
Bureau of Labor Market Information (February 2022)

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Northern Region Industry	Units* (Employers)	Average Annual Employment	Percent of Private Employment	Percent of Private Total Wages
62 Health care and social assistance	23,775	281,757	16.8%	13.0%
44 Retail trade	15,172	204,935	12.3%	6.5%
54 Professional and technical services	15,950	155,258	9.3%	15.7%
31 Manufacturing	4,904	131,487	7.9%	8.7%
56 Administrative and waste services	8,268	127,747	7.6%	5.0%
72 Accommodation and food services	10,517	119,628	7.2%	2.5%
52 Finance and insurance	5,939	107,507	6.4%	13.1%
42 Wholesale trade	7,738	106,449	6.4%	7.8%
48 Transportation and warehousing	4,763	102,702	6.1%	5.0%
23 Construction	11,122	72,557	4.3%	4.3%
81 Other services, except public administration	13,729	64,201	3.8%	1.9%
55 Management of companies and enterprises	752	52,813	3.2%	7.3%
61 Educational services	1,968	36,523	2.2%	1.4%
51 Information	1,932	35,974	2.2%	3.9%
53 Real estate and rental and leasing	4,844	31,441	1.9%	1.8%
11 Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	N/D	N/D	N/D	N/D
21 Mining	N/D	N/D	N/D	N/D
71 Arts, entertainment, and recreation	1,893	26,063	1.6%	1.1%
22 Utilities	180	6,249	0.4%	0.6%
99 Unclassified	4,669	5,426	0.3%	0.2%
Total Private Sector	*138,438	1,672,190	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

Prepared by: New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, December, 2022

*the vast majority are small employers (less than 50 employees); average # of employees/unit = 12
Largest employers are in Management of Companies and Enterprises, Utilities, Manufacturing, and Transport

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Northern New Jersey Private Sector Employment 2021											
Avg. Employment by Sector and County	Total	Bergen	Essex	Hudson	Hunterdon	Morris	Passaic	Somerset	Sussex	Union	Warren
11 Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	2,116	ND	ND	281	572	482	101	151	180	ND	349
21 Mining	0	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
22 Utilities	3,025	1,297	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	327	ND	1,401	ND
23 Construction	72,557	15,776	10,503	4,592	3,059	11,141	7,727	7,194	2,012	9,400	1,153
31 Manufacturing	131,487	28,245	14,915	9,838	2,981	18,629	17,256	15,618	2,422	18,203	3,380
42 Wholesale trade	106,449	32,260	11,369	12,488	1,564	14,044	8,720	13,544	832	10,820	808
44 Retail trade	204,935	47,296	22,949	24,752	5,815	27,461	22,352	17,324	5,811	25,576	5,599
48 Transportation and warehousing	102,702	16,309	30,972	20,752	553	7,720	3,913	5,611	855	15,257	760
51 Information	28,469	8,380	4,490	7,701	ND	3,448	928	ND	189	3,175	158
52 Finance and insurance	104,365	13,469	16,923	38,656	ND	17,621	3,968	6,724	756	5,845	403
53 Real estate and rental and leasing	28,580	8,136	5,763	4,878	316	4,248	1,841	ND	302	2,891	205
54 Professional and technical services	155,258	28,748	22,022	14,582	4,099	39,847	6,000	20,625	1,566	16,648	1,121
55 Management of companies and enterprises	49,988	11,007	6,059	3,920	ND	11,505	1,506	12,026	ND	3,965	ND
56 Administrative and waste services	127,747	25,401	14,598	16,434	1,683	22,957	11,824	14,944	2,018	16,519	1,369
61 Educational services	36,523	9,436	7,842	3,889	596	6,146	2,357	2,978	357	2,343	579
62 Health care and social assistance	281,757	74,179	46,756	27,993	5,913	37,803	26,101	20,963	5,657	31,471	4,921
71 Arts, entertainment, and recreation"	15,560	ND	3,524	3,204	1,094	ND	1,282	2,405	1,301	2,284	466
72 Accommodation and food services	119,628	27,337	18,259	16,369	3,130	16,795	9,626	9,638	3,455	12,784	2,235
81 Other services, except public administration	64,201	13,927	10,747	5,952	1,726	9,676	5,729	4,878	1,492	8,894	1,180
99 Unclassified	5,426	1,452	1,063	830	123	446	473	360	127	474	78

Source: New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Annual Averages

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As shown below, growth in regional employment is projected to come from:

- Accommodations and Food Services
- Healthcare and Social Assistance and
- Professional and Technical Service.

Manufacturing employment is projected to grow by 5.3%. Recent projections from Lightcast (Q1 2023), also show Transportation and Warehousing as the top growth industry for the region.

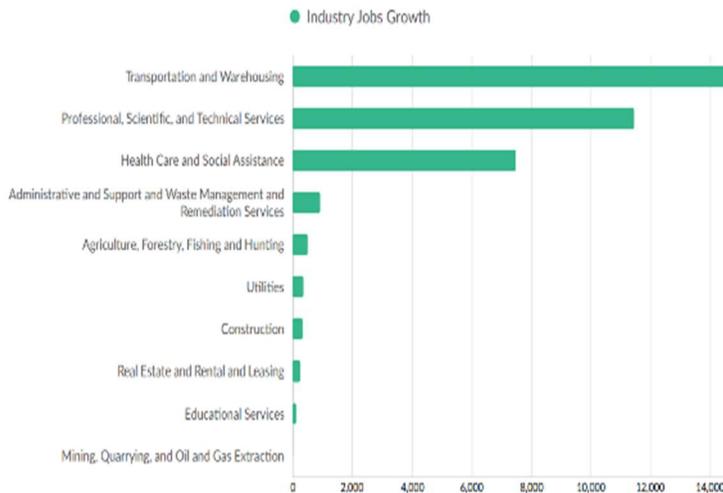
Nearly 50% of NNJ's employment growth is projected to be within 'Accommodation and Food Services', 'Healthcare and Social Assistance', and 'Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services'

Industry (North American Industry Classification System)	Employment		Employment	
	2020 Actual	2030 Projected	2020-2030 Number Percentage	
Accommodation and Food Services	107,450	147,200	39,750	37.0%
Health Care and Social Assistance	288,750	327,750	39,000	13.5%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	167,900	195,450	27,550	16.4%
Administrative, Support & Waste Management	135,500	157,900	22,400	16.5%
Other Services (except Government)	75,900	93,850	17,950	23.6%
Transportation and Warehousing	100,250	117,250	17,000	17.0%
Educational Services	197,350	213,800	16,450	8.3%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	21,750	37,800	16,050	73.8%
Construction	73,600	81,700	8,100	11.0%
Manufacturing	132,150	139,200	7,050	5.3%
Retail Trade	203,250	208,000	4,750	2.3%
Wholesale Trade	116,750	121,150	4,400	3.8%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	32,350	35,650	3,300	10.2%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	57,250	59,350	2,100	3.7%
Finance and Insurance	116,850	118,750	1,900	1.6%
Information	40,350	40,500	150	0.4%
Utilities	6,300	5,800	-500	-7.9%

Source: Industry and Occupational Employment Projections
Prepared by New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce
Development, Bureau of Labor Market Information

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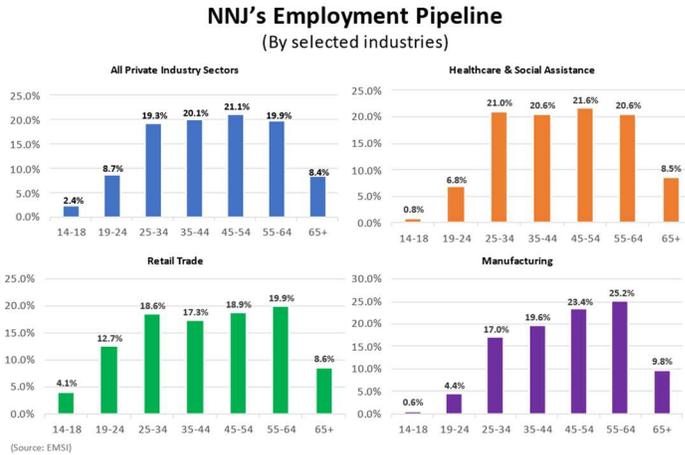
Top Growing Industries



Source: Lightcast Q1 2023

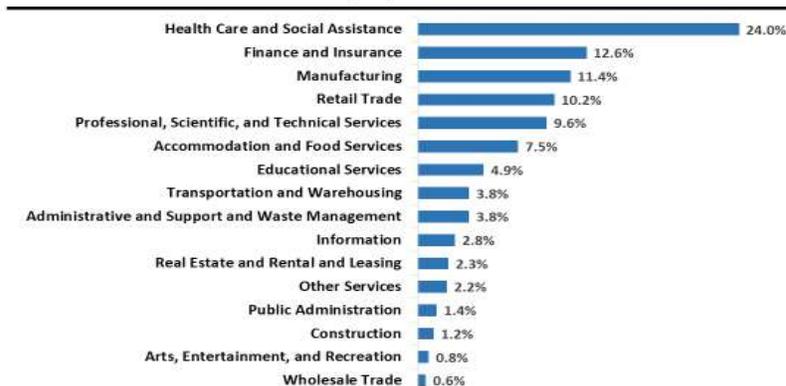
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Demand for labor is driven not only by growth but also by quits, which include retirements. The older the workforce in an industry, the more retirements are expected. As shown in the chart below, the region's Manufacturing sector will be most affected by retirements, since it now has 10% of employees at retirement age and an additional 25% will become retirement eligible in the next 5-10 years.



Job openings take into account both growth and quits and are the best measure of labor demand and Job Postings are a real time measure of job openings. Based on the job postings data, the major industries with the most job openings in 2022 are the same top industries mentioned previously plus Finance and Insurance (see below).

Industries that had the most job postings in 2022 for employment in NNJ



Postings Available: 500,000
Postings with unspecified industry sectors: 0

Source: Labor Insight Burning Glass, (January-December 2022)
Prepared by: New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development,
Bureau of Labor Market Information

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Occupations

The top five largest specific occupations in 2021 were: Retail Salespersons; Laborers & Freight, Stock & Material Movers; Cashiers; Registered Nurse, Home Health Aides and Personal Care Aides. Registered Nurse is the only occupation of this group with a much higher wage than the others. Only two other high paying occupations are listed in the top 10 occupations: they are Software Developers and General and Operations Managers.

Two occupations, Registered Nurses and Software Developers, have higher salaries than the other top occupations.

**Northern New Jersey's Top Occupations
by Employment (2021)**

Top Occupations	Estimated Employment	Average Salary	Education
Retail Salespersons	50,640	\$35,450	No formal educational credential
Laborers & Freight, Stock, & Material Mover	41,040	\$38,380	No formal educational credential
Cashiers	41,000	\$29,630	No formal educational credential
Registered Nurses	37,270	\$92,270	Bachelor's degree
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	36,530	\$32,250	High school diploma or equivalent
Stockers and Order Fillers	36,090	\$34,550	High school diploma or equivalent
Customer Service Representatives	33,360	\$44,550	High school diploma or equivalent
Janitors and Cleaners	32,740	\$36,320	No formal educational credential
Office Clerks, General	30,280	\$42,820	High school diploma or equivalent
Fast Food and Counter Workers	27,830	\$29,250	No formal educational credential
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	27,300	\$46,560	High school diploma or equivalent
Receptionists and Information Clerks	26,190	\$36,730	High school diploma or equivalent
Software Developers	25,260	\$125,200	Bachelor's degree
General and Operations Managers	24,650	\$173,280	Bachelor's degree

SOURCE: Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics Surveys, 2021
Prepared by: New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development,
Bureau of Labor Market Information (February 2022)

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Growth Occupations Regional occupations projected to experience most growth are Home Health and Personal Care Aides, Laborers/Freight/Stock, and Material Movers, Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts/Testers, and Fast Food/Counter workers. The projected job growth reflects the dominant jobs in the growth industries mentioned previously.

