

Middlesex County Workforce Investment Board

“Achieving Change through Vision”

An Update to the Strategic Plan

July 2002

Middlesex County Workforce Investment Board

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Section 1:

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Middlesex County Workforce Investment Board

“ Achieving Progress through Vision “ *An Update to the Strategic Plan*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Middlesex County is a dynamic community with a diversified economic base and a burgeoning population. Employment is expanding, and by all accounts, Middlesex will continue to lead all other New Jersey counties in increased employment through the Year 2005. This robust economy only serves to heighten the business community's demand for a first-rate workforce: one that can compete *and* grow in the global marketplace.

The Middlesex County Workforce Investment Board (WIB) is charged with the responsibility of addressing workforce issues. Across the country, WIBs are expected to develop policy and realign workforce resources so that every community has a logical and congruent system of well-designed programs and services. This is a particularly challenging endeavor given that Middlesex County is home to an impressive array of medical, pharmaceutical, engineering, finance and business service firms that have a wide variety of high level training needs. Furthermore, the demands of Middlesex County employers for a highly skilled, knowledge-based workforce is coupled with the needs of a growing population that not only requires technical skills training to keep pace but also needs more educational programs to address limited literacy skills.

Despite the fact that the Middlesex County WIB was formed only three years ago (four years after other areas in the State¹), the WIB has surpassed many of its counterparts in its ability to create synergy among many local organizations to address workforce issues. In short order, the WIB developed an organizational structure in support of the work of the Board, assessed the community's workforce needs, identified resources and gaps and then began the process of restructuring programs and services. At each step in the development process, the WIB stayed focused on leveraging and maximizing resources, instilling quality business practices that improved customer service, and brokering relationships among local organizations and businesses to develop the teamwork essential in crafting a well-functioning workforce system.

We are pleased to report that in this short period of time, the WIB's work is already making a difference. This document updates our initial Strategic Plan, details our accomplishments, and sets forth an equally ambitious agenda for the ensuing two years. Here are just a few of the highlights:

¹With the passage of the federal Workforce Investment Act, Middlesex County opted to *separate from a tri county SDA to a designated single County* workforce investment area, thereby insuring that resources could be directed to the workforce needs of the County.

Reorganized One Stop system to leverage the programs and services of four agencies at the comprehensive site in New Brunswick as well as at the Perth Amboy offices.

Results:

- ✍️✍️Ninety-four thousand five hundred thirteen (94,513) Middlesex County residents and workers received assistance during the past ten months² through One Stop System Partners.
- ✍️✍️The New Brunswick One Stop Career Center was renovated so that customers now have a pleasant and productive place to seek employment and training services. A Resource Room with Internet capability encourages job seekers to gather additional information on careers and workforce programs as well as accessing basic computer tutorial training programs.
- ✍️✍️Four local and state government agencies came together through Process Mapping to establish common processes, simplify access of services and eliminate duplication in data collection and foundational services such as assessment. All One Stop staff was subsequently trained on these new procedures.

Conducted a comprehensive analysis of workforce programs and services.

Results:

- ✍️✍️Fourteen (14) organizations representing nineteen (19) programs are partnering in the One Stop system. Each Partner agreed to provide a specific set of services thereby leveraging multiple resources as well as broadening the menu of sites and services for job seekers.
- ✍️✍️Conducted an in-depth analysis of literacy programs and prepared a preliminary literacy plan to leverage an additional \$500,000 in literacy funding for the County.
- ✍️✍️Developed a plan for the establishment of a Middlesex County Community Learning Center at Roosevelt. This Center is accessible by public transportation and conveniently located in the heart of the County. It will initially provide literacy training and partner with the health care community for occupational related training.

Network programs and services so that youth have ready access to programs and services.

Results:

- ✍️✍️Created a "continuum of services" model to support every youth enrolled in a year-round program with career counseling, leadership development, case management and connections to ongoing programs and services.

²Ongoing tabulation by Partners between July 1, 2001 and May 31, 2002. While every effort was made to avoid counting an individual more than once, it is recognized that this total does include some duplicates.

☞☞ Youth Portfolios have been institutionalized as a common practice among youth providers. These portfolios are designed to gather and communicate critical information regarding the needs of each youth, their work experience and their progress between youth agencies thereby eliminating duplication of services as well as helping youth make more informed education and career choices.

Create a high degree of customer satisfaction among Middlesex County employers.

Results:

- ☞☞ Developed a customer service training curriculum, benchmarked to business standards, which is now being integrated into the curriculum of a number of training programs, youth programs and staff development.
- ☞☞ Collaborated with Mercer County WIB and the respective county colleges on a \$2,997,072 U.S. Department of Labor competitive grant on training initiatives targeted to high technology firms.
- ☞☞ The WIB recently added a Business Services Committee in order to identify a complete menu of business-based services to be provided by the One Stop System.

In conclusion, the WIB is indeed fortunate that the Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders views workforce development as a significant priority to achieving its economic agenda for the County. The guidance through the work of the Board and its Committees has been essential to achieving the above accomplishments. This is buoyed by the hard work and commitment of numerous education, government agencies and community organizations as well as an infrastructure in Middlesex County that strongly supports partnerships. Together the WIB and Freeholders have crafted the vision described in this document.

The WIB is now poised to advance its agenda in several key areas: implementation of a comprehensive strategy for literacy, establishing the Middlesex County Community Learning Center at Roosevelt as a premier training center, further development of its One Stop system with an emphasis on business services and quality, and more fully developing its youth strategies. We welcome your review of this report and your continued support for partnering with us to achieve a first-rate workforce development system in Middlesex County.

Section 2:

PROGRESS REPORT

Middlesex County Workforce Investment Board

“ Achieving Progress through Vision“ *An Update to the Strategic Plan*

PROGRESS REPORT

“The mission of the Middlesex County Workforce Investment Board is to provide the leadership and direction that mobilizes all workforce investment resources to create a workforce system that is built on quality standards, strong interagency collaboration and innovative technology so that every employer and resident has access to and benefits from the workforce programs and services needed to do business and succeed in the workplace.”

In March of 2000, the Middlesex County Workforce Investment Board (WIB) developed its Strategic Workforce Investment Plan that identified their vision for a workforce development system in Middlesex County. As part of this plan they identified the goals and strategies the WIB would focus its efforts toward over the next two years. Since then, the WIB has worked aggressively in partnership with the Freeholders and other local community-based organizations, government agencies and business-led organizations to implement the strategies. The following is a description of the significant progress made toward achieving their goals and the future directions of the WIB. (A chart summarizing the progress, future directions and timetable can be found on the Progress Chart in Appendix A.)

Goal #1: Establish One Stop services as an integrated and comprehensive system that streamlines services for the customer, establishes quality standards, is “open and accessible” and is linked to the community.

A central component of the local workforce system is the ability to provide services to the community through a comprehensive service delivery system. The One Stop system is that service delivery system. A One Stop system is a network of organizations that join together to

Middlesex One Stop Partners

/ Middlesex County Employment and Training Department	/ Perth Amboy Housing Authority
/ Township of Woodbridge Housing Authority	/ Workforce New Jersey
/ New Jersey Department of Vocational Rehabilitation	/ Perth Amboy School District
/ Middlesex County College	/ New Brunswick School District
/ Middlesex County Vocational and Technical Schools	/ Department of Health and Senior Services
/ Middlesex County Board of Social Services	/ Edison Job Corps
/ Workfirst New Jersey	/ Middlesex County Opportunities Corporation

simplify the process through which job seekers and employers access workforce development services and are matched to either jobs or employment-related programs and services.

Early on, the WIB placed significant emphasis on developing its One Stop system. In Middlesex County, the One Stop system is supported by fourteen (14) Partner agencies representing nineteen (19) programs. As One Stop system Partners, each are committed to sharing information, coordinating their services and providing resources for the development and maintenance of the system. In just ten months the joint efforts of these One Stop Partners have provided services to 94,513 job-seeking customers.³ (See Appendix C for a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Partners and Appendix E for a chart of the resources delineating how each Partner contributes to the workforce system.)

At the heart of the One Stop system are its One Stop Career Centers, which are supported by a statewide technology infrastructure. One Stop Career Centers are physical locations where job seekers and employers are able to access a wide variety of services offered through the One Stop system. Many of the services are offered on-site and include a combination of self-directed services (referred to as core services) and more intensive services for those requiring individualized assistance. Many of the core services are provided on-line through “WNJPIN” – a State-supported web site linking visitors to a variety of assessment, training, career development and job seeking resources.

“[The Partners]...have gone from working acquaintances to active collaborators and co-managers of the One Stop Career Centers.”

Middlesex County has established a comprehensive One Stop Career Center at 506 Jersey Avenue, New Brunswick, New Jersey. In addition, there are two partner offices in close proximity to each other in Perth Amboy that operate similar to a comprehensive One Stop Career Center. Both the New Brunswick and Perth Amboy sites are supported by the Middlesex County Employment and Training Department, the Workforce New Jersey Employment Service and Veterans Services, New Jersey Unemployment Insurance and the New Jersey Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, all of which have staff co-located at one or both of the sites.

Middlesex County One Stop Career Centers have undergone a significant transformation. While the on-site Partners had worked together on a project-by-project basis, there was little history of merging processes and services to provide customers a unified and non-duplicative process through which to receive assistance. Similar to a corporate merger, the Partners were now faced with the task of clearly identifying their joint core business, what and how services should be provided, who would provide them and what would signify success. The Partners spent significant time and energy building their partnerships and have gone from working acquaintances to active collaborators and co-managers of the One Stop Career Centers.