**Occupations in Northern New Jersey that are projected to
grow the most between 2020 – 2030 (by Employment)**

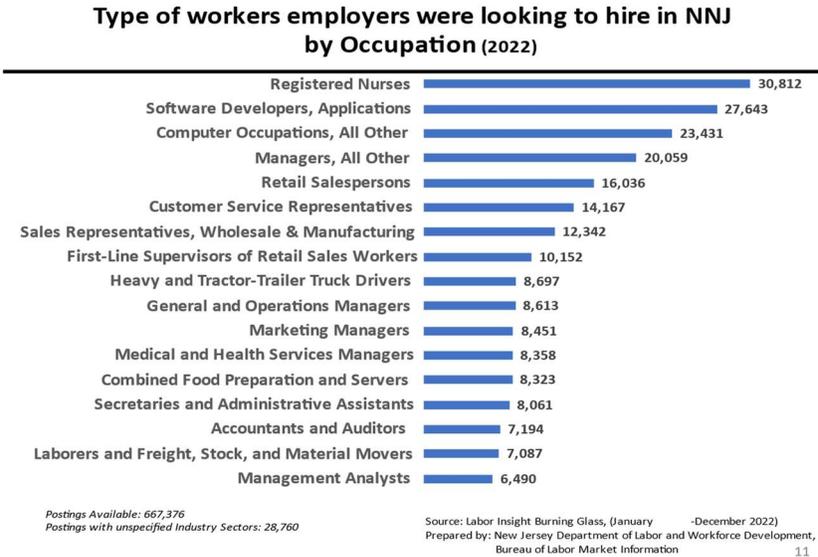
Occupations	Employment		Employment	
	2020 Actual	2030 Projected	2020-2030 Number	2020-2030 Percentage
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	30,050	38,700	8,650	28.8%
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers	58,200	66,800	8,600	14.8%
Software Developers & Software Quality Assurance Analy	34,150	42,600	8,450	24.7%
Fast Food and Counter Workers	27,700	35,900	8,200	29.6%
Waiters and Waitresses	20,100	27,350	7,250	36.1%
Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists	17,650	23,000	5,350	30.3%
Cooks, Restaurant	6,400	10,800	4,400	68.8%
Passenger Vehicle Drivers	10,550	14,050	3,500	33.2%
General and Operations Managers	24,800	28,250	3,450	13.9%
Security Guards	19,300	22,700	3,400	17.6%
Receptionists and Information Clerks	28,050	31,350	3,300	11.8%
Registered Nurses	41,600	44,900	3,300	7.9%
Stockers and Order Fillers	31,500	34,700	3,200	10.2%
Janitors and Cleaners	32,650	35,800	3,150	9.6%
Fitness Trainers and Aerobics Instructors	4,650	7,600	2,950	63.4%
Packers and Packers, Hand	27,800	30,650	2,850	10.3%
Retail Salespersons	52,000	54,800	2,800	5.4%
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	12,100	14,800	2,700	22.3%

Source: Industry and Occupational Employment Projections
Prepared by New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce
Development, Bureau of Labor Market Information

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As previously noted, job openings are the best indicator of labor demand, since they include labor demand created by business growth and labor demand created by retirements. The top four specific Occupations with the most job openings, as reflected by the 2022 job postings are: Registered Nurses, Software Developers and Other Computer Occupations, Managers.



Occupation Families

Some of the largest occupational families have seen a decline since 2017, some due to the pandemic, while others continue to grow. Occupation families which continued to grow are:

- Transportation and Material Moving
- Management and Business Operations
- Healthcare Practitioners and Healthcare Support

Food Preparation occupations, which declined significantly (14%) from 2017, had 9% increase from 2021 to 2022. All but two of the fastest growing occupation groups (Food Preparation occupations and Personal Care occupations) paid average wages above \$16.00 per hour.

Data on occupational families may be used in the development of career pathways. Starting on a career pathway, can lead to potentially higher income than the average for that occupation family.

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Largest Occupation Families

Occupation Families	2017 Jobs	2022 Jobs	Change in Jobs	% Change in Jobs
Office and Administrative Support	317,444	306,256	(11,188)	(4%)
Transportation and Material Moving	228,297	229,216	920	0%
Sales and Related	227,711	206,755	(20,956)	(9%)
Educational Instruction and Library Management	167,345	159,120	(8,225)	(5%)
Business and Financial Operations	127,300	154,118	26,818	21%
Food Preparation and Serving Related	140,399	153,933	13,534	10%
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	150,431	129,838	(20,593)	(14%)
Healthcare Support	123,387	129,316	5,929	5%
Production	89,283	98,748	9,464	11%
Computer and Mathematical	99,078	92,039	(7,038)	(7%)
	76,498	79,447	2,948	4%

Fastest Growing Occupation Families

Occupation	Change in Jobs (2021-2022)	% Change	2021 Median Hourly Earnings
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	10,402	9%	\$14.46
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	9,356	4%	\$18.11
Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	5,301	3%	\$30.95
Management Occupations	4,101	3%	\$70.10
Healthcare Support Occupations	3,912	4%	\$16.09
Sales and Related Occupations	3,415	2%	\$18.97
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	3,267	2%	\$43.54
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	2,892	1%	\$21.77
Personal Care and Service Occupations	2,574	4%	\$14.91
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	2,220	3%	\$16.51
Production Occupations	2,190	2%	\$19.33
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	2,009	3%	\$27.24
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	1,448	1%	\$45.44
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	1,439	4%	\$29.96
Construction and Extraction Occupations	1,328	2%	\$30.29
Community and Social Service Occupations	1,088	3%	\$27.88
Protective Service Occupations	817	2%	\$24.50
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	688	2%	\$46.02
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	519	2%	\$41.47
Legal Occupations	242	1%	\$53.30

Source: Lightcast Q1 2023 Dataset

North Jersey Partners WIOA Regional Plan

Education, Skills, and Certifications Requirements

As shown previously in the Northern New Jersey Top Occupations by Employment table:

- Only five of the top 20 Occupations require a bachelor's degree.
- Most only require a high school diploma or no formal educational credential.
- Some require post high school credentials, e.g., HHA/CNAs, Tractor Trailer Truck Drivers, and the others require on the job training.

Similar as in statewide, many of the region's fastest growing occupation do not require advanced levels of educational attainment and will have widely varying education and skill requirements that cannot be projected solely based on occupational growth; the needs will also be driven by the expected retirements.

Just like New Jersey's workforce, the region's workforce appears to be overeducated. Many occupations are common across multiple industries. Identification of transferrable skills and monitoring the needs of the region's businesses are key to the development of customized plans of actions for jobseekers.

New occupations and employment opportunities (not reflected in the above data) are expected as a result of:

- Newark Port Expansion
- Chips Act
- Off-Shore Wind Project

To understand the needs of these emerging occupations, (of which many do not require a college degree) we will need more information on the type of jobs and the training they will require. The off-shore wind Project has performed a workforce needs/gap analysis and we will need to better understand its impact on the Northern Region. <https://www.njeda.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/2022-NewJersey-OSW-Workforce-Assessment-Report.pdf>

The key takeaways from the charts below are:

- Basic/Soft Skills continue to be a significant requirement, with "Communication skills" at the top. Overall, in-demand soft skills are focused on interpersonal skills. However, "basic skills" now include not just general computer literacy but also competency with Microsoft Office
- In demand specialized skills are: Marketing, Auditing, Finance, Agile Methodology, Nursing, Computer Science, and several programming languages
- In-demand certifications center around the healthcare sector (e.g., RN, LPN); Driver license and/or CDL are the most sought-after requirement.

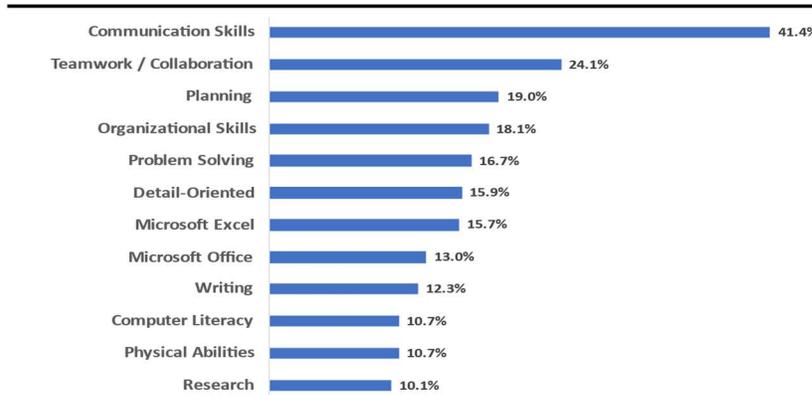
Attainment of credentials will continue to be a high priority for the region. We will continue to use evidence-based performance information along with Regional Industry stated credential requirements to ensure development of programs for industry-valued credentials, including Apprenticeship programs.

In addition, the region and its LWDBs plan to establish OSCC strategic approaches to provide career coaching and career pathway implementation (see Sections below).

North Jersey Partners WIOA Regional Plan

Baseline Skills

Top 12 Baseline (Soft) Skills Requested by Employers
(for NNJ in 2022)



Postings Available: 667,357
Postings with unspecified Industry Sectors: 110,598

Source: Labor Insight Burning Glass (January -December 2022)
Prepared by: New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development,
Bureau of Labor Market Information

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Top Specialized Skills based on Job Postings

2022 Top Specialized Skills (per Lightcast Q1 2023 Data Set)	Unique Postings	National Average
Marketing	45,163	42,706
Auditing	39,176	37,303
Finance	39,103	27,837
Agile Methodology	35,474	18,929
Nursing	33,651	39,053
Accounting	33,552	33,609
Merchandising	32,036	35,325
Computer Science	30,479	23,037
SQL (Programming Language)	27,160	15,414
Data Analysis	25,943	19,957
Automation	24,726	17,298
Workflow Management	24,700	20,909
Selling Techniques	23,745	24,739
Warehousing	22,284	26,196
Pharmaceuticals	22,272	7,014
Project Management	21,815	16,405
Python (Programming Language)	21,560	13,464
Java (Programming Language)	20,954	9,815
Process Improvement	18,553	18,280
Billing	18,352	18,289

North Jersey Partners WIOA Regional Plan

Top Qualifications/Certificates in 2022, per Lightcast Q1 2023 DataSet

Qualification	Postings with Qualification
Valid Driver's License	51,476
Registered Nurse (RN)	37,568
Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification	20,736
Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Certification	11,678
Master Of Business Administration (MBA)	10,631
Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)	8,572
Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS) Certification	8,107
Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)	5,478
Commercial Driver's License (CDL)	4,829
Project Management Professional Certification	4,264
First Aid Certification	4,242
Nurse Practitioner (APRN-CNP)	3,945
Board Certified/Board Eligible	3,936
Certified Public Accountant	3,446
Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS)	3,217
CDL Class A License	3,105
Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)	2,875
Teaching Certificate	2,788
Certified Pharmacy Technician	2,624
Certified Medical Assistant (CMA)	2,439
Certified Home Health Aide	2,397
Certified Information Systems Security Professional	2,319
Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Certification	2,190
Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA)	2,113
Security Clearance	2,080
Certified Patient Care Technician (CPCT)	2,077
Licensed Social Worker	2,034
ServSafe Certification	2,023
Pharmacist License	1,869
Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC)	1,864
Certified Information System Auditor (CISA)	1,829
Basic Cardiac Life Support	1,732
Phlebotomy Certification	1,577
American Registry Of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT) Certified	1,547
FINRA Series 7 (General Securities Representative)	1,409
Certified Internal Auditor	1,326
American Society For Clinical Pathology (ASCP) Certification	1,275
CDL Class B License	1,254
Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN)	1,234
Chartered Financial Analyst	1,219
Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) Certification	1,198
Real Estate Salesperson License	1,125
Advanced Practice Registered Nurse	1,068
Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) License	1,066
Certified Information Security Manager	1,047
Food Handler's Card	1,035
IV (Intravenous) Certification	1,034
Neonatal Resuscitation Program Certification (NRP)	1,019
Forklift Certification	1,014
Registered Behavior Technician (RBT)	1,003

North Jersey Partners WIOA Regional Plan

Labor Supply

Labor Force and Unemployment

After record high unemployment in 2020, the region's unemployment rate 3.6% average for 2022 and 3.1% at the end of 2022. Regional workforce participation, however, is still below the pre-pandemic level. It dropped from the 2019 high of 66% to 62.3% at the end of 2022.