³ Ongoing tabulation by Partners between July 1, 2001 and May 31, 2002. While every effort was made to avoid counting an individual more than once, it is recognized that this total does include some duplicates.

Core Services process mapping was instrumental in the transformation of both the One Stop Career Centers and the One Stop partnerships. Process mapping is a facilitated process designed to examine functions critical to a One Stop delivery system. It provides a framework for developing common goals, outcomes and processes that result in achieving high quality customer service. The on-site Partners dedicated over six (6) months to evaluating their core services delivery system. The result was a fully integrated menu of core services available to any customer who walks in their door. These services, jointly supported and managed by the Partners include One Stop orientations, self-directed assessment, on-line and counselor-based job seeking support, labor market information, and information on supportive services and training options. Over time the Partners introduced additional services such as Career Beacon job search workshops, FDIC's MoneySmart personal financial management training and an additional Resource Room with Internet access. (See Appendix F for a flowchart depicting core services offered through the One Stop Career Centers.)

As a result of this detailed evaluation and restructuring process, customers now find accessing and using the services to be simple and easy. The New Brunswick One Stop facility was transformed to better accommodate the increased number of customers and the types of services offered. Customers are assisted by knowledgeable and professional staff trained on how to focus on meeting the customer's needs first. Activities and paperwork required by various funding streams have been simplified and streamlined.

“In just eight months the joint efforts of these One Stop Partners have provided services to 94,513 job seeking customers.”

The processes defined for core services influenced the degree to which the on-site Partners coordinate the more intensive services they offer. For example, referral processes and mechanisms for sharing information have been put into place.

The Partners also clearly defined the outcomes a customer should achieve as a result of each of these services, thereby laying the foundation for an in-depth performance management and continuous improvement system. While initial customer service surveys and data collection processes have been put into place, work has begun on the development of a sophisticated process for measuring customer satisfaction levels and the effectiveness of services.

These jointly developed procedures and outcomes are now documented in a Core Services Policy and Procedure Manual. The Partners use this manual as the template for staff on how core services will be provided and the outcomes they are striving to achieve, regardless of which agency they represent. Staff from all Partner agencies was trained on these procedures. In addition, Partner staff received additional training to support them in providing the full scope of One Stop services. Training topics included customer service, working with disabled individuals, and information sessions on local and One Stop Career Center resources and services.

With this customer service based process in place, the WIB initiated the development of a marketing plan. This plan is ready for final approval and several of the marketing pieces – brochures on adult and youth services have been developed.

To oversee the One Stop Career Centers, a One Stop Management Team was established to facilitate the coordination of services, evaluate processes, identify areas for continuous improvement, implement improvement efforts and support individual agencies in meeting their goals. This team was instrumental in core services process mapping and the implementation of the resulting policies and procedures. The team will continue to serve as the heart of the continuous improvement effort as they evaluate the efficacy of these policies and procedures on an ongoing basis and take steps to better meet the needs and expectations of the One Stop system's customers. In addition, the WIB's One Stop Operations Sub-committee meetings are used as a forum for discussion on issues that affect all twelve Partners. This Sub-committee also meets monthly and as needed.

The Middlesex County WIB has also begun to develop standards and criteria for future One Stop Career Centers. The Customer Credo, developed by the One Stop Operations Sub-committee was the first step in this process. The Credo focuses on providing professional, customer-centered services and is the foundation for all services offered through the One Stop system.

Future Directions:

The WIB plans to continue to advance the development of the One Stop system through the establishment of resource and affiliate sites to complement the existing comprehensive sites. As part of this effort, the WIB will identify additional local organizations that can offer services complimentary to those offered at the current and new One Stop sites. Using the Policy and Procedure Manual as the operating template, sites will be treated as franchises to ensure consistent and quality services throughout the system.

To assist with quality control, the WIB will also further develop One Stop standards and a performance management system to

CUSTOMER CREDO

Members and Partners of the Middlesex County One Stop Workforce Development System believe that all our customers should be treated with dignity and respect.

CUSTOMERS HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

Know the name and role of the professional with whom they are dealing.

Speak with knowledgeable, concerned, professional staff to obtain complete, accurate information, delivered in a clear, courteous manner.

Access One Stop programs, services and activities in an uncomplicated expeditious manner.

Expect that information is fully available to partnering agencies and organizations to reduce duplication and to ensure that customers are not inconvenienced.

Be informed promptly when a request for services cannot be met and be referred to an alternate appropriate entity, if possible.

Receive assistance in making informed decision, making arrangements and scheduling appointments for programs, services and activities.

measure how successfully One Stop Career Centers are serving their customers. One Stop standards will be established for every major customer service transaction occurring in the One Stop Career Centers, as well as overall performance standards. In addition, criteria will be set for future One Stop Career Centers and affiliate sites. It is anticipated that one of the criteria for comprehensive sites will be to implement the basic policies and procedures defined in One Stop procedure manuals. The performance management system will include customer satisfaction measures, as well as mechanisms for collecting and analyzing data to evaluate overall performance against local and State standards.

With the implementation of core service procedures well on its way, the Partners will begin to initiate the development of a comprehensive intensive services plan. This plan will more clearly define the services to be offered and how the Partners will communicate and coordinate to better serve the customer. One Stop standards will also be established for these services and they will be incorporated into the performance management system.

To support these new processes and services, staff development needs will be reassessed and additional training opportunities provided. The WIB will continue to develop and implement its One Stop Career Center marketing plan, revising it to accommodate new services and Centers.

Goal #2: Create a high degree of customer satisfaction among Middlesex County employers.

Middlesex County is home to an impressive array of medical, pharmaceutical, engineering, finance and business service firms that have a wide variety of high level training needs and demand a highly skilled, knowledge-based workforce. The Middlesex County WIB recognized early on that it would need to take a targeted approach to addressing the needs of the various industry sectors. The WIB's first industry sector initiative was a joint venture with Mercer County to provide training in high technology firms. The Middlesex County and Mercer County WIBs successfully applied to the U.S. Department of Labor for a \$3 million H1B grant. Middlesex and Mercer County colleges are conducting the training for this grant with the oversight of both WIBs.

While the County's divergent industry base requires a wide variety of technical skills training, they all continually point to the need to raise the literacy levels in order to meet the growing demand for higher skilled workers. Recognizing this, the WIB formed New Jersey's first Literacy Committee, which is now a statewide requirement for all WIBs. The WIB prepared a literacy plan and is also establishing the Middlesex County Community Learning Center at Roosevelt, which is described in Goal #4.

Employers, regardless of industry, also expressed significant frustration with the lack of good customer services skills. A Customer Service curriculum targeted to small businesses was developed. It is now being integrated into the curriculum of a number of training programs, youth programs and in staff development activities.

While the majority of current on-site One Stop Career Center services target job seekers, One Stop Career Centers are also expected to serve as a hub for business services. Current estimates indicate that only five (5) percent of the businesses nationally use One Stop Career Center services. Clearly creating a system businesses trust to be efficient and effective and ultimately want to use requires a concentrated effort. In recognition of this, the Middlesex County WIB created the Business Services Committee to focus specifically on increasing employers' use of One Stop services. This committee is comprised of entirely private sector representatives from key industry sectors and local personnel offices.

Less than six (6) months old, this Committee is initially focusing on improving the accessibility and quality of business-based services. They have instituted a three-phase process mapping initiative. Phase one, currently underway, is an analysis of what services are currently offered and how they are offered by each of the One Stop Partners. Over a three-month period, on-site Partners will identify services currently being offered and create detailed process maps on how these services are being offered to employers. All twelve Partners will eventually be asked to do the same.

“..this [Business Services] Committee is initially focusing on improving the accessibility and quality of employer services”

The second phase, starting concurrently, focuses on establishing standards and benchmarks for the One Stop business services. This includes surveying businesses in terms of what services they need and their expectations around how those services should be delivered. It is anticipated that the Committee will identify a complete menu of services that should be offered by the One Stop system. The Committee will also survey local personnel agencies to identify benchmarks to measure the One Stop services against. Based on the work done in these first two phases, a framework will be developed for ensuring that services to the business community are easily accessible, comprehensive and customer-friendly.

In phase three, the Partners will develop a plan for incorporating the full menu of services. This will include establishing new processes to streamline and consolidate their services based on the framework identified. The new processes will be structured to meet expectations of business and the benchmarks set by the Business Services Committee.

In anticipation of a more cohesive process, the WIB stepped up its outreach activities to the business community. It conducted its first Business Forum on Census 2000. It also established a web site for the Workforce Investment Board. The WIB also secured the services of a professional marketing firm to develop a marketing plan for business services.

Future Directions:

Because the WIB is expanding its agenda to include various industry sectors, it is establishing a Membership Committee to identify and invite local private sector representatives from specific industry sectors to join the WIB. The WIB will also collaborate with the County's economic development department, chambers of commerce and industry associations such as the New Jersey Hospital Association to identify and pursue industry-specific initiatives. Three industries already targeted are hospitality, health care and retail.

In an effort to expand outreach to the business community, a WIB Member Ambassador Program also will be implemented to train WIB members on how to promote workforce system services and goals to other members of the business community. The WIB will also continue to host business forums on various topics and work with the marketing firm to implement the marketing plan.

In addition, the Business Services Committee will remain focused on the completion of all three phases of business services process mapping. Their first task will be to complete a survey of local business needs and expectations and to continue to work with the Partners to complete the analysis of current services and processes. The ultimate goal is the development of a comprehensive menu of services benchmarked to employer needs and standards.

Goal #3: Consolidate the fragmentation that presently exists among youth programs to develop an integrated planning system that networks youth programs and services so that youth have access to them.

Any successful long-term strategy for developing a strong workforce must include strategies for developing youth. This is particularly true today as the baby boomer generation begins to retire and a higher percentage of younger workers are asked to fill their shoes. In accordance with the Workforce Investment Act and in an effort to give special attention to this vital segment of the current and future workforce, the Middlesex County WIB established a Youth Investment Council. The role of this Council is to develop a coordinated and comprehensive system of services to aid youth in their personal and career development, with a focus on youth in their teens and early twenties. The Council is comprised of a broad spectrum of youth serving agencies.

When the Youth Investment Council was originally formed, the WIB recognized that the Middlesex County's Council for Children's Services has a similar collaborative planning effort – the Youth Services Council, which focuses on youth from birth through the teenage years. Thus, in order to facilitate joint planning and eliminate duplication of efforts, the Youth Investment Council and Youth Services Council have worked together to ensure that they have

mutual members. These two Councils have begun a fruitful relationship – having conducted several joint planning activities and actively sharing information vital to program and system planning.

The Youth Investment Council's first step was to determine the needs of local youth and the status of the current system of services. This was done through focus groups with the New Brunswick Teen Center and high schools throughout the County as well as focus groups expressly targeted to the juvenile justice system. A survey was also conducted with local youth providers. The Council is now working with InfoLine⁴ to publish a youth services directory on-line. Once completed, this service will be marketed to a wide-range of youth organizations.

The Council also focused on the development of youth program standards to govern programs receiving funding through the WIB. These initial standards were incorporated into a Request for Proposal (RFP) for youth services and submitted proposals were evaluated against these standards. These standards include minimum customer satisfaction levels and a requirement that programs offer a continuum of services that include case management and counseling, as well as access to ongoing youth development programs and services. The Council also determined that in the future, all youth providers must use CASAS assessment tools, thereby creating a consistent assessment process that includes an evaluation of each youth's work readiness and basic skills.

“The Youth Investment Council recognizes that community service is a vital component to a youth's development.”

One of the unique initiatives established by the Council was the development of a Youth Portfolio for all youth enrolled in a program. The Youth Portfolio is designed to document youth successes. They identify their goals and as they progress through the programs at school, their progress is documented. Documenting these successes offers youth a constant reminder of their potential for success and how to build on the skills and talents those successes demonstrate. The Portfolio provides the youth with valuable information and guides them in establishing career and education goals as well as offers tools and information on looking for work. A secondary benefit of the Youth Portfolio is that it maintains critical information including assessment results and service plans. Youth can carry this Portfolio from service agency to service agency, giving providers the tools to ensure a continuity of service to each youth.

A second unique element is the requirement that every youth enrolled in a program must agree to participate in a minimum of 20 hours per year in a community service activity. The Youth Investment Council recognizes that community service is a vital component to a youth's development. It builds valuable leadership skills and gives youth a sense of pride as they give back to the community in which they live.

⁴ InfoLine is an on-line and toll-free phone service offering information and referrals to a health and human services agencies.

Finally, the Youth Investment Council has pursued initiatives to broaden the programs and services available to youth. A Youth Career Awareness Committee has been created to identify mechanisms for educating youth about the wide variety of careers open to them. Their first initiative is a youth Career Fair to be held in late 2002. In addition, the Council is supporting the School Counts Program - a program that offers rewards to youth who demonstrate key work and life skills such as good attendance and consistent work habits.

Future Directions:

This Council's ambitious agenda will continue to focus on the many initiatives they have already begun including the further development of youth standards including assessment standards, the publication of an on-line youth directory, continued joint planning and coordination with the Youth Services Council, the identification of funding to support the School Counts program and expanding the Youth Portfolio system-wide.

The Youth Investment Council will also place particular emphasis on developing Youth One Stop Career Centers. Based on a continued review of the needs of youth and the gaps in services, the Council will seek to develop and find support for physical sites where youth providers can jointly operate programs. These Youth One Stop Career Centers will also serve as a location where youth can go after school or during the day to receive advice and counseling or to just stay out of trouble. While the physical Youth One Stop Career Centers are under development, the Council will work with the One Stop Partners to integrate Youth One Stop activities into the existing One Stop Career Centers.

The Council recognizes that this is an involved process. They will continue to look for potential sites and establish standards for these Centers. In addition, the Youth Investment Council will begin an active campaign to raise its visibility in order to promote the Youth One Stop Career Center concept. It will seek to develop strategic linkages with local providers whose services will add value to the Centers. The Council also intends to develop a comprehensive evaluation and continuous improvement system for Youth One Stop Career Centers and services.

Goal #4: Focus on the full development of a comprehensive and integrated workforce system in Middlesex County.

Historically, planning for employment and training had a very narrow focus – providing occupational training and job search assistance to low income adult and youth as well as dislocated workers. With the inception of the Workforce Investment Act, WIBs are expected to take the lead in creating a workforce development system for their local communities that covers the full range of labor market needs – from preparing underemployed workers with increased skills for better jobs to those needing foundational literacy skills. WIBs, as discussed

earlier, are also expected to be responsive to the needs of varied industry sectors. Creating this system requires careful and deliberate planning. Being able to meet the workforce needs of the County requires a clear understanding of the local labor market needs, leveraging and improving upon existing programs, and expanding resources to address gaps in services.

One of the most striking gaps in the workforce development system was the lack of a systemic response to the literacy needs in the county. Resources were minimal and fragmented -- frequently scattered among various training organizations with little coordination to insure efficient and effective use of the funds. Standards historically were driven by national and state education departments with little regard to workplace literacy needs and standards. The State of New Jersey estimates that forty percent (40%) of its workforce is functioning at or below literacy levels one and two. (The top of level two barely meets employers' minimum literacy requirements for entry-level positions.) In some areas within Middlesex County, up to 40% of the residents fall at or below literacy level one.

“Recognizing that literacy is the foundational skill upon which to build a workforce system coupled with the magnitude and complexities of this issue, the WIB identified literacy as its number one priority.”

Recognizing that literacy is the foundational skill upon which to build a workforce system coupled with the magnitude and complexities of this issue, the WIB identified literacy as its number one priority. The WIB began by creating the State of New Jersey's first Literacy Committee. The Committee developed an inventory of local literacy services as well as identifying obstacles to expanding these services. The WIB communicated these obstacles to the State, some of which were later captured in a State preliminary report prepared by Rutgers University on the *Adult Literacy Funding and Delivery System*. This report shows how New Brunswick's Adult Program is forced to manage more than seventeen (17) distinct programs through fifteen (15) different funding streams, making management of these funding streams an operational nightmare for the provider and a challenge to the WIB in its system-building efforts.

In late 2001, the WIB received notice that the State of New Jersey was identifying upwards of \$28 million dollars to be dedicated to literacy services throughout the state. A portion of these funds was directed to WIBs and One Stop Career Centers to expand and enhance local literacy systems. With access to additional funds, the WIB is now poised to take the development of local literacy services to the next level.

To receive these funds, the State required the development of an Adult Literacy Plan (which can be found in Section 4 of this update). Middlesex County's plan describes in detail the local literacy needs analysis conducted and the strategies that emerged from this planning process.

One of the most significant strategies identified is the development of the Middlesex County Community Learning Center at Roosevelt. This Center will offer English as a Second Language instruction, assessment, adult basic education and computer and workplace literacy. It is scheduled to open in the fall of 2002. It is envisioned that it will expand over the next two years to include occupational skills training for local demand occupations.

Implementing a comprehensive workforce system also requires resources over and above Workforce Investment Act funds to support the wide variety of services needed. The structure of the One Stop system facilitates the leveraging of current resources, but it too is feeling the effects of limited resources. The One Stop Partners represent nineteen (19) different programs, each funded by separate funding stream. Merging processes, and sharing facilities has allowed the One Stop Partners to provide a wider array of services more efficiently and to a larger number of people. As noted in Goal #1, the One Stop system has served 94,513 people in just eight months.

Even with the greater efficiency afforded by the One Stop system, additional sources of support are needed. The WIB has taken several steps to increase the funding coming into the County. As discussed in Goal #2, the WIB, in partnership with the Mercer County WIB was awarded a \$3 million U.S. Department of Labor H1B training grant for high technology firms providing the funds to support the WIBs first industry sector project. The WIB also secured a \$212,600 grant for expanding transportation to low-income individuals. The literacy grants are hoped to provide more than \$500,000 annually.

Developing a workforce investment system can only occur with comprehensive planning on the needs of the labor market, keeping abreast of new trends, resource analysis and ongoing communication with stakeholders. The WIB began its workforce development planning efforts by conducting a comprehensive needs analysis in partnership with the United Way of Central Jersey. This analysis provided the WIB with an initial picture of the needs of the local labor market and was foundational in establishing the WIB's initial strategic plan. The WIB continues to monitor the labor market trends with the assistance of State labor market analysts who provide presentations to the WIB periodically as well as through community workforce forums. These forums are designed as mechanisms to exchange information with the business community on local needs and resources. The first forum was conducted around the 2000 census results.