The unemployment and the workforce participation rate are improving in all the counties, however, some of the region's counties have a higher unemployment rate than the region and a lower workforce participation than the region. Essex and Passaic had a 4% unemployment rate at the end of 2022; Passaic and Essex's workforce participations rate is also lower, 61% for Passaic and only 57% for Essex. These are the same counties with large population centers, larger areas of poverty and among the region's most racially diverse and most affected by the pandemic.

In 2022, the region's Labor Force was still below its 2019 level and also represented a slightly smaller percent of the state total Labor Force. This is another indication that the region as a whole was impacted more severely than the state.

Dec 2022 Labor Force Breakdown

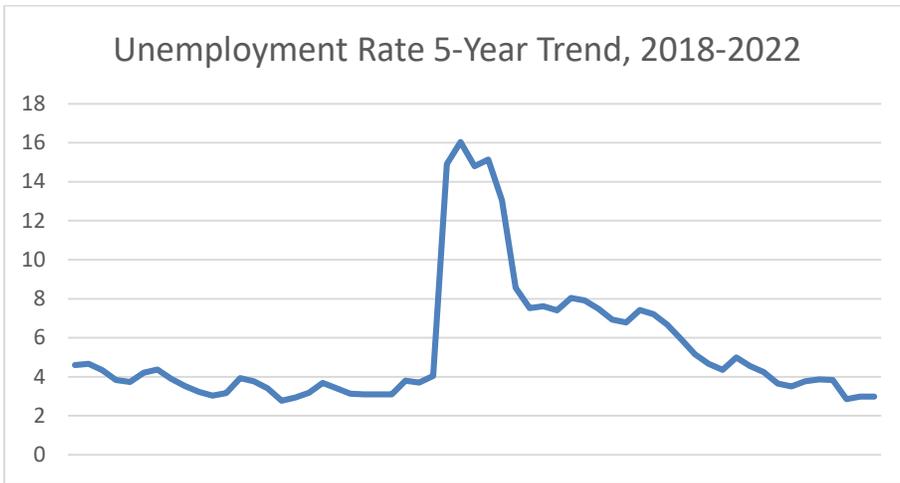
Population	4,923,815
16+ Civilian Non-Institutionalized Population	3,940,153
Not in Labor Force (16+)	1,484,441
Labor Force	2,455,712
Employed	2,379,535
Unemployed	76,177
Under 16, Military, and institutionalized Population	983,662
Unemployment Rate	3.1%
Labor Force Participation	62.3%

<u>Northern Region</u>	<u>Net</u>			
<u>Annual Averages</u>	<u>2022 *</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>Change</u>
				<u>2019-2022</u>
Labor Force	2,426,400	2,425,100	2,454,100	-27,700
Employment	2,336,900	2,266,600	2,373,100	-36,200
Unemployment	89,500	158,700	80,800	8,700
Unemployment Rate (%)	3.7%	6.5%	3.3%	0.4%

* Preliminary Estimate

Northern Region Labor Force as % of NJ Labor Force	51.9%	52.0%	52.4%
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North Jersey Partners WIOA Regional Plan



Labor Force Participation Rate Trends



North Jersey Partners WIOA Regional Plan

Across all our counties, we have observed significant changes in our communities. Some examples:

- In Hunterdon, we see the effects of an aging workforce and a shrinking population
- Several counties are experiencing a marked influx of widely diverse ethnic groups with limited English literacy
- The high-density population centers, who have been disproportionately impacted by Covid in the last three years, are still feeling the pandemic's effects (e.g., impact on health, housing). Due to this more extreme impact, there is a dire need for meaningful supportive services for these residents/jobseekers.

We continue to notice older workers (55+) experiencing age discrimination and jobseekers with more barriers to employment other than age, e.g., mental/behavioral health, long-term unemployment.

As noted previously, all counties have areas of jobseekers who require additional supports, with the highest need especially in the Newark/Essex County area. We must take a closer look at approaches to address the support services needed by those with barriers to employment, including the working poor who require full-time, skilled jobs.

Reaching out to “non-traditional” populations and assisting in removing their barriers to employment is imperative to our ability to meet the needs of the region's employers and help maintain the region's economic growth.

Unemployment by demographic groups

The Northern Region's unemployment by various demographic groups is shown in the tables below (Data Source: Lightcast).

Some unemployed populations represent a smaller percent of the total unemployed but an even smaller share of the region's population/workforce, and thus as a group they have a higher unemployment rate. This is especially so for Black/African Americans but also, to a lesser extent, for all Males).

Males have a higher unemployment rate than females, since the gender split in the region is close to 50/50

Unemployment by Gender

Gender	Unemployment (Dec 2022)	% of Unemployed
Females	31,726	41.65%
Males	44,451	58.35%
Total	76,177	100.00%

Black or African Americans represent 27% of the region's unemployed but only 14% of the population.

Unemployment by Race

Race	Unemployment (Dec 2022)	% of Unemployed
American Indian or Alaskan Native	616	0.81%
Asian	3,710	4.87%
Black or African American	20,748	27.24%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	531	0.70%
White	50,572	66.39%
Total	76,177	100.00%

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Unemployment by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Unemployment (Dec 2022)	% of Unemployed
Hispanic or Latino	24,249	31.83%
Not Hispanic or Latino	51,928	68.17%
Total	76,177	100.00%

Unemployment by Age

Age	Unemployment (Dec 2022)	% of Unemployed
< 22	1,903	2.50%
22-24	3,864	5.07%
25-34	18,593	24.41%
35-44	16,197	21.26%
45-54	14,462	18.98%
55-59	7,712	10.12%
60-64	6,877	9.03%
65+	6,568	8.62%
Total	76,177	100.00%

Unemployment by Industry

Total Unemployment (12/2022)

Industry	Unemployed (12/2022)	% of Regional Unemployment
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	327	0%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	34	0%
Utilities	136	0%
Construction	8,222	11%
Manufacturing	5,051	7%
Wholesale Trade	3,858	5%
Retail Trade	7,456	10%
Transportation and Warehousing	5,767	8%
Information	1,116	1%
Finance and Insurance	4,110	5%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,487	2%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	4,701	6%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1,101	1%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	12,616	17%
Educational Services	1,716	2%
Health Care and Social Assistance	6,720	9%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	2,359	3%
Accommodation and Food Services	6,127	8%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	2,083	3%
Government	1,189	2%

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Current population demographics

Per the 2020 Census, the counties with the highest populations are: Bergen and Essex, followed by Hudson and Union. The table below shows the racial diversity of each county. Highlighted in green are the populations which represent a higher percentage of each county's population. The most diverse counties are Essex and Hudson, followed by Union and Passaic.

<u>Northern Region Counties by Race</u>	<u>Total:</u>	<u>White alone</u>	<u>Black or African American alone</u>	<u>American Indian and Alaska Native alone</u>	<u>Asian alone</u>	<u>Some Other Race alone</u>	<u>Population of two or more races</u>
Bergen	955,732	56.9%	5.7%	0.5%	16.6%	10.1%	10.2%
Essex	863,728	30.3%	38.8%	0.5%	5.5%	14.4%	10.5%
Hudson	724,854	34.3%	11.0%	1.0%	17.2%	22.1%	14.4%
Hunterdon	128,947	82.8%	2.5%	0.2%	4.4%	3.2%	6.9%
Morris	509,285	69.7%	3.3%	0.3%	11.4%	6.1%	9.2%
Passaic	524,118	43.8%	11.0%	1.2%	5.9%	25.7%	12.3%
Somerset	345,361	53.7%	9.2%	0.4%	19.5%	8.1%	9.0%
Sussex	144,221	84.5%	2.1%	0.2%	2.1%	3.1%	7.9%
Union	575,345	41.1%	20.4%	0.7%	5.6%	18.4%	13.8%
Warren	109,632	79.2%	5.4%	0.2%	2.7%	4.2%	8.3%
Total	4,881,223	48.7%	14.4%	0.6%	10.9%	14.2%	11.1%

Source: CENSUS DATASET DECENNIALPL2020

Poverty Estimates

<u>Population for whom poverty status is determined</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Below poverty level</u>	<u>Percent below poverty level</u>
Bergen County, NJ	943,734	71,588	7.6%
Essex County, NJ *	833,009	126,854	15.2%
Hudson County, NJ	694,796	111,289	16.0%
Hunterdon County, NJ	125,473	4,134	3.3%
Morris County, NJ	501,826	28,609	5.7%
Passaic County, NJ	511,015	72,041	14.1%
Somerset County, NJ	341,777	17,933	5.2%
Sussex County, NJ	144,223	8,788	6.1%
Union County, NJ	565,979	51,096	9.0%
Warren County, NJ	109,033	11,794	10.8%
NNJ Region	4,770,865	504,126	10.6%
New Jersey	9,093,135	930,602	10.2%
Newark City, NJ	293,735	74,066	25.2%

* Includes Newark, NJ

Source: American Community Survey, 1-year estimates, 2021 (Table ID 1710)

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Age and Education

The population of the Northern Region represents 52% of the state’s population; While it is home to 56% of NJ residents with a bachelor degree or higher, it is also home to 62% of NJ residents without a high-school education (see table below).

Additional state investments will be required to get the less than high-school educated population to benefit from WIOA programs (and become part of the in-demand skilled labor pool).

The demographic landscape of Northern New Jersey

Resident Population by Age	Number	Percent
Total population	4,844,256	100.0%
Less than 25	1,449,088	29.9%
25 to 34	647,234	13.4%
35 to 44	669,844	13.8%
45 to 54	653,626	13.5%
55 To 64	658,757	13.6%
65 to 74	450,213	9.3%
75 to 84	222,019	4.6%
85 and over	93,475	1.9%

Resident Population by Educational Attainment	Number	Percent
Population 25 years and over	3,395,168	100.0%
Less than 9th grade	181,237	5.3%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	146,633	4.3%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	813,882	24.0%
Some college, no degree	482,922	14.2%
Associate's degree	216,260	6.4%
Bachelor's degree	908,072	26.7%
Graduate or professional degree	646,162	19.0%

SOURCE: American Community Survey 1 -Year Estimates
Prepared by: New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development,
Bureau of Labor Market Information (February 2022)

Northern Region Age and Education groups as percent of the NJ statewide category

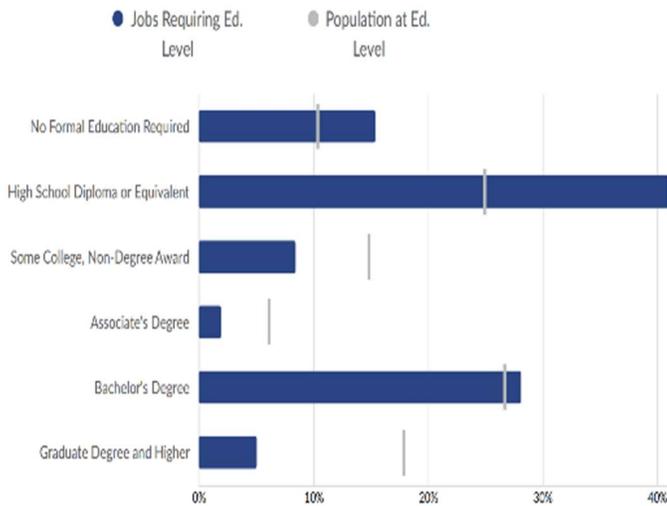
Resident Population	Number	Percent	% of NJ
Total population	4,844,256	100.0%	52.3%
Less than 25	1,449,088	29.9%	51.9%
25 to 34	647,234	13.4%	54.6%
35 to 44	669,844	13.8%	54.8%
45 to 54	653,626	13.5%	53.7%
55 To 64	658,757	13.6%	51.3%
65 to 74	450,213	9.3%	48.8%
75 to 84	222,019	4.6%	48.9%
85 and over	93,475	1.9%	50.1%

North Jersey Partners WIOA Regional Plan

Northern Region			
Resident Population by Educational Attainment	Number	Percent	% of NJ group
Population 25 years and over	3,395,168	100.0%	52.4%
Less than 9th grade	181,237	5.3%	62.2%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	146,633	4.3%	50.2%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	813,882	24.0%	49.3%
Some college, no degree	482,922	14.2%	48.5%
Associate's degree	216,260	6.4%	47.6%
Bachelor's degree	908,072	26.7%	54.6%
Graduate or professional degree	646,162	19.0%	57.4%
Minimum of Associate's degree	1,770,494	52.1%	54.6%
Bachelor's+Graduate/professional degrees	1,554,234	45.8%	55.7%
Source: American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates			

As noted earlier, overall, the region appears to have an over-educated labor force (data source: Lightcast).

Underemployment



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Population trends

Due to the Covid shock to the system and no data point yet available for post-Covid, population projections are difficult to make. Based on pre-Covid projections, the population of Northern Region is projected to have an overall increase, although some counties were projected to have population decreases.

As shown by the census 2020 data, the Northern Region has become more diverse with White only population at less than half (47%) of the region total; people of “more than one race” now represent 11%. The increase in the racial and ethnic diversity of the region is projected to continue.

The tables below show expected population growth based on pre-pandemic forecasts. Recent data from Lightcast, shows that the Northern Region population increased by 5.7% since 2017 and is expected to increase by 7.3% (360,854) in the next four years. The regional labor force is expected to grow also, although Hunterdon, Sussex, and Warren may see small declines.

Labor Force nearing retirement (55+) is expected to reach 25% of the total labor force.

Projection of Labor Force Changes

County	Change 2019-2024		Change 2024-2029		Change 2029-2034	
Bergen	15,700	3.18%	20,000	3.93%	16,100	3.04%
Essex	7,000	1.76%	11,700	2.88%	7,300	1.75%
Hudson	6,100	1.59%	21,800	5.58%	14,900	3.61%
Hunterdon	0	0.00%	-600	-0.93%	-200	-0.31%
Morris	9,900	3.62%	8,500	3.00%	4,500	1.54%
Passaic	4,000	1.60%	8,500	3.34%	5,100	1.94%
Somerset	6,600	3.64%	6,900	3.67%	4,000	2.05%
Sussex	-800	-1.03%	-1,500	-1.96%	-1,100	-1.47%
Union	10,400	3.46%	15,600	5.01%	10,300	3.15%
Warren	-200	-0.36%	-600	-1.09%	-400	-0.73%
NNJ Region	58,700	2.37%	90,300	3.56%	60,500	2.30%
New Jersey	114,600	2.48%	154,600	3.26%	119,400	2.44%

Age	Projections			
	2019	2024	2029	2034
16-54	1,868,500	1,898,600	1,975,800	2,032,100
55+	611,600	640,000	653,500	657,900
% Labor Force 55+	24.66%	25.21%	24.85%	24.46%
	2,480,100	2,538,600	2,629,300	2,690,000

Age	Change 2019-2024		Change 2024-2029		Change 2029-2034	
16-54	30,100	1.61%	77,200	4.07%	56,300	2.85%
55+	28,400	4.64%	13,500	2.11%	4,400	0.67%
	58,500	2.36%	90,700	3.57%	60,700	2.31%

Source: NJLWD, 2014 - 2034 Labor Force Projections

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Special populations

Services for people with disabilities are offered in partnership with DVR

Populations with a disability by age group	Northern Region Total	With Disability	Percentage
Under 5 years	272,103	1,297	0.48%
5 to 17 years	779,703	29,291	3.76%
18 to 34 years	1,032,177	54,658	5.30%
35 to 64 years	1,971,257	150,997	7.66%
65 to 74 years	445,068	81,912	18.40%
75 years and over	301,815	126,458	41.90%
Northern Region	4,802,123	444,613	9.26%
18 to 64 years	3,003,434	205,655	6.85%

Source: NJDOL

Veterans [State Summaries New Jersey.pdf \(va.gov\)](#)

This the top Priority of Service group and services are provided in conjunction NJDOL veterans' Representatives.

Limited English Proficiency

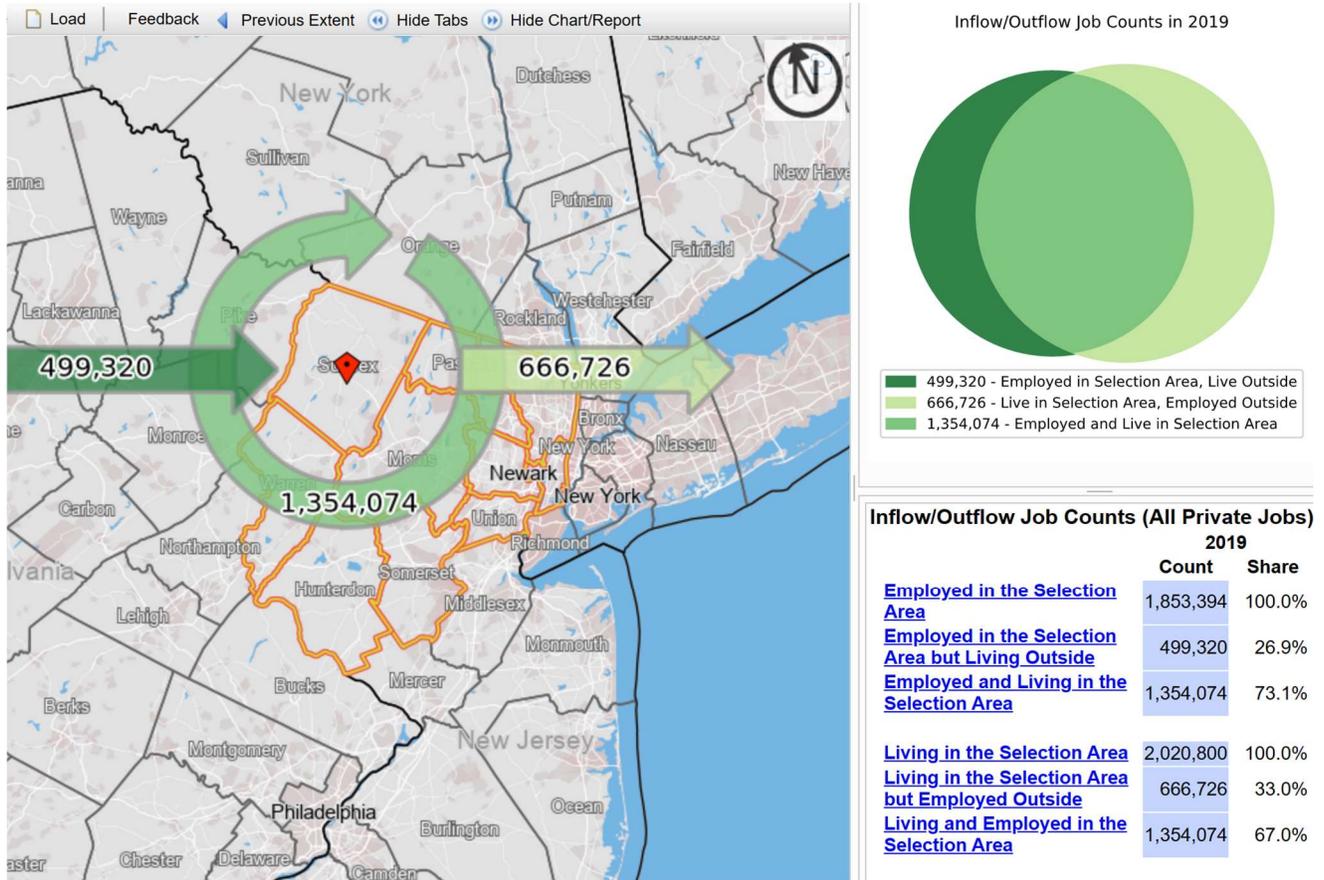
The region LWDBs will ensure that services are offered to accommodate the needs of this population.

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Commuting Patterns

According to the latest pre-pandemic data, more region residents are employed outside the region than non-region residents commuting for work into the region.

The pandemic and the shift to work from home, has resulted in population migration from cities to rural and suburban areas, specifically New York City to New Jersey. The impact of this shift is not reflected here since these are pre-pandemic statistics.



Source:
[OnTheMap \(Census.gov\)](https://onthemap.census.gov/)

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Target sectors, occupations, and population

The industries and occupations prioritized and outlined below were developed as regional priorities through close analysis of the Regional Labor Market Information data presented in the previous section, and our own and/or partners' observations, and the information presented in the State Plan.

Target Sectors:

- Healthcare
- Professional Services
- Retail
- Accommodations and Food Services (Hospitality)
- Manufacturing
- Transportation, Distribution and Logistics
- Construction and Utilities

Target Occupations:

- Healthcare occupations (RN, LPN, healthcare technicians)
- Machinists/CNC – High Tech manufacturing
- Drivers – CDL
- Technology/Infrastructure/Energy occupations (“green jobs”) resulting from:
 - Infrastructure grants - Port of Newark upgrade
 - Off-shore wind project
 - Chips Act
 - Overall need for “technical” skill across all sectors

Target Populations:

- Veterans (priority of service)
- Youth (priority of service)
- Population with disabilities
- Re-entry/Addiction recovery
- No high school education
- Limited English Proficiency
- Low-income individuals (who need support in order to continue to be part of the workforce)
- Older workers (incl. those in need of skill upgrade or who are discriminated due to age)
- Women and men for non-tradition occupations

How will your region work jointly towards meeting the demands and needs of existing/emerging sectors and occupations?