The WIB also uses the information from the forums and labor market research, as well as the focused research and analysis of its committees, to evaluate its strategic plan on an ongoing basis. As local labor market conditions change and employer needs shift, the WIB adjusts its goals and strategies as it continually works towards building an effective workforce development system for Middlesex County.

Section 3:

WIB MEMBERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

Middlesex County Workforce Investment Board

WIB Membership and Governance

The Middlesex County Workforce Investment Board was formed in late 1999 and is one of the newer WIBs in the State. It is comprised of thirty-seven (37) members. The Board of Chosen Freeholders gave significant thought in appointing its membership. Its representatives from business and organized labor were selected based on key industries in Middlesex County as well as on leadership qualities. As noted earlier, the WIB is establishing a Membership Committee to identify and target recruitment of new members from industries that are the focus of the WIB's work on industry sectors. The balance of the membership (49%) comes from education, economic development, One Stop Partners and community organizations. (Attached is an organizational chart and list of Board and Committee members.)

Much of the success of the WIB comes from the active work of its members on various Board committees. All members serve on one or more Committees. Committees meet regularly and enjoy good attendance from its members.

The WIB's committee structure has evolved since it's initial structure in early 2000. Today the WIB has an Executive Committee, Youth Investment Council, By-laws Committee, Planning/Resource Committee, Systems Performance Committee and ad hoc Transportation Committee. The Literacy Committee, Membership/Nomination Committee and Business Services Committee were recently established. Several Committees have also added subcommittees including the Youth Investment Council's Youth Career Awareness Sub-committee and the Systems Performance Committee's One Stop Operations Sub-committee. The WIB, as communicated to that state in a memo dated August 7, 2000, it does not wish to create an additional committee dedicated to disability; rather the Board is committed to addressing disability issues in the work of four committees: Planning/Resources Committee, One Stop Sub-committee, Literacy Committee and Youth Investment Council.

All of the Board's work has been significantly strengthened by a strong partnership with the Board of Chosen Freeholders. Freeholder Jane Z. Brady is responsible for workforce development activities in the County. She has actively advanced the WIB's work in the County ensuring that workforce development is viewed as a top priority. It is through her leadership that coordination and consolidation has occurred in areas such as Literacy and Youth. She attends all Board meetings and many committee meetings as well as national and state workforce development conferences.

The work of the Board is supported by Patricia Roman, the Director of Middlesex County Employment and Training Department. She serves as the WIB Director with a team of four professionals. The grant recipient is the County of Middlesex who has designated the Middlesex County Employment and Training Department as its fiscal agent.

The One Stop system has fourteen (14) Partners representing nineteen (19) programs (see Section 2 for list of Partners). The One Stop system is supported by the work of Adrienne Keaton who serves as the One Stop Operator.

WIB MEMBERSHIP				
Category	Member Name & Title	Affiliation	Term Expir. Date	
*	Private Sector	Deborah Aguiar-Velez, CEO/President	Sistematica Training & Computer Ctr	06/30/03
		Barbara DeCarlo, Consultant	Consultant, Milltown NJ	06/30/03
		Jeanne S. Fauer	Saint Peter's University Hospital	06/30/03
		Nicholas Gacos, President	Colorado Café Associates	06/30/03
		Edith Giniger, Owner	Edith Giniger & Associates	06/30/03
		Marc S. Greenspan, Circulation Director	Business News New Jersey	06/30/03
		Phyllis Klugerman, Financial Advisor	Prudential Securities, Inc.	06/30/03
		Carlos Maldonado, Partner	HR Consulting Group, LLC	06/30/03
		Jay McMurren	O/E Learning, Inc.	06/30/03
		Loida Noriega-Wilson, President	The Norwil Group	06/30/03
		Ramesh Pandey, President/CEO	Xechem International	06/30/03
		Margie Perez, Vice-President	First Union National Bank	06/30/03
		John Regina, Vice-President	Robert Wood Johnson Univ. Hospital	06/30/03
		Howard Rich, President/Owner	ST&L Associates, Inc.	06/30/03
		Miguel Rivera, Director, External Affairs	Verizon Communications	06/30/03
		Eric S. Smith, President	Smith & Solomon Tractor Trailer	06/30/03
		Mary Jane Stofik, Account Executive	Rotator Staffing Services	06/30/03
		John St. Omer, General Manager	Ramada Inn-North Brunswick	06/30/03
		Patricia Sturkie, Human Resources Admin.	Procter & Gamble Company	06/30/03
		Bernice Proctor Venable, Vice-President	AlphaGraphics	06/30/03
Vito Verruso, Owner	Pathfinder Consulting Group	06/30/03		
Charisse Wilson, Director, Hum.Resources	Hyatt Regency-New Brunswick	06/30/03		
Elizabeth Wnorowski, Employ. Supervisor	United Parcel Services	06/30/03		
Carol Young, Sales Manager	Joule Staffing Services	06/30/03		
**	Community Based Organization (min. 2)	Gloria Aftanski, President	United Way of Central Jersey	06/30/03
		C. Roy Epps, President	Civic League	06/30/03
		Carroll Thomas, Executive Director	MCEOC	06/30/03
**	Organized Labor (min. 2)	Carol Barrett, President	AFSCME Local #3440	06/30/03
		Joseph Jennings, Business Representative	IBEW Local #456	06/30/03
		John Wade, Business Manager	Iron Workers Local #373	06/30/03
	Abbott School Supt.	Adult Education Principals are Designees (See Names Provided Below)		
	Adult Education/Literacy	Ana Cruz, Principal/Director	Perth Amboy Adult School	06/30/04
		Judith Faherty, Principal	New Brunswick Adult Learning Center	06/30/04
	Board of Social Services	Angela Mackaronis, Director	Middlesex County Board of Social Services	06/30/03
	Community or County College	Camille Mahon, Director, Grant Development	Middlesex County College	06/30/04
	Econ. Development Agency or Municipal Economic Auth. (min. 2)	Melvin Ramos, Director, Econ. Develop.	City of Perth Amboy	06/30/04
		Carl Spataro, Director	Middlesex County Econ. Development	06/30/03
	Human Services Advisory Council Director	Thomas Seilheimer, Director	Middlesex County Human Services	06/30/04

WIB: MIDDLESEX COUNTY

WIB LITERACY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP	
NAME AND TITLE	AFFILIATION
Sergio Acosta President	UAW Local 2326
Michael Alliegro Reverend Monsignor	Diocese of Metuchen
Khalid Anjum Director	Middlesex County Information Technology Department
Wanda Ashley-Williams President	NAACP New Brunswick Area Chapter
James Borders Manager	Division of Employment Services
Joan Borheimer Director of Bilingual ESL	New Brunswick Board of Education
Jane Z. Brady Freeholder	Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders
Martha Clifford Bilingual Counselor	New Brunswick Adult Learning Ctr.
Mary Ann Conners Executive Director Corporate & Community Education	Middlesex County College
Ana Cruz, Director	Perth Amboy Board of Education
Barbara DeCarlo Consultant	Milltown
Sophia Domogala Adult Advisor	South Plainfield Adult Education School
Marc S. Greenspan Circulation Director	Business News New Jersey
Ronald Grygo Assistant Superintendent	South River Board of Education
Donna Guskind Adult Education Coordinator	East Brunswick Board of Education
Steve Heisler Community Programs Coordinator	Highland Park Board of Education
Dr. Jefferson President	Perth Amboy Area NAACP
Reggie Johnson Placement Specialist	Metuchen Area NAACP
Adrienne Keaton One-Stop System Manager	Middlesex County Employment and Training Department

WIB LITERACY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP	
NAME AND TITLE	AFFILIATION
Loretta Keimel Supervisor of Adult Education	Middlesex County Vocational-Technical High School
Neva Lawson Reverend	First Baptist Church of Woodbridge
James A. Lenox Director	South Plainfield Adult Education
Natalie Londensky Manager	Division of Employment Services
Angela Mackaronis Director	Middlesex County Board of Social Services
Gregory Mackaronis Family Development Program Director	Middlesex County Employment and Training Department
Joanne McFarlane Asst. Director, Rehabilitation Services	Middlesex County Adult Corrections Center
Claudia Merkel-Keller, Planning Associate for Adult Literacy	N.J. Department of Education
Nancy Ostin President	Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce
Margie Perez Vice-President of Comm. Development	First Union National Bank
Ligita Rafael Executive Director	Literacy Volunteers of Middlesex
Mike Rivera External Affairs Director	Verizon Communications
Irma Sandoval Workforce Development Director	Puerto Rican Action Board
Judy Schiff Teacher	Middlesex County Youth Services Juvenile Facility
Samuel B. Stewart Superintendent	South Brunswick Board of Education
Lydia Trinidad Executive Director	Puerto Rican Association for Human Development
Mario S. Vargas Director, Human Services	New Brunswick Tomorrow
Alvin Williams Career Development Counselor	Perth Amboy High School