To meet the demand and needs of existing/emerging sectors and occupations, the Northern Region will build on the demonstrated ability to adapt to new challenges and understand employers' needs as demonstrated during the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, it will also focus on solving the challenge posed by populations with barriers and improve its capacity to support these populations by seeking new partnerships to provide supportive services (see Section II).

As shown by the data, the strong need for labor is expected to continue, due to growth, retirements, and new major NJ initiatives. In view of the current and projected labor needs, low/declining

North Jersey Partners WIOA Regional Plan

workforce participation, and employers' inability to fill openings, a priority at the regional level will be to focus on expanding the labor supply by tapping on populations with barriers and providing the appropriate support so that the working poor can continue to stay in the workforce and not fall back on welfare services.

Regardless of the sector, all occupations will require soft skills, enhanced computer literacy, an overall comfort with using and adapting to technology's impact on the work, and an understanding of the Future of Work (e.g., continuous learning of new skills).

While the region has a high level of educated residents, many occupations do not require a college degree. Even many in-demand and emerging "technical" occupations do not require a college degree. The region will work to more specifically identify the requirement for the emerging industries (e.g., Energy/Infrastructure) and ensure programs are available to prepare the workforce to meet employer needs.

With the appropriate training and supportive services, individuals with "barriers to employment" may become "job-ready" to fill many of these positions and start on a career pathway.

The region's LWDBs will work jointly to meet the demands by taking a regional approach to outreach and engagement of prospective employers and ensuring the availability of required training programs:

- All jobs will require basic digital/computer literacy. This requirement is much broader than several years ago and includes MS Office. The region will ensure that programs are available so that all jobseekers have these basic skills or acquire them.
- While many "technical jobs" do not require a college degree, they require basic math literacy. Programs will be developed to bridge the gap in basic math literacy. These programs will be useful to more than the above-mentioned target populations. The Newark "bridge" program will be deployed regionally to get trainees to become "training-ready" for these occupations. (e.g., program currently being developed by Newark WDB)

How will your region work jointly to target jobseekers and workers to meet these industry needs and support skill development and barrier removal for these individuals? Who are the specific populations that are a priority for service based on the data?

- Overall, regionally, we have observed more job seekers with barriers to employment, including mental health sometimes caused by long-term unemployment. The stressors caused by low-income and lack of child-care are also a barrier to participation in the workforce. The regional approach will be to focus on the "human side" and assist with "barrier removal" to ensure that those enrolled in training programs truly have the "ability to benefit" and enter and stay in the workforce. To this end, we will identify partners for the "wrap-around" services that will be required by many.
- The region plans to meet jobseekers and prospective jobseekers "where they are" physically and psychologically through
 - Mobile/Satellite One-Stop Career Centers
 - Programs offering "full support", including empowerment training, financial literacy, comfort with technology, comfort with learning new skills (Details in the section on OSCC Operations)
- Continue to seek partners and funding (e.g., Needs Based Work Supports) to facilitate access to transportation
- The region plans to continue to host outreach events for the target populations
- The region plans to create a repository of resources for the community
- Priority of Service Populations: veterans and their family members, low-income individuals

How your region engages in ongoing analysis and review of LMI data to track changes and adjust strategies.

o How does the region work collectively to gather and disseminate LMI information?

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- o How does the region work together to build capacity in utilizing LMI?*
- o How does this information drive collective regional efforts to support employers, jobseekers, workers, and other workforce stakeholders?*
- o What types of staffing and/or resources are shared regionally to drive this work? How are they funded?*

The region depends on the NJDOL ORI's Labor Market analysts to provide the most recent workforce data and analysis. Real-time needs of employers are monitored at the local level by Business Services and local WDBs. The ORI analyses and reports also provide valuable understanding of the key industry workforce trends and of the workforce needs of employers. [Labor Market Information | Industry Sector Focus \(nj.gov\)](#)

Some LWDBs have a local staff person responsible for LMI analysis but others do not. LMI is shared at the Northern Region WDB Directors' meetings and LMI informs decisions on new initiatives (e.g., Endures grant)

The Region and LWDBs plans to establish a repository of LMI data and of information gathered from employers.

B. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES What are the specific areas where regional partners will target regional approaches to support local strategies through shared capacity and/or joint initiatives?

In order to accomplish the regional Strategic Priorities listed in the introduction, the Region and LWDBs will build on successes and innovations developed and implemented by the member LWDBs by maintaining formal and informal processes of replication and expansion of successful programs. The Region's LWDBs will also build upon training, partner service, and business partnerships developed by one member LWDB and leverage those efforts on behalf of the whole region.

o What opportunities exist for shared programs or service delivery at the regional level that support local area implementation?

The following regional functions will be considered for implementation:

- Identification of partners and development of training programs
- Common repository of resources for the community
- Common repository of best practices
- Outreach/community programs for target populations

o How might the region set a common vision, goals, and/or specific strategies related to:

- *Industry pipelines and career pathways*
- *Service delivery, including around ITAs, virtual learning, full range of work-based learning opportunities, supportive services, and job assistance and placement*
- The region's common vision, goals, and/or specific strategies are based on the analysis of the labor market data, understanding of employers' needs, input from Economic Development agencies and the agreement of the Northern Region member LWDBs.
- Service delivery strategies are informed also by the demographics and environmental factors, as demonstrated during the Covid-19 and the plan to offer mobile/satellite OSCC services in Bergen and Newark (see also Section II)
- Community partners will also be a significant input to the development and implementation of specific initiatives (e.g., Economic Development, The NJ Business Action Center, NJ Employers' Association, and the state's Industry Partnerships)

How will the region track progress and manage implementation of activities related to common goals and/or specific strategies? Who are the specific partners/stakeholders that will contribute to these efforts, as well as specific in-kind or financial contributions that partners will offer?

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Progress will be tracked at the Northern Region regular LWDB Director's meetings.

What are the specific plans for leading and supporting the development of career pathways and industry pipelines at the regional level?

Plans for supporting the development of career pathways include partnering with the NJ Office of Apprenticeship and the NJ Industry Partnerships. Career pathways are especially important for attracting talent to the priority industries mentioned above: Healthcare, Professional Services, Retail, Accommodations and Food Services (Hospitality), Manufacturing, Transportation, Distribution and Logistics, and Construction and Utilities

What industry sectors or occupations is the region targeting or prioritizing and why?

The target sectors and occupations include those listed in Section IIA and most of the sectors represented by the Industry Partnerships. They were selected because they represent the top employment sectors in the region, are experiencing high growth and/or job openings, or are expected to experience high growth as a result of statewide projects.

How are career pathways strategies aligned with serving identified target populations and priority populations identified in WIOA and New Jersey's state plan (including disadvantaged adults, dislocated workers, youth, and other underserved populations)?

To align career pathways strategies with the identifies target populations, we must start with "job-ready" programs, which include soft-skills and basic computer skills. These must be followed by remedial math skills education.

In addition (or prior to training), counseling and empowerment skills will be provided to ensure participants can benefit from the training provided and will continue with employment.

- o *What stakeholders from across local areas are part of these efforts?*
- o *How will regional partners engage in and continue this work?*

Career Pathways are being developed in partnership with the Community College Consortium and the Industry Partnerships. Other stakeholders are: NJMEP, GSETA, Economic Development.

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II One Stop Career Center Operations – Regional Plan

(Plans for regional support, joint efforts, common models)

This section looks at the actions and steps planned for the next four years at the regional level to build up the relationships and connection across partners and services (including with youth providers). The Northern Region is committed to, and fully supports the State's increased focus on **Integrating partners and services**. This includes:

- **Functional alignment** for seamless transition and/or coordination of services using co-enrollment
- **Relationship-Building with Partners** (Engagement of all WIOA and NJ required One Stop partners and the various employment and training opportunities they offer into One Stop Career Center service delivery)
- **Service Agreements** (Development of MOUs/IFAs to help support planning and implementation around these relationship are discussed in Section III)

We also look forward to collaborating in the delivery of the state's and NJSETC's commitments:

- Building out centers of training and technical assistance across workforce program areas, e.g.:
 - Development of a new learning management system (LMS)
 - Development of new training partnership with GSETA
- Supporting efforts to continue modernization of systems and investments in technology, e.g.:
 - Data system modernization
 - Investment in tools like SkillUp New Jersey

This section also looks at the regional actions planned for Supporting Customized Strategies for Jobseekers and Employers. These include:

- Partnering with Business Services to develop Work-Based Learning capacity to match and fill gaps between employer needs and jobseeker skills and interests through regional and local business service functions
- Increasing Access and Engagement through investments in tools that support virtual intake, assessment, and service delivery and also mobile one-stops
- Increasing effectiveness of Career Services by emphasizing work readiness and training readiness (Bridge Program) and career advisement across WIOA services, including in Wagner-Peyser and Title I programs specifically and recognizing that work readiness includes more than training (i.e., supportive services).
- Supportive services - Leveraging resources across required partners and additional community partners to provide services that reduce barriers to employment beyond specific the training-related needs

To accomplish the above goals, the region partners will prioritize understanding the possibility of a common structure for service delivery for: Assessment, Plan development, Individualized Career services, Training Services, Supportive Services and Follow-up services.

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A. One-Stop Service Delivery and Flow: Regional Plan

1. *Region support for the integration of partners, programs, and services across all One Stop centers in the region.*

Each LWDB will provide the Partner-Service Matrix as part of their plan.

Partners common to all Northern Region LWDBs/OSCCs are: Title I Adult , Title I Dislocated Worker, Title I Youth, Title II Adult Education/Literacy, Title III Wagner-Peyser, Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation, WorkFirst New Jersey, Veterans/ Jobs for Veterans State Grant, Reentry Employment Opportunities.

Some LWDB, also have strong partnerships with Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs and with HUD Employment and Training.