YIC Membership				
Category	Member Name& Title	Affiliation	Term expiration date	
WIB Reprs	WIB business employer member	Elizabeth Wronowski Employment Supervisor	United Parcel Service	6/30/03
	Employer profit or nonprofit	John St. Omer General Manager	Ramada Inn	6/30/03
	Vocational School Superintendent or County Superintendent or rep	Joseph Colombo Superintendent	Middlesex County Vocational & Technical High Schools	6/30/03
	County College President or rep	Bill Davis, Director of New Brunswick Program	Middlesex County Community College	6/30/03
	One-Stop Operator	Adrienne Keaton One-Stop Manager	Middlesex County Employment & Training	6/30/03
Agency Reprs	Youth Corps	Paul Reynolds Director	Youth Corp	6/30/03
	School-Based Youth Services	Marilyn Green Director	New Brunswick Youth Services Program	6/30/03
	Adjudicated Youth Agencies	Bobbie Danino Supervisor	Middlefield Program	6/30/03
	Youth Services Commission rep	Carolyn Timmons Director	Division of Children's Services	6/30/03
	DYFS	Carol Breed County Service Specialist	DYFS	6/30/03
	Faith Based and/or Community-based	C.Roy Epps President	Civic League of Greater New Brunswick	6/30/03
Public housing authorities	Kathy Blaha Coordinator	Woodbridge Housing Authority	6/30/03	
A parent or a parent advocate	Vacancy			
Current or former youth program participant	Wilberto Campos	Jewish Renaissance Foundation, Operation Hope	6/30/03	
Comprehensive School district superintendent	Dr. Mary Jean Guidette Superintendent of Schools	NJ Department of Education	6/30/03	
Abbott District Superintendent	Ronald Larkin Superintendent	New Brunswick School System	6/30/03	
An advocate for youth with disabilities	Harriet Findlay Program Director	Johnson Rehabilitation Institution	6/30/03	
Job Corps (as appropriate)	Lee Matthews Director	Edison Job Corps	6/30/03	
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services	Rose Ricci Regional Manger	Divison of Vocational Rehabilitation	6/30/03	
Substance/alcohol abuse services agency	Roger Keaton Planner	Divison of Alcohol & Rehabilitation	6/30/03	
A representative from organized labor or an apprenticeship coordinator	Joseph Jennings Business Representative	I.B.E.W. Local 456	6/30/03	

Section 4:

ADULT LITERACY PLAN

Middlesex County Workforce Investment Board

“ Achieving Change through Vision“ *An Update to the Strategic Plan*

ADULT LITERACY PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION

A. Executive Summary

“Middlesex County is a hub of commerce and industry located in the center of New Jersey. Along its thriving business corridors are major corporations such as Johnson and Johnson, Inc., Bristol-Meyers Squibb Co., Dow Jones Company, Inc., American Reinsurance and Merrill Lynch, Inc. Economic expansion has included many research and development, high technology and supporting business service establishments. The growth of high-tech business is bolstered by the presence of Rutgers – The State University, in New Brunswick and Piscataway. Finally, with five major hospitals and the Cancer Institute of New Jersey located within the county’s boundaries, Middlesex has also become a regional center for health services and scientific and medical research.”

Regional Labor Market Review, June 2000

The economic environment in Middlesex County in these first years of the new millennium portrays a bright picture as businesses continue to re-configure to be responsive to the new economic conceptual framework based on knowledge, information, and learning. At the same time, Middlesex County is faced with the challenge, as are other New Jersey counties, of a workforce with varying degrees of readiness (literacy) to meet the demands of the 21st century economy. The 21st century workforce must possess the skills necessary to match the needs of employers. In the absence of the requisite skills, significant segments of the workforce will be relegated to the ranks of the working poor at best and out of work at worst. A strong, literate, adaptable workforce that meets the needs of business is critical in sustaining economic growth within the county. What are the skills that the 21st century workforce must possess? Increasingly, it is becoming clear that the requisite skills overlap and fall into several inter-related categories as shown in the following chart.

Skill Categories	Related Skills
Academic	Communications oral and written, mathematical conceptual and computational, problem solving, and varying levels of computer skills
Technological	Foundational science and mathematics, critical and inquisitive thinking skills, analytical and hands-on problem-solving
Interpersonal	Credibility, reliability, flexibility, leadership, problem solving, communication and listening skills

A pattern of fluidity is discernible when examining these skill sets, skill needs flow across all the categories lending credence to the fact that literacy in the 21st century is a complex and multi-faceted issue. The continued development of Middlesex County's workforce with the skills to function successfully, in a knowledge, information and learning based economy, is a prime objective of the Middlesex County Workforce Investment Board; the literacy plan endeavors to identify and prioritize the literacy needs of the County's citizens and the workforce development needs to the County's businesses.

Middlesex County has an existing and highly developed, functioning system for providing literacy services. In planning for the development of the literacy plan a cross section of organizations providing literacy services to diverse populations including local education agencies, community-based organizations, faith based organizations, and private businesses were identified throughout the county, and surveyed by staff. The initial survey consisted of four questions that asked the providers to rank the greatest literacy needs of the population they serve, as well as the population they are unable to serve; how they would address expanding the capacity of their literacy programs; and finally the greatest needs of their organizations. A total of twenty-three responses were received. However, not every respondent provided data for each question; thus the variation in the number of responses to the specific questions. The 92% response rate is statistically significant emphasizing the importance that the literacy providers have placed on this initiative, and the data the respondents provided clearly identifies the service gaps in the present system.

The results of the initial survey are provided in the Figure 1(following page), in instances where the respondents' answers resulted in a statistical insignificance between two answers both answers are shown.

Subsequent surveys were utilized to further define existing literacy providers and services, identify gaps and provide a clear picture of the County's literacy related needs. (The data from these surveys is included in the Inventory of Capacity chart, Attachment A). The responses of the literacy providers were central to identifying and prioritizing the County's literacy needs and forms the core of the literacy plan. The primary literacy needs are to enhance the present delivery of literacy related services (particularly in the area of English-as-a-Second-Language) by identifying additional space for conducting literacy programs in central locations; providing content specific skills assessment that can identify literacy skills gaps and learning differences; developing relevant professional workshops for adult literacy service providers, and One Stop Career Center staff, workplace literacy projects linked to the needs of employers.

Figure 1: Results of Literacy Survey

Question	Ranking	Ranking	Ranking	Ranking
Greatest Literacy Needs For Population Served	English as a Second Language (16/23)	Work Readiness Skills (11/19)	Assessment Tools (12/20)	Basic Computer Skills (9/20) Workplace Navigation Skills (9/19)
Greatest Literacy Needs For Population Not Served	English as a Second Language (14/18)	Assessment Tools (11/18)	Basic Computer Skills & Readiness Skills (12/20)	Workplace Navigation Skills (9/18)
Expansion of Capacity of Literacy Programs	Expand to Serve Larger Population (17/22)	Expand Menu Of Services to Existing Population (14/22)	Expand Breadth Of Literacy Services (11/20)	
Greatest Need of the Organization	Updated Assessment Tools (12/21)	Offer more Levels of ESL (13/23)	Updated Hardware and Literacy-Related Software (12/21)	Professional Development of Staff (9/20)

B. Vision

Over the past two years, the Middlesex County Workforce Investment Board has identified literacy as a top priority. The Literacy Committee developed a literacy resource directory and initiated a comprehensive needs assessment. The Middlesex County Workforce Investment Board's vision is to enhance existing literacy services so that the literacy skills of the existing and future workforce meets or exceeds the skills needed by the business community. To actualize this vision, the Middlesex County Workforce Investment Board has taken a multi-faceted and phased approach to addressing the literacy needs of the County as follows:

- ✎ Incorporating Literacy and Career Resource rooms at the One Stop Career Centers, to provide comprehensive content specific literacy assessment as well as work readiness skill development.
- ✎ Establishing the Middlesex County Community Learning Center at Roosevelt to address the literacy needs of all residents but especially the needs of a significant population in Woodbridge and Edison that is presently underserved.
- ✎ Addressing the need for updated assessment tools (of which the CASAS system will be the nucleus).
- ✎ Increasing professional development opportunities for literacy service providers and One Stop Career Center staff by sponsoring a series of professional development workshops focusing on adult learning.
- ✎ Developing workplace literacy projects linked to the needs of the business community (specifically in growth occupational clusters).

The Middlesex County Workforce Investment Board is committed to taking the necessary steps to ensure quality, cost-effective workforce development related literacy services to adult learners throughout the County.

C. Plan Development

All partners of the Middlesex County One Stop Workforce Investment System collaborated in the development of the literacy plan. The Middlesex County Workforce Investment Board's Literacy, Planning Resources, and Business Services Committees provided both direction and a forum for discussions from the onset of the planning process. Additionally, representatives of local education agencies, the New Jersey Employment Services, Middlesex County Community College, and the Board of Chosen Freeholders, actively participated and provided critical information and assistance in identifying existing services as well as gaps in the County's literacy programs. Together the partners' agreed on the overall plan to enhance existing literacy services and develop new projects to meet identified needs. All of the partners are committed to achieving the vision of providing comprehensive literacy services through a seamless, integrated continuum throughout the County.

D. Equipped for the Future Integration (EFF)

In varying degrees the EFF philosophy of empowering learners and providing contextual literacy classes is incorporated into literacy programs throughout the County. Additionally, the four content specific categories communication, decision-making, interpersonal, and life long learning skills already form the nucleus of the County's literacy programs. The critical link to be established through a comprehensive literacy initiative, is between assessing and identifying the existing knowledge base of customers, determining their learning goals, and developing learning plans to ensure that participation in literacy programs will enable them to fully develop the skills necessary to function as workers, parents, and citizens. The EFF framework will be integrated as the nucleus for developing the system that assesses, customers' learning needs, develops learning plans, and provides of literacy services.

E. Agreements

The Middlesex County Workforce Investment Board's primary role has been to provide oversight and guidance in the development of the literacy plan. All agreements between providers will be developed through the One Stop system Partners.

2. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

A. Individuals

The literacy needs of the adult population in Middlesex County have been identified through a variety of mechanisms, including the use of survey data gathered directly from literacy service providers, as well as documented information on literacy levels. According to statistics from the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) the percentage of the adult population in New Jersey functioning at level 1 literacy (defined as unable to complete basic forms, able to sign name only) ranges from a low of ten (10) percent to a high of thirty-four (34)

percent. The same statistical source places level 1 literacy functioning adults in Middlesex County at seventeen (17) percent or approximately at the mid-point of the state range. In specific areas such as Cranbury, East Brunswick, Helmetta, Jamesburg, Monroe, Plainsboro, and South Brunswick the percentage of level 1 literacy functioning adults is twelve (12) percent while in Carteret, Perth Amboy, and part of Woodbridge the percentage of level 1 functioning adults is thirty-nine (39) percent. The statistical data places the percentage of level 1 literacy functioning adults in the balance of the county at approximately seventeen (17) percent. A number of demographic variables account for the disparity in the literacy levels including concentrations of immigrants in specific areas, educational levels, and economic and business growth trends and the limited access to literacy services in Woodbridge and Edison. It is evident from the statistical data that the literacy levels of the population in Middlesex County are as diverse as the county's demographics. The statistical data outlining demographic pockets of low-literacy functioning adults, correlates with the data and information gathered from the county's literacy providers which identified the need for enhanced literacy services; i.e. updated assessment tools, English as a Second language, adult basic education, and work readiness skill development.

B. Employers

Middlesex County is experiencing a period of strong economic growth within and outside of its traditional employment markets. In addition to the pharmaceutical and financial corporations new business opportunities are being maximized throughout the county. New Brunswick is experiencing expansion in the retail and hospitality industry, in Perth Amboy there are plans for a waterfront mall with increased retail activity as well as a new hotel complex, and in the southwestern area of the county manufacturing and warehousing predominates. The rich and diverse economic environment in Middlesex County dictates that the existing and potential workforces possess diverse literacy skills. An intrinsic part of the Middlesex County Workforce Investment Board's strategy is to collaborate with industry associations such as the New Jersey Hospital Association to identify specific skills requirements for multi-tiered jobs within the retail, hospitality and health care industries and provide literacy related, as well as, occupational training where appropriate to meet skill needs of the local business community.

C. Current System Capacity

The analysis conducted by the Middlesex County Workforce Investment Board as part of the planning process included determining the capacity of the current system to deliver literacy services. Diverse literacy providers throughout Middlesex County were canvassed to determine the capacity of the current system of literacy services. The literacy providers included Adult Schools, Literacy Volunteers, and Community-Based organizations. The following is a summary of the capacity of the current system. (The detailed results are outlined in the Inventory of Capacity found in Attachment A.)

Type of Literacy Service	Total Number of Clients Served
ABE	875

GED	1,300
ESL	4,807
Basic Computer Literacy	1,702
Literacy Tutoring	0
Adult High School	334
Citizenship Preparation	45

D. Target Population(s)

Literacy providers clearly indicated that providing additional enhanced ESL services is the greatest need for the population presently served as evidenced by the data reported on the inventory of capacity that shows that customers access ESL in far greater numbers than any other literacy service. With respect to the population unable to access services, there is no hard data to confirm the finding, beyond the experience of the literacy service providers, because due to the transient nature of much of the population they maintain few if any waiting lists. The available data does support however, that customers in need of ESL fall into two cohorts - unemployed, economically disadvantaged customers whose low literacy levels are a barrier to gaining employment; and the working poor who are underemployed due to low literacy levels and subsequent occupationally oriented skills. Therefore, the Middlesex County Workforce Investment Board has prioritized the pyramid of literacy needs, and will address these in phases beginning with the most immediate need to increase access to English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) services.

3. SERVICE STRATEGY

A. Literacy Levels

Present customers accessing literacy services throughout the County have diverse literacy needs, and it is expected that any additional customers will also have diverse needs. Various mechanisms will be utilized to determine literacy levels at the point of access, including testing and assessment as well as the determination of customer literacy goals. To insure that customer literacy goals can be achieved, a program mix will be incorporated into literacy services that include traditional classroom instruction, and individual tutoring as well as computerized self-directed and classroom instruction. A customer's literacy level and goal will determine the type of literacy services to be provided i.e. classroom instruction or individual tutoring. The data gathered through the planning process indicates that the County's current literacy providers serve diverse literacy needs in their programs, however, Literacy Volunteers of Middlesex County primarily targets low functioning customers.

B. Priority of Services

Initially, the literacy services in Middlesex County will concentrate on enhancing the current provider system's ability to provide English-as-a-Second Language to unemployed, economically disadvantaged, and underemployed customers. In subsequent phases of implementation additional literacy services will be integrated into the system including basic computer literacy, work readiness skills, skill training in local demand occupations, and workplace literacy skills linked to local business needs.

C. Outreach and Recruitment

A variety of techniques will be utilized to outreach and recruit the target populations for literacy services as well as to determine the literacy requirements of businesses and the community at large. These will include but not be limited to:

- ✍✍ Incorporating literacy services into the menu of available services at both of the One Stop Career Centers.
- ✍✍ Referral to literacy services by literacy providers and community-based organizations within the county.
- ✍✍ The development of an active marketing/recruitment plan by the Middlesex County Community Learning Center at Roosevelt for outreach to both individuals and businesses needing literacy services.

D. Access and Referral

There will be multiple paths for customers to access literacy services. Initially, customers will be able to access literacy services directly through the One Stop Career Centers in New Brunswick and Perth Amboy, and the Middlesex County Learning Center at Roosevelt in Edison; and indirectly through the Middlesex Workforce Investment Board's web-site, existing literacy programs, and community-based organizations throughout the County. It is anticipated that in future phase's customers will also be able to access workplace directed literacy services through linkages with the employer community. Referrals of customers in need of literacy services to appropriate providers will be based on several inter-related criteria including customer literacy levels and literacy goals, appropriate literacy services and the customer's accessibility to literacy programs. The program mix will include traditional and computer-based classroom instruction, self-directed computer-based instruction, tutorial services and in future phase's distance learning formats.

The New Brunswick One Stop Career Center has dedicated space with fifteen Internet accessible computer stations, utilized two to three days a week for basic skill assessments and instruction on using the Internet. Space is also available at the site for twelve more computer stations. This combined space will form the nucleus of the New Brunswick One Stop Career Center's Literacy and Career Resource room. The Middlesex County One Stop Career Center satellite in Perth Amboy is currently in a separate building from the Workforce New Jersey Program location. A site review is in progress to locate a building that can house both entities. Once the relocation has been accomplished, a Literacy and Career Resource room will be established in the Perth Amboy One Stop Career Center similar to the New Brunswick facility. Initial additional staffing is one (1) interviewer at each of the Literacy and Career Resource rooms in New Brunswick and Perth Amboy.

Another critical issue identified by literacy service providers is the limited amount of available space and accessible locations to conduct programs and provide ancillary services. Space issues are prevalent during daytime and evening hours, however, it is especially problematic during daytime hours, when existing facilities are shared by both literacy service providers and elementary, middle, and high schools.

Recently, a significant amount of space, that is centrally located within the county, was identified at the Roosevelt Care Center in Edison, New Jersey. The Middlesex County Improvement Authority (MCIA) has approved the space for use as a community-learning center, and approximately 4,000 square feet will be modified and made available to area literacy service providers, a number of who have expressed support for this center. Modification of the site will include installing cable for computers and the purchase of furniture and equipment. The configuration of the space is still being determined, however, it lends itself to establishing an center for testing and assessment, a large resource room that can house both a lab for self-directed literacy skill development and self-directed job search, as well as space for seven classrooms for traditional and computer-based classroom instruction and individual tutoring. Additionally, there is space for ancillary services.

Initially, the Middlesex County Community Learning Center at Roosevelt, will concentrate on providing ESL classroom and tutorial instruction for all literacy levels, with Literacy Volunteers of Middlesex County providing the literacy services to low literacy functioning customers. The additional components including testing and assessment, ABE instruction, and if appropriate GED testing, and the resource room will be phased into the operation of the Center. Within the next year approximately 1,000 square feet of additional space will be available and is targeted for providing occupational skills training in local demand occupations. The Middlesex County Community Learning Center at Roosevelt site is adjacent to the Menlo Park Mall in Edison, NJ, which is accessible by public transportation from the northern and central areas of Middlesex County. Literacy services at the Middlesex County Community Learning Center at Roosevelt will be available for morning, afternoon, and evening classes, seven days a week. Initial staffing will include one (1) coordinator, two (2) full-time instructors, two (2) part-time instructors, one (1) program assistant, and one (1) career advisor.

E. Assessment

Fifty six (56) percent of the literacy survey respondents identified updated assessment tools as a critical area and identifying adults with learning differences, as a priority need. Recent research has shown that there is not a single, generally accepted or applied literacy assessment tool being utilized within the County. The CASAS system will be the nucleus of the assessment system, however the Middlesex County Workforce Investment Board is committed to a comprehensive assessment process, and has utilized available resources to explore identifying different assessment tools that could be universally applied dependent on the learning abilities of individual customers. To this end, the Middlesex Workforce Investment Board Literacy Committee is working with Dr. Hal Beder, Ph.D. of Rutgers University, a nationally recognized literacy expert, to help identify appropriate assessment tools particularly in the area of ESL literacy and assessing when and if learning differences are effecting literacy levels.