The following services/supports are provided by all of the region's OSCC/LWDB:

- Participant Outreach/ Recruitment
- Assessment/Plan Development/ Career Counseling
- Job Preparation, Search, and Placement Ongoing Case Management
- Classroom Training
- Supportive Services
- Employer Engagement
- Staff Cross-Training

Work-Based Learning (WBL) is not yet provided by all LWDBs. The WBL programs are:

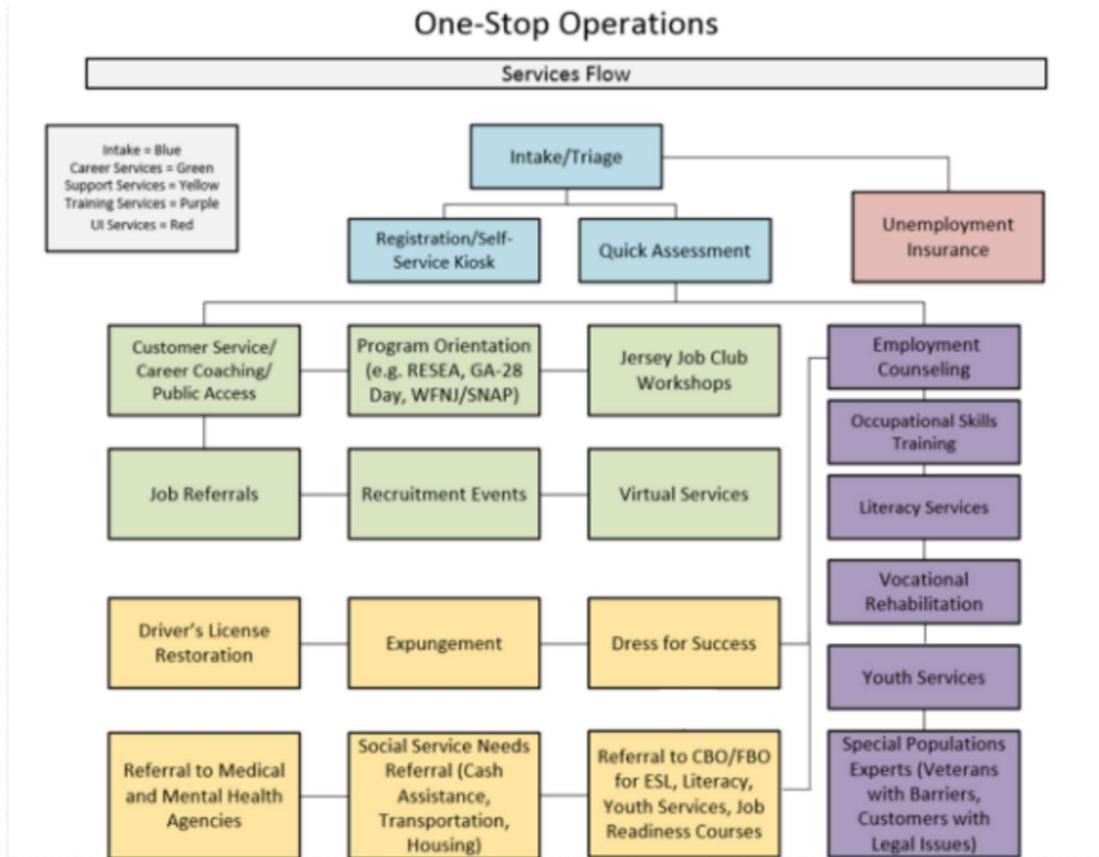
- Incumbent Worker Training
- On-the-Job Training including Apprenticeship
- Transitional jobs

The plan is to have all LWDBs offer all WBL programs, including especially the Transitional Jobs Program which is designed for those with little/no job experience.

One-Stop Operations Flow

The objective for the flow is as shown in the State Plan.

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o What partner and program relationships can be developed at the regional level to support integration of services across One Stop Career Centers?

While each LWDB has individual MOUs with their partners, regional approaches to working with certain partners will be explored, especially when partners have regional focus (e.g., Regional Disability Committee).

The other approach to better integration will be to replicate successful partnership models, such as:

- Union partnership with Housing Authority connecting to job center and shared staff training
- Newark planning a partnership with Prudential for economic and financial equity and empowerment
- Essex/Newark program using Federal Re-entry grant for an entrepreneurship program
- Invest Newark “internet for all”
- Passaic working with Juvenile Justice Center
- Essex Transitional Jobs program

o What common models or recommendations for operational efforts related to One Stop delivery and flow might be established at the regional level?

The following programs are planned to be established at the regional level:

- Regional events for certain populations e.g., Youth,
- Regional job fairs for occupations (e.g., CDL, healthcare)
- Regional recruiting/job fairs for emerging industries/state initiatives, e.g., off-shore wind, Port Newark
- Support of New Jersey’s industry sector strategies and relationships with New Jersey Industry Partners: e.g., Employer engagement with regional employers
- Regional communications on social media

As applicable, the programs shown below will also be deployed throughout the region:

- Mobile One-Stop using the Newark and Bergen models
- Programs supporting the working poor and re-entry into the workforce, including Financial Empowerment/Literacy
- “Bridge” program for math and computer literacy
- “Life-skills” program for all (incl. WIOA) customers, not just WFNJ customers

In addition, policies and procedures will be evaluated and revised to support robust provision of supportive services. To address the need for supportive services and the seamless transition and coordination of services, Dual Enrollment (WIOA-WFNJ) is/will be used. This, however, is only a part of the solution. The Region and the LWDBs will continue to look for partners who can provide supportive services and will also seek additional funding for this purpose (i.e., Needs Based Work Supports).

o What mechanisms or resources can be organized regionally to support partner and service integration and coordinated service delivery in an ongoing way?

The following maybe organized regionally:

- Platform for communicating events and information via social media, possibly using GSETA
- Repository of resources (including supportive services and community partners) for jobseekers and businesses, respectively

A regional approach to training provider contracting (especially with Community Colleges) will also be explored.

o What other regional partnerships can be leveraged to support partnership and service delivery across the

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regions One Stop Career centers?

Other potential partnerships are with:

- Non-profits and/or Public Private partnerships who can assist with supportive services for the working poor
- Local Transportation Management Agencies and NJTPA, for assistance in solving the transportation issues
- HUD/ HHS/ local Housing Authorities
- Port Authority of NY/NJ
- Economic Development-Together North Jersey and local county economic development
- NJ Industry Partnerships
- GSETA - may become the repository for regional information and best-practices and for dissemination of regional communications to customers.

o How will the region integrate the voice of those who are served into program development, design, and operation? Regional Youth Voice efforts must be described.

Local input from all customers (including youth) is obtained on a regular basis via surveys at the end of (or during) the training programs and on monitoring visits.

The regional approach for increasing the focus on the Youth Voice is to:

- develop a regional survey which will be used as part of the intake for the summer youth employment program and all other WIOA programs
- hold Youth listening sessions/round tables/focus groups
- enhance communication via social media and texting app (using Newark model throughout the region)
- seek input from local high-schools and other organizations working with youth, including youth aging out of foster care
- review results of survey already performed by other state agencies

Program changes will be made as needed based on these inputs.

2. Efforts at the regional level to engage and outreach to new and existing partners to enhance service delivery across the region's One Stop Career Centers.

The objective is to find ways to serve as many customers as possible by establishing regional sharing of best practices and establishing policies and practices for supportive services and co-enrollment. This includes cooperation to also remove "internal system" barriers and strengthening the cooperation with Industry Partnerships in our area.

o How might partnerships at the regional level enhance and support service delivery related to:

- *Supportive services: mental health, substance abuse, housing, transportation, childcare services*

We must ensure these services, essential to our programs' success, are available. We will seek out partner organizations who can provide such supportive services. The region and LWDBs will continue to advocate for, and seek solutions to the need for transportations (e.g., public transportation and "last-mile" transportation).

Possible partners include non-profits, NJTPA and transportation management agencies, private/public partnerships. The Region and LWDBs will look into establish a regional repository of resources including available subsidies for:

- Mental Health
- Substance Abuse
- Housing
- Child Care
- Transportation

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- **Employer engagement:** Business/trade organizations, Economic development

Partnerships include:

- NJ Industry Partnerships
- NJEA
- Economic Development-Together North Jersey
- EDA
- Port Authority of NY/NJ

- *Specific target populations: Youth services, LGBTQIA organizations, organizations promoting DEI*

Continued outreach and support for Youth

The region's LWDB have many successful youth programs, especially for OSY, and also Youth Summer Programs.

North Jersey Partners and Morris-Sussex-Warren have hosted Youth forum/events and the Greater Raritan WDB used these events' template to host a different Youth-focused event/job fair in 2022. The region and LWDBs will continue to conduct these programs and aim to create a youth specific communication platform and repository of resources.

Additionally, youth will benefit from increase focus on work-based learning opportunities.

Outreach and assistance to Underserved/Overburdened Populations including those with lack of work experience and the working poor

Two of the region's LWDBs (Bergen and Newark) have deployed mobile OSCC to increase awareness of available services. In Somerset County, Greater Raritan will be working with the Human Services department which is launching a mobile outreach in the late spring/early summer of 2023. The region and LWDBs will replicate this model, as appropriate.

Possible initiatives for this population are increasing opportunities for work-based learning (incl. OJTs, Transitional Jobs) for those without work experience and, for the working poor, identifying incumbent worker training programs that would lead to learning new skills and career advancement.

It is imperative that the required supportive services are available and subsidized prior, during and, for a period of time, after enrollment in the WIOA training programs. Program success/continued employment is dependent on the availability of supportive services (e.g., transportation, child care). The region and LWDBs will continue to identify partners who can assist in the provision of these supportive services and seek the additional funding expected to be required.

Ongoing Outreach to Disabled Adults and Veterans

The Region and LWDBs will coordinate policies with the State Rehabilitation Councils and the SETC to ensure collaboration in the implementation of program goals that focus on identifying the training needs, accommodations, and resources specific to people with disabilities. The integration of these policies and program goals will help to ensure that the diverse needs of the disability community are being met.

Many New Jersey firms and national employers with New Jersey locations are seeking qualified and dependable veterans, and many have stepped up to hire significant numbers of veterans and build coordinated hiring initiatives with Veterans and One-Stop programs. This systematic approach by large companies is something New Jersey's WIOA and partner staff have been highly successful in building.

The region and LWDBs will work to ensure ongoing coordination with the NJDOL which dedicates a lead business

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representative (usually one of the Veterans Business Representatives) to be the company's main point of contact to respond to their needs statewide, and to manage the local relationships between various company worksites and One-Stops such that the same level of services is offered across the state and region.

Assisting Re-Entry Populations

The Region and each LWDBs will advance communication with the appropriate institutions (e.g., county jails, JJC) to ensure that individuals re-entering the population have access to job readiness programs, training programs, and other tools to advance their workforce and employment opportunities. These include collaborations with the NJ Department of Corrections "Successful Transition and Re-entry Series," STARS and the various organizations/institutions.

B. Operational Priorities

1. Please describe any region-wide operations/service priorities that should inform and guide operations/services across local areas.

The region-wide operations/services priorities are:

- Ensure equity and access to services and serve as many customers as possible
- Increase OSCC efficiency and effectiveness (e.g., remove "internal system" barriers)
- Prepare customers not only for their next job but also for sustained employment by using the partnerships (e.g., supportive services, financial empowerment, coping skills/"future of work")
- Increase business engagement
- Establish quality control of training providers at the regional level

2. Please describe the supports that the region will offer in supporting regional operations/service priorities and/or common local priorities.

o Will the implementation of specific program or services occur at the regional level?

Some specific programs will occur at the regional level (e.g., regional recruiting or events, staff training)

Delivery of some virtual programs may be considered at the regional level (e.g., preparing for "the future of work", Financial Literacy)

o Will the region offer specific funding to support these service priorities?

No

o Will the region offer specific training to support the implementation of these priorities?

Regional training for staff will be conducted in partnership with GSETA or Workforce180

o Will the region support data collection?

Yes, data driven decisions are vital. A regional repository of data is planned.

3. Please describe any role that the region may play in supporting operations at the local level by coordinating activities related to:

o Outreach/recruitment

Regional recruiting events, regional communications (see above II A1)

o Service delivery related to, e.g., ITAs, work-based learning, and/or supportive services

A regional approach to increasing efficiency in the training contracting process will be explored:

- Ability to use each other's contracts (including for OJTs)
- Regional/Articulation agreement with Community Colleges
- Repository for common documentation required from vendors (BRC, Certificate of Employee Info Report, insurance certificates naming each WDB/County as additional insured)

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o Follow-up supports and achievement of successful outcomes for participants

Information and ideas are exchanged as part of:

- Northern Region LWDB Directors' meetings
- LWDBs participation in the GSETA Committees (Monitoring, Operations)

The Region and LWDBs will evaluate the possibility of a repository for sharing monitoring reports, customer experiences and/or complaints, and other training vendors findings

4. Please describe opportunities for the region to support programs and/or services related to specific target populations highlighted in the bullets above.

See Section IIA2, above.