To develop a more comprehensive literacy assessment system, the New Brunswick One Stop Career Center will utilize the CASAS system to assess and evaluate the basic skills of customers accessing literacy services. When feasible the CASAS system will be integrated into the Literacy and Career Resource room at the Perth Amboy One Stop Career Center and into the assessment component at the Middlesex County Community Learning Center at Roosevelt.

In the initial phases of the literacy program, current assessment tools and techniques will continue to be utilized throughout the literacy provider system until the transition to the CASAS system for all basic skill assessment can be completed. Assessment through the Literacy and Career Resource rooms at the One Stop Career Centers and the Middlesex County Community Learning Center at Roosevelt will focus on customers' literacy levels including basic skills, English as a Second Language (ESL), and basic computer literacy skills. For customers whose initial assessment indicates a need for comprehensive basic skill or English as a Second Language remediation/instruction, a referral will be made to the appropriate literacy provider and/or community education program.

For customers identified as possibly having learning differences, Middlesex County College is the local regional center that can conduct diagnostic assessments, provide supportive services, workshops and outreach activities. It is anticipated that specific target populations such as adult learners who are out of school, earning below the self-sufficiency income level and identified by adult schools as having potential learning differences will be referred for this service. The Middlesex County Workforce Investment Board will contract with the Middlesex County College to provide this literacy service, thus addressing an identified service gap. The results of the literacy level assessments as well as literacy program participation outcomes will continue to be shared within the workforce development system through established procedures.

The Middlesex County Workforce Investment Board conducted an assessment of the GED testing process, and the following issues were identified:

- ✍✍ Answers Sheets for the Spanish version of the GED test were not available for a significant period of time.
- ✍✍ Excessive delays in reporting test scores, resulting in a systematic stagnation that forced many test takers into a state of limbo, thwarting their ability to forward in achieving their goals.
- ✍✍ Inadequate funding to support local test centers.

The remedies are outside the purview and control of the local Workforce Investment Boards and therefore needs to be addressed at a higher policy level.

F. Service Integration

Middlesex County is currently addressing service integration by process mapping the delivery of intensive services at both of the One Stop Career Centers to identify any deficiencies and ensure a seamless and efficient customer flow throughout the system. More than half of the literacy service providers responding to the literacy survey sixty-three (63) percent identified the expansion of literacy services as a need. Middlesex County's existing and highly developed, system for providing literacy services will not change but rather be enhanced by the development of Literacy and Career Resource rooms.

The Literacy and Career Resource rooms at the One Stop Career Centers will have a dual function, to assess and evaluate customers' literacy levels and enable them to develop work-readiness skills necessary to successfully enter or reenter the workforce in the current employment environment. To that end, the Literacy

and Career Resource rooms will also incorporate work readiness skills to provide a full range of literacy skills necessary for employment. Work readiness skills will include; instruction in such areas as: keyboarding techniques, the fundamentals of computer literacy, occupation-related literacy, navigating the Internet (America's Job Bank, WNJPIN and other employment and career-related web sites), and where appropriate and available, distance education in commonly used software applications. Furthermore, the resource rooms will function as a tool for customers having limited or no access to computers. Literacy providers presently operating programs through a myriad of federal state, local and private funding streams will continue to operate their programs.

Additionally, the Middlesex County Workforce Investment Board's Business Services Committee will examine the feasibility of initiating targeted workplace literacy projects to address occupational literacy deficiencies within the health care, hospitality and retail industries. It will continue to provide oversight and guidance for the integrated system. Existing linkages with adult education consortia within the County will be strengthened and new linkages will be developed particularly with employers of demand occupations and with new economic development initiatives.

G. Coordination and Leveraging of Resources

Resources whether financial or non-financial will be coordinated and leveraged to address identified service gaps and enhance the existing highly developed and collaborative literacy service provider system within the county. Where necessary additional Memoranda of Understanding will be developed and executed to ensure a seamless delivery system. Through a coordinated and collaborative effort the literacy service provider system will be enhanced through the development of new initiatives geared to both literacy customers and literacy providers.

Forty-three (43) percent of the respondents to the literacy survey indicated that professional development issues are an ongoing need specifically identifying adult learners with special learning needs. To better assist adult educators and One Stop Career Center Staff in developing skills in these areas, Middlesex County College will provide professional development workshops to accommodate their training needs. A series of professional development workshops will be scheduled, topics will include among others: Identifying Adults That May Have A Learning Disability, Teaching Methods for Multi-Grade Classes, Working With English-as-a-Second Language Learners, and Interpreting Assessment Test Results.

Additionally, the linkage with the Graduate School of Education at Rutgers The State University of New Jersey in New Brunswick will be strengthened to provide tutors for the Literacy and Career Resource rooms as well as assistance in assessment, program and curriculum development and evaluation. Finally, the location of the Middlesex County Community Learning Center at Roosevelt has the potential to provide mentors and tutors for the literacy programs through both residents and staff of Roosevelt Care Center, and through the Literacy Volunteers of Middlesex County.

H. Support Services

Customers accessing literacy services at the two (2) One Stop Career Centers and at the Middlesex County Community Learning Center at Roosevelt, will have access to the supportive services provided at those sites and through other One Stop system partners. Additionally, Infoline of Middlesex County, a countywide information and referral service, and One Easy Link (OEL), are accessible to all County residents.

I. Performance Standards

At the present time the Middlesex County Workforce Investment Board will not set any additional standards beyond the performance standards developed by the State.

INVENTORY OF CAPACITY

LITERACY SERVICES & TRAINING	EAST BRUNSWICK ADULT EDUCATION	EDISON ADULT & CONT EDUCATION	HIGHLAND PARK COMM EDUCATION	MONROE TWP ADULT EDUCATION*	NEW BRUNSWICK ADULT LEARNING CTR	NORTH BRUNSWICK BOARD OF EDUCATION	PERTH AMBOY ADULT SCHOOL	PISCATAWAY COMMUNITY EDUCATION*	SOUTH BRUNSWICK COMMUNITY EDUCATION*	SOUTH PLAINFIELD ADULT SCHOOL	SOUTH RIVER ADULT SCHOOL
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TYPE OF LITERACY SERVICE:												
ABE	1	1	1		1		1					
GED	1	1	1		1		1		1			
ESL	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
DISTANCE LEARNING							1					
BASIC COMPUTER LIT			1	1	1		1	1				
LITERACY TUTORING	1		1				1					
ADULT HIGH SCHOOL					1							
CITIZENSHIP	1											

DAYS/HOURS OF SERVICE:												
DAYTIME: AM	9:00	9:30	9:00		8:30		8:30		10:00	9:00		
TO PM	3:15	12:30	1:00		4:30		3:30		1:00	1:00		
EVENING PM	7:00	7:00	6:00	7:30	4:30	7:00	6:00	7:00	7:00	6:00	6:30	

*Achieving Progress through Vision
An Update to the Strategic Plan*

Adult Literacy Plan

TO PM	10:00	9:00	10:00	9:30	8:30	9:00	9:00	9:30	10:00	9:00	9:30
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WEEKDAYS	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
WEEKENDS	X		X				X			X	

NO OF CLIENTS SERVED:											
ABE	200	10	10		350		250				
GED	140	20	10		535		550		45		
ESL	500	170	150		1345	85	1500	60	145	200	175
DISTANCE LEARNING											
BASIC COMPUTER LIT			20	15	851		300	15			
LITERACY TUTORING											
ADULT HIGH SCHOOL					334						
CITIZENSHIP PREPARATION	45										

	EAST BRUNSWICK ADULT EDUCATION	EDISON ADULT & CONT EDUCATION	HIGHLAND PARK COMM EDUCATION	MONROE TWP ADULT EDUCATION*	NEW BRUNSWICK ADULT LEARNING CTR	NORTH BRUNSWICK BOARD OF EDUCATION	PERTH AMBOY ADULT SCHOOL	PISCATAWAY COMMUNITY EDUCATION*	SOUTH BRUNSWICK COMMUNITY EDUCATION*	SOUTH PLAINFIELD ADULT SCHOOL	SOUTH RIVER ADULT SCHOOL
FUNDING SOURCES:											

NJDOE:

TITLE II WIA	1				1		1				
ENGLISH/CIVICS		1	1		1		1			1	

NJDOL:

WDPP-ITA											
WDPP CUSTOMIZED TRN											
WDPP LITERACY					1		1				
WIA TITLE					1						
WFNJ SUP. TANF-AWEP							1				
WFNJ SUP FS-AWEP							1				
WFNJ SUP GA-AWEP							1				
WELFARE TO WORK							1				
SUP WORKFORCE 34:15D-21(a)(1)							1				
SUP WORKFORCE 34:15D-21(a)(2)					1		1				
SUP WORKFORCE 34:15D-21(a)(3)							1				
UNKNOWN											1

NJDHS:

TANF-AWEP					1		1				
21ST CENTURY					1						
DDD	1										
BOARD OF EDUCATION		1		1	1		1				
CORPORATE											

OTHER:

EVENSTART			1		1						
CONSULTANT REVENUE											
ENGLISH FOR THE FOREIGN BORN					1	1					
NJ STATE LIBRARY GRANT											
TUITION											