C. Service Expansion and Accessibility in One Stop Career Centers: Regional Plan

1. Please describe the role of the region in the development/implementation of any technical solutions designed to expand the reach of services provided by local areas.

o How might the region support joint development to ensure consistency across area?

Best practices will be shared to be replicated across the region e.g., mobile One-Stop nlwdb.org - NewarkWOW (Workforce on Wheels) (google.com), Work-Based Learning, wrap-around support services, IEPs, policies, contracting, monitoring

o How might the region support joint training of staff or training with staff in individual local areas?

The Region and LWDBs will tap into GSETA training programs and/or develop a regional agreement with Workforce180

2. Please describe any role the region would take in physically or programmatically expanding the access to facilities, programs, or services.

o How would the region ensure support/participation for individuals with disabilities and ensure that any expansion considers diversity, equity, and inclusion?

Support for individuals with disabilities is accomplished through:

- Engagement of employers and special forums/events for Individuals with Disabilities
- Partnerships with disabilities organizations
- Project SEARCH – currently in Bergen and Morris-Sussex-Warren
- Collaboration with DVRS Business Outreach Team's Regional Program Development specialist

o How would the region include joint training for regional partner/stakeholder training?

Staff training sessions are to be coordinated at the regional level by a planned Regional Disabilities Committee.

o Please provide insight on efforts to make expansion and any associated materials and training tools accessible for individuals with disabilities?

The Region and LWDBs, through a Regional Disabilities Committee, will work with DVR to keep abreast of technologies and best practices, including use of service animals in the OSCC.

3. Please describe the process the region would use in taking a lead role in any form of expansion and how it would work with and inform its individual members and respective LWDBs.

The lead role in the process of making the region's OSCC service delivery more efficient and effective is with the Northern Region LWDB directors. Each Regional Directors Meeting will have a standing agenda item for a specific

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planned initiative. Initiatives may include:

- Regional joint development of a program/policy/practice
- Sharing of best practices among the region's LWDBs
- Regional training programs for staff

As noted above, a regional communication platform and repository is also planned.

4. Please indicate what considerations the region shall make to ensure that service expansion considers new approaches/strategies for potential resolution. This should include, but not be limited to, digital equity and education considerations

Considerations for new approaches will focus on supportive services to help remove barriers to employment, including providing access to broadband, assisting with transportation, possibly laptop loaner programs.

Solutions:

- Dual-enrollment
- "Wrap-around" programs for working poor
- Financial literacy/empowerment

D. Detailed Partnership and Service Integration:

1. Please describe regional efforts may assist local areas in building relationships and coordinating with key partners – those articulated in WIOA as required partners, as well as any critical regional partners unique to your area – to move beyond referrals/handoffs to integrated service models for participants and co-enrollment opportunities.

o What role has and/or will your region play in leading discussion with specific partners/stakeholders who must be included in local Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) or include in an Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFAs)?

- Regional informal agreements will be explored with new potential partners to be invited at the Region's LWDB Directors' meetings (e.g., HUD, HHS)
- Partnerships with organizations who can deliver supportive services for the working poor will be sought out. One such organization is NORWESCAP; their services include financial empowerment through a savings-match program; however this is only available for Warren County residents.

o What role has and/or will your region play in helping to negotiate with specific partners/stakeholders to establish agreements with partners/stakeholders, particularly those that have a regional footprint?

By partnering with the Community College Consortium, we will explore the possibility of a Regional Training agreement or the ability to use each other's LWDB contracts. This will expedite the process of enrollment when there is only a single enrollee from a county going to a different county's Community College for a program not offered anywhere else.

2. Please describe how regional efforts may help to build the capacity for service integration in local One Stop Career Centers through cross-training of staff, provision of technical assistance, sharing of information, etc., and other supports

The Region and LWDBs will work to ensure best practices are shared and staff has the appropriate training. Regional training programs (using GSETA or Workforce180) will include Employment Services staff and, as appropriate, staffs from other partners organizations.

E. Employer Engagement: Regional Plan

1. Please describe the role the region will play in the Employer Engagement efforts

o How will the region conduct outreach to, as well as develop and maintain relationships with, employers?

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The region and LWDBs will conduct outreach by partnering with

- Industry Partnerships active in the region (Health and Manufacturing)
- Economic development agencies
- NJ Employers Association (NJEA)

Regional partnerships with regional Health Care organizations will also be considered

o What services or programs, if any, will be delivered regionally?

As noted previously, regional level programs include regional recruiting events, regional forums, and regional repository/website where businesses can be directed when in need of resources.

The Region and LWDBs also plan to:

- Create a space to talk to businesses about the culture of loyalty as a new business model; business self-assessment; an organization called Mercer can provide speakers on the loyalty model.
- Provide an educational component to businesses to debunk the myth of endless supply of “cheap labor.”
- Research to identify what entity/entities provide report cards on how businesses rate when measured for a positive employee culture where workers feel engaged, appreciated and supported.
- Promote work-based learning to businesses, including Apprenticeships, Incumbent Worker Training, OJTs, and Transitional Jobs using the Essex model.
- Move businesses from survival mode to strategically thinking long term about employee retention by offering benefits such as virtual time, childcare, gym membership etc.

o What shared costs and capacity will support these regional efforts?

The shared costs to fund regional initiatives described in this plan have not been determined yet.

Shared costs will also be explored for grant writing.

2. Please describe how the region’s efforts will coordinate with local efforts and those of other partners/stakeholders working with employers in the region, including state Business Services activities.

- Across the One-Stop Career Centers in the Region, staff are working to coordinate the Business Service Representatives into region-wide business services teams. These efforts have grown from single collaborations for major employers’ hiring initiatives into a wider concept. When a One Stop brings a large employer or any employer with a significant hiring or training need to the NJP, 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. This process has been successful and will be expanded even further
- Working closer in conjunction with the New Jersey Community College Consortium and other education partners to address the needs of businesses
- Coordinating with the NJ Office of Apprenticeship:
 - o Facilitate interactions among businesses, workforce intermediaries, apprentices, educators, and the United States Department of Labor.
 - o Increase diversity and inclusion in registered apprenticeship programs in the state
 - o Create formal linkages to employers, secondary and higher education systems so that more New Jerseyans receive opportunities in career pathways with upward mobility and sustainable wages.
 - o Help apprentices earn college credits, access robust career counseling for middle- and high-school students and increase diversity and inclusion in apprenticeship programs.

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o What will be the roles and responsibilities of state partners, the region, LWDBs, and other entities in building coordinated employer engagement strategies and a system of services and supports?

- [Coordination with Industry Partnerships and the NJ Office of Apprenticeships \(see above\)](#)
- [Coordination of employer contacts with Business Service Representatives \(see above\)](#)

o What will the flow of employer engagement and services look like? Where will different partners support this flow? [See above](#)

3. Please describe how the region might help build employer engagement capacity across and within local areas.

[At the regional level, employer engagement may be built through regional job fairs and by providing, a resource repository/website for employers; Employer introductions should through collaboration with state BSRs.](#)

o Will the region offer specific funding to support employer engagement activities?

[Currently funding is only available at the local level](#)

o Will the region offer specific training or technical assistance to support the implementation of these priorities?

[Yes, required training will be coordinated at the regional level, as needed](#)

o Will the region support coordinated data collection?

[See above regarding repository of LMI, employer data, and training provider report card.](#)

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III. Local WDB Structure and Functions

The structure of each LWDA is described in their respective plan. The Region will continue to support stronger firewalls between governance and operations and support key board functions through sharing of best practices.

To ensure service delivery operations comply with WIOA regulations and maximize the impact of available resources there will be an increased focus on monitoring and oversight.

A. Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) Structure

Please describe any role the region will play in support the capacity and development of LWDBs and/or fiscal agents.

The region's LWDB Directors have regular meetings at which they identify and plan for the implementation of best practices.

LWDB Fiscal Officers/Managers participate in the GSETA Fiscal Committee, where best practices and procedures are shared.

o Does the region have any formal role in identifying potential Board members for its local colleagues?
No.

o Does the region have any joint committees to discuss shared matters? How are committees structured and how is business conducted?

Currently, there are no Regional Committees. Shared matters are discussed at the regular LWDB Directors meeting. A Northern Region Disabilities Committee and a Northern Region Procurement Committee are being considered.

o Does the region provide any training or technical assistance to support LWDB capacity-building (e.g., agreement development, designation of fiscal agents, committee development)?

Procurement and agreement development training and technical assistance is being provided by EDSI via GSETA. If needed, an ad-hoc committees will be established on how to best cooperate on WIOA governance matters.

B. Procurement of Operator and Services

Please describe any role the region has or intends to have in assisting its members in the procurement of a One Stop Operator, One Stop Career Services provider, or Youth Services providers, e.g., supporting procurement procedures, sharing procurement materials, managing lists of potential vendors, and/or supporting the development of scopes of service.

Each LAWDA is responsible for competitively procuring the One-Stop Operator, One-Stop Career Services, and Youth Services providers.

As noted above, procurement training has been/is provided by EDSI/GSETA and discussion of challenges always take place at the monthly regional WDB directors' meetings. In addition, the Region and LWDBs will consider forming a Northern Region Procurement Committee to further address issues related to contracting, including the contract limit imposed by Pay-to-play on OJTs and Incumbent Worker Training contracts

The regional objective is to streamline the contracting processes and eliminate internal barriers by engaging appropriate state representatives/agencies.

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The region will explore the possibility of a regional approach and/or articulation agreements for the following:

- Regional contracting for services such as Metrix, LinkedIn, Workforce180, GSETA, etc
- Regional grant applications
- Regional MOUs with regional partners, as applicable
- Explore the possibility of streamlining training vendor agreements

C. Oversight and Monitoring

Please describe any role or support the region will play in oversight and monitoring of programs/services within the region, e.g., monitoring of shared providers, facilitating sharing of results, or supporting shared analysis of individual LWDB monitoring reports

Currently Oversight and Monitoring functions are performed by each LWDB with informal sharing of training provider monitor reports, as needed.

There is no Northern Region Monitoring Committees, however, LWDB representatives participate in GSETA's Monitoring Committee where information and best practices are shared.

To allow for real-time access to issues with training providers or programs, the Region and LWDBs will look to establish a more formal process of sharing information on monitoring i.e., schedule, reports, tools, by creating a regional repository of information.

As a result of issues uncovered (specifically/especially in the Newark WDB area), we believe there is a need to have a Northern Region Report card which will be in addition to the ETPL Report Card. The Northern Region Report card will also include vendor performance with regards to their commitment to provide training to all populations.

Please describe how oversight and monitoring efforts that are conducted or culled at the regional level are shared with LWDB members and staff.

Monitoring and oversight is done by each LWDB. The region's LWDB Directors address the issues related to monitoring and oversight at their regular Directors meeting.

D. Performance Measures and Accountability

Please describe any role or support the region will play in helping LWDBs to track and measure local levels of performance, e.g., training, shared tracking, etc

Each LWDB tracks and measures their own performance. Regional support is only in coordinating training sessions with NJ Performs.

F. Regional and Local Plan Development

Describe process to create regional and local plans, in respective plans, and provide assurances that it was an open and transparent process

The Regional Plan Development Process is described in the Introduction.

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IV. 2026 Regional update

In 2023, the Northern Regional Plan was drafted by North Jersey Partners, a consortium of Local Area Regional Workforce Development Board and partners serving the Northern region of the state, as defined by the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NDJOL). While the entity known as North Jersey Partners no longer exists, the workforce development boards in the Northern region continue their collaborative work uninterrupted. This update reflects the input, expertise and guidance of the region’s workforce development professionals who are committed to smart, strategic and specific goals that contribute to the success of job seekers and businesses.

Performance metrics for Program Year 2024 (July 2024 to June 2025) show that the strategies put in place by the region’s Local Area workforce development boards are having positive impacts on the measurable skill gains and median earnings of direct service program participants.

Location: **Multiple** State Goal PY24

	Employment Q2	Median Earnings	Employment Q4	Credential	Measurable Skill Gains
Adult	82.25% Actual: 55.93% / 928 Goal: 68.00%	111.42% Actual: \$7,796.52 / Cohort 519 Goal: \$7,000.00	90.23% Actual: 59.55% / 614 / 1031 Goal: 66.00%	85.19% Actual: 54.06% / 489 / 504 Goal: 63.50%	138.03% Actual: 85.58% / 706 / 825 Goal: 62.00%
Dislocated Workers	98.31% Actual: 62.92% / 565 / 868 Goal: 64.00%	124.28% Actual: \$11,434.08 / Cohort 565 Goal: \$9,200.00	93.14% Actual: 63.61% / 486 / 764 Goal: 68.30%	89.52% Actual: 63.56% / 436 / 686 Goal: 71.00%	120.64% Actual: 84.45% / 820 / 971 Goal: 70.00%
Youth	87.32% Actual: 58.51% / 509 / 870 Goal: 67.00%	132.96% Actual: \$4,387.68 / Cohort 428 Goal: \$3,300.00	87.00% Actual: 56.99% / 465 / 816 Goal: 65.50%	88.90% Actual: 46.85% / 342 / 730 Goal: 52.70%	107.62% Actual: 73.18% / 472 / 645 Goal: 68.00%
Wagner-Peyser	94.95% Actual: 50.80% / 15343 / 30203 Goal: 53.50%	114.67% Actual: \$8,944.48 / Cohort 15343 Goal: \$7,800.00	89.11% Actual: 53.02% / 15205 / 28678 Goal: 59.50%		
Ⓜ All	50.77% Actual: 15595 / 30716 Goal: 53.50%	\$8,835.49 Actual: 15595 Goal: \$7,800.00	53.12% Actual: 15454 / 29091 Goal: 65.50%	53.11% Actual: 1264 / 2380 Goal: 52.70%	81.65% Actual: 1971 / 2414 Goal: 70.00%

These performance metrics also show that the boards have the opportunity to grow the outcomes of their program participants’ credential attainment and employment status two quarters and four quarters after exiting workforce career and skill-building trainings and supportive programs. Working individually while staying in constant contact and sharing best practices, the region’s workforce boards have identified several areas that will positively impact the lives of participants in the next two years.

Building on the work done since 2023, the region’s partners are concentrating on:

- Leveraging resources – how we work together to share ideas and best practices and explore common challenges.
- Regional business trends – how we work to braid local business movements into cross-area opportunity.
- Policy development and compliance – how we continue to implement and update local policies and procedures based on recent NJDOL Workforce Innovation Notices.

Leveraging resources

Clearly these are the most challenging o times, with New Jersey’s statewide unemployment rate among the

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nation's highest as job seekers grapple with a constantly changing business environment and the accelerating pace of new technology development. The complexity of the region's economy can be seen by reviewing [this 2025 economic report](#) provided by the NJDOL Office of Research and Information. These national and international forces shaping the regional economy are having a dramatic impact on the labor force, locally and regionally. To support the understanding and skills of frontline staff, the areas workforce board professionals have been participating in a number of state and national AI-focused initiatives. By understanding how to utilize these developing technologies and understanding the impact it is having on entry-level position as well as higher-wage occupations like software developers and accountants, the area's workforce developments can help inform statewide efforts to develop programs which will help job seekers navigate these turbulent times.

In the past three years, the NJDOL has contracted with new grant recipients for specific workforce development programs. These grantees are required to coordinate programmatic efforts with their local One-Stop Career Centers, to ensure their participants are connected to all career-related services available in each Local Area. One Local Area developed an MOU that outlines the relationship of the new grantee with the programs of that area's Career Center and details how the referral system is to operate, with the aim of facilitating co-enrollment and exposure of the grantee's participants to other services available from all partners. This MOU has been shared with other Local Area boards who see it is a best practice that will improve their own customer experience.

Similarly, another Local Area developed a one-page Co-enrollment Matrix document that lists the areas many partners, including these new grant recipients. This resource document is hyperlinked to each partner's website to facilitate the understanding of how the services work and who they assist. This matrix was designed for frontline staff to facilitate connecting those they are working with all the services they may need and for individuals looking to engage with career-development opportunities. The matrix has been shared across the region as a best practice.

These developments also respond to a changing landscape; over the past two years, NJDOL has moved from encouraging co-enrollment among its service partners to requiring it. RESEA participants must now be co-enrolled with Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs as appropriate, and many of the state's One-Stop Career Centers are beginning to restructure from program-based silos into functional teams organized around customer needs: Welcome/Intake, Assessment, Career Planning, Skills Development, and Transition Success. This fundamentally changes how partners operate together. All Local Areas will need to demonstrate functional alignment implementation and the North's Local Areas are continuing to innovate and develop best practices as noted above that can be shared regionally and statewide.

Beyond job training, Local Area board are modernizing service delivery with new technology platforms and services. For example, in alignment with the regional service strategy, several Local Areas are using the Engage by Cell mobile platform to outreach to youth and disadvantaged populations with virtual services and real-time job alerts, ensuring a seamless, data-driven approach to workforce development. In the past year, some boards have used this technology to message service information to new unemployment customers entering the system as well as an ongoing communication tool with WorkFirst New Jersey participants. Boards are also exploring how this tool can be used to assist and engage customers in the state RESEA program.

Local Area boards also embrace the importance of equity, access for the targeted populations they are mandated to serve. Changes federally mandated to begin in early 2026 for eligible Work First New Jersey customers are also expanding the number of individuals who must receive career services. As Local Areas continue to understand the impact of this expansion, they continue to implement targeted outreach and service strategies for individuals with barriers to employment, including English language learners, individuals, youth, the working poor and individuals experiencing homelessness.

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Regional business trends

Healthcare dominates regional demand, as shown in this [2025 job analysis report](#) provided by the NJDOL Office of Research and Information. Healthcare postings account for an estimated 25 to 30 percent of all job demand across the 10-county region, and these employers manage are cross-county health systems.

But support roles like HHAs, CNAs, and PCAs are difficult to fill and retain due to a combination of low wages, high emotional and physical demands, and a shrinking labor pool, resulting in high turnover. The high-stress occupations combined with limited career advancement and demanding, inconsistent scheduling are key reasons for high turnover and low recruitment. Working with a state assessment initiative and employers, the Local Areas have the opportunity to identify and develop coordinated career pathways with salary progression stepping-stones from entry level support into wage-sustaining, high-demand roles.

Several areas with the Northern region as well as in the Central region are evolving into a high-tech entertainment corridor, fueled by robust expansion of large production facilities for Netflix, Paramount-Skydance, Cinelease Studios-Caven Point and other companies. To sustain this "Hollywood East" boom, Local Area boards are prioritizing investments in and connections to training and apprenticeship programs at community colleges. These programs provide specialized training for high-demand roles such as gaffers, grips, camera operators, set constructors and makeup artists. This strategy emphasizes high-quality, employer-driven collaborations that align with the Regional Plan by creating "learn-while-you-earn" pipelines that secure high-quality local jobs within an expanding industry.

Manufacturing and information technology also have evolved rapidly over the past three years. Area community colleges have developed targeted training programs that are funded by businesses which can put successful completers directly into career-pathway good-paying jobs. One example is the aseptic manufacturing track which, after six months of classroom training can lead to immediate placement in positions starting at \$60,000 annually. Several Local Area boards are supporting these initiatives and connecting One-Stop Career Center participants with these growing opportunities. Regional training coordination also is looking to connect this demand to the underemployed, educated population as well as different populations facing barriers to employment.

Local Area board are working to Implement regionally aligned workforce strategies utilizing more services like incumbent worker training, customized training and work-based experiences, with the focus of advancing the region's demand-driven, employer-informed workforce system.

While focusing on areas of common growth, the region's workforce development partners are also working to understand the forces behind data that show job growth is stalling, and labor force participation is declining. The region grew jobs just 1.0% (2019–2024) versus 4.4% nationally while Labor force participation slid from 67.2% to 64.9%.

The "why" is worth uncovering. Is the population aging? Are people retiring early? Are fewer people looking for work? Has hiring slowed down? Is there a skills mismatch? Are barriers increasing? Answers will vary slightly by county, but Northern workforce development professionals are planning meetings to explore these questions and develop strategies that work across the region.

Policy compliance

Significant new state policy requirements have been issued by the New Jersey Department of Labor since the original plan adoption. At the same time, the state has identified performance gaps in Local Areas requiring

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corrective action.

While the 32 new or updated policies released over the past years have different impacts on the day-to-day processes of the local workforce development boards and the One-Stop Career Centers that are under their oversight, priority attention is being given to: mandatory co-enrollment procedures, functional alignment implementation, updated eligibility guidance expanding self-attestation, ITA policy revisions (including an increased recommended limit), and a comprehensive framework of 47-plus required local policies, along with clearly written, detailed fiscal procedures that each Local Area must document. In addition, Measurable Skill Gains are now assessed for sanctions for the first time.

As a result, by the end of PY25, boards are sharing their best practices to help staff and partners:

- Employ mandatory co-enrollment procedures with clear AOSOS data entry instruction to better show the breadth of available services and the impact this work has on the individuals being served.
- Document functional team structures with related cross-training plans to continue to refine One-Stop service delivery flow and partner coordination.
- Update all required policies, including eligibility, ITAs supportive services, follow-up procedures and One-Stop partners, to better help partners implement meaningful processes that result in positive outcomes.
- Tighten performance monitoring of vendors/sub-contractors and ensure that monitoring includes robust fiscal procedures that in turn will result in better service delivery.
- Continue to develop enhanced employer engagement models that will include cross-area components as needed based upon shared business targets. These strengthened business service engagement and staff models are already improving recruitment, retention, and upskilling outcomes.

The Northern Region partners are also committed to supporting regional plan objectives through:

- Alignment with state workforce goals, ensuring all residents, including those in underserved populations, access quality employment and businesses efficiently fill talent needs.
- Increased focus on the needs of the working poor and low-income residents who require full-time skilled job and access to additional supportive services, like financial literacy and other partner services, which can enhance their career journeys.
- Sector coordination in regionally significant industries: this includes healthcare, transportation/logistics, advanced manufacturing, and construction
- Coordinated services for priority populations: veterans, individuals with disabilities, English language learners, justice-involved individuals, and opportunity youth
- Data quality improvement and preparation for state workforce case management system modernization.

The ongoing implementation of these best practices and the continuous sharing of policy and program enhancements and collaboration efforts by Local Area boards ensure that customers coming into the system have similar experiences and understand the wealth of services available to them. In addition, the Northern Region partners are active members of the Garden State Employment and Training Association, which in the past three years has grown its effectiveness to help New Jersey's workforce development board and operations teams receive and provide clear communication with their state colleagues. As a result, this better-managed association is allowing all workforce partners to more quickly and comprehensively learn from one another and participate in regional (and statewide) initiatives.

In doing this work, the Northern partners will continue to communicate and connect to, and innovate and advocate for the job seekers and businesses they serve.