ATTACHMENT I

BUDGET LITERACY LAB

MIDDLESEX COUNTY ONE-STOP CAREER CENTER

PERTH AMBOY - 24% FUNDS

CATEGORY	QUANTITY		UNIT COST
STAFF			
INTERVIEWER	1		
TOTAL STAFF			
EQUIPMENT			
Dell Optiplex GX150	12		946
Cisco 2900XL Switch	2	675	
Cable Drops	12		300
Printer	2		500
Install T1/T3 Fiber Optic Line			
Internet Service FEE	12		450

TOTAL EQUIPMENT

II. FURNITURE

Work Stations	12	211
Desk Chairs	12	381
Chair Mats	12	35
Stands Two-Shelf	2	125
Large TV 27" w/ Wall Mount	1	1,000
VCR/DVD Combo	1	350
Black Board 48"x72"	1	250
Lab Supplies - Consumables		5,000
Signage		

TOTAL FURNITURE

TOTAL COSTS

**ATTACHMENT II
BUDGET LITERACY LAB
MIDDLESEX COUNTY ONE-STOP CAREER CENTER
NEW BRUNSWICK - 24% FUNDS**

CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT COST	TOTAL
STAFF			
Senior Interviewer			58,042
Interviewer			35,281
	TOTAL STAFF		93,323
EQUIPMENT			
Mini Tower Base Unit	2	1,000	2,000
Printer	1	500	500
Internet Access	12	450	5,400
	TOTAL EQUIPMENT		7,900
FURNITURE			
Chairs	7	382	2,674
Stands 2 shelf	1	125	125
27" Television with Wall Mount	1	1,000	1,000
VCR/DVD Combination Unit	1	350	350
Blackboard 48" X 72"	1	250	250
Lab Supplies/Consumables			5,000
Signage			500
	TOTAL FURNITURE		9,899
	TOTAL COSTS		111,12

**ATTACHMENT III
BUDGET
MIDDLESEX COUNTY COMMUNITY LI
AT ROOSEVELT - 28% F**

CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	TOTAL
STAFF			
Coordinator			52,200
Instructor			33,914
instructor			45,614
P/T Instructor (\$25/HR - 15HRS)			15,112
P/T Instructor (\$25/HR - 15HRS)			19,500
Teaching Assistant			36,570
Career Development Counselor			45,614
	TOTAL STAFF		248,524
EQUIPMENT			
Printers	2	500	1,000
LCD Projector	1	5,000	5,000
Scanner	1	250	250
Software			5,000

*Achieving Progress through Vision
An Update to the Strategic Plan*

Adult Literacy Plan

Telephone	6,00
Fax Machine	1,00
Copier	1,60
TOTAL EQUIPMENT	19,85
TOTAL CENTER	268,37
LEARNING DIFFERENCES ASSESSMENTS	21,12
TOTAL 28% FUNDS	289,49
ADMINISTRATION 7%	20,26
GRAND TOTAL	309,764

Section 5:

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Progress Chart

Goal #1: Establish One Stop services as an integrated and comprehensive system that streamlines service, establishes quality standards, is "open and accessible" and is linked to the community.

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Progress</i>	<i>Next steps</i>
<p>Develop a comprehensive One Stop Center, affiliate sites and resource sites as appropriate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ENNew Brunswick One Stop Center was established as a comprehensive One Stop Center. ENThe New Brunswick Center was renovated to promote ease of job seeker access and increased usage ENCreated a customer service (public access) area furnished with Internet access along with copiers, telephones and fax systems. ENTwo Perth Amboy partner offices in close proximity have developed a full range of services and operate as a comprehensive center to the degree possible. ENUpgraded technology at all sites. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ENDevelop criteria for certifying One Centers. ENDevelop a process for certification sites. ENExpand One Stop Career Center various One Stop Centers.
<p>Expand program services at One Stop Centers for job seekers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ENCreated a Resource Room with Internet access ENAdded a basic computer tutorial training program. ENAdded Career Beacon workshops. ENAdded Money Smart Training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ENDevelop a comprehensive intensification plan.
<p>Develop/enhance partnerships to support one stop system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ENIdentified initial partner roles and commitments to implement core services policies and procedures. ENDeveloped a Partner Resource Directory of the programs and services offered by the 19 Partners. ENExecuted MOU between 19 partners for One Stop System. ENEstablished referral system among New Brunswick and Perth Amboy anchor partners. ENJoined One Ease ELink collaborative. ENDeveloped a customer credo ENConducted monthly partner meetings ENHeld Partner Resource Day to help local agencies learn about the services one another provide. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ENRe-evaluate partner roles and responsibilities. ENIdentify additional multi-agency anchor partners. ENExpand number and type of One partners as appropriate.
<p>Engage in a comprehensive analysis of workforce processes by all partners and develop and implement an integrated process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ENConducted Process Mapping, a best business practices for core services. ENDeveloped a policy and procedure manual for core services to be used at all One Stop sites. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ENFully implement the policies and procedures established through process mapping. ENProcess map business services.

Goal #1: Establish One Stop services as an integrated and comprehensive system that streamlines services, establishes quality standards, is "open and accessible" and is linked to the community.

Strategy	Progress	Next steps
	<p>services to be used at all One Stop sites.</p> <p>Defined outcomes for core services.</p> <p>Teamwork of partners has been significantly enhanced.</p>	<p>Use Process Mapping framework and a Performance Management System</p>
<p>Conduct staff training.</p>	<p>Surveyed WIA partners to determine staff capacity building needs.</p> <p>Conducted training on new policies and procedures developed through process mapping.</p> <p>Provided training opportunities in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> OSOS CASAS ADA Performance measures Community resources PAR seminar Customer service FDIC-money smart program Career Beacon 	<p>Reassess and prioritize training needs</p> <p>Arrange for staff development opportunities</p>
<p>Develop and conduct marketing activities in support of the One Stop System.</p>	<p>Identified and secured the services of a professional marketing firm.</p> <p>Developed marketing plan for One Stop.</p> <p>Developed brochures for adult services.</p> <p>Developed brochures for youth services.</p> <p>Attended Job Fairs to promote services of One Stop</p>	<p>Develop a work plan for implementing marketing strategies.</p> <p>Implement additional marketing strategies appropriate.</p> <p>Prepare and distribute Annual Report</p> <p>Widely distribute marketing materials</p> <p>Develop Business Services Brochure</p>
<p>Measure customer satisfaction</p>	<p>Developed and conducted initial customer satisfaction survey.</p>	<p>Design an enhanced customer satisfaction measurement system keyed to customer transaction segments.</p> <p>Implement new system.</p>
<p>Monitor One Stop against performance standards</p>	<p>Draft standards have been developed.</p>	<p>Finalize One Stop performance standards</p> <p>Establish processes to measure performance against standards.</p>

Goal #1: Establish One Stop services as an integrated and comprehensive system that streamlines servi establishes quality standards, is "open and accessible" and is linked to the community.

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Progress</i>	<i>Next steps</i>
Evaluate performance against state negotiated levels	0 Data is being collected.	0 Review data to evaluate performe

Goal #2: Create a high degree of customer satisfaction among Middlesex County employers.		
<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Progress</i>	<i>Next step.</i>
Increase the knowledge and participation of the employer/business community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established the business services committee as a standing committee. Created a Web Site on the Workforce Investment Board Developed a draft marketing plan targeted to the business community. Conducted a Census Forum for the business community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a work plan to implement focused marketing strategies. Update website
Establish standards and common procedures (system-wide) in the delivery of One Stop business services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begun to process map employer services with on-site partners. Drafted survey to employers regarding their needs and expectations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct survey, analyze results to process mapping activities Survey similar businesses to determine appropriate benchmarks. Identify employer-desired metrics Develop finalized procedure for One Stop employer services. Train One Stop staff.
Develop a sector approach to working with local industry to improve the skills of the workforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruited WIB members from demand industries. Partnered with Mercer County to secure a \$3 million federal competitive HIB grant targeted to high technology firms. Individuals provided training through HIB grant. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create membership committee of future demand industry sectors Develop a strategy for workforce care sector. Develop a strategy for workforce workers
Develop curriculum benchmarked to employer standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designed a curriculum to train employees in customer service skills for small businesses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand customer service curriculum Integrate customer service curriculum into ongoing training programs as appropriate
Plan and develop WIB member ambassador program (train WIB members to promote workforce system services and goals to other members of the employer community).		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop plan and materials Sponsor training. Evaluate effectiveness.
Develop strategies that target county economic development priorities.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build partnerships with industry to assess sector skill needs. Develop plan for conducting workforce development with County Economic Development targeted to industry sectors.

Goal #3: Consolidate the fragmentation that presently exists among youth programs to develop an integrated network of youth programs and services so that youth have access to needed programs and services.

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Progress</i>	<i>Next step</i>
<p>Develop long- term, comprehensive youth strategic plan for at-risk youth.</p>	<p>EC Conducted a countywide assessment and analysis of youth services needs.</p> <p>ED Designed an interview guide for youth focus groups.</p> <p>EC Conducted youth focus groups in 5 high schools in the County as well as in the New Brunswick Teen Center and Juvenile Detention Center.</p> <p>EA Youth needs analysis was conducted.</p> <p>EA Needs assessment of youth in Juvenile Justice System was completed</p>	<p>ES Statistics and priority needs established.</p>
<p>Develop, analyze, publish and expand the inventory of youth services.</p>	<p>EA Youth services inventory taken.</p>	<p>ES Create an on-line youth directory partnership with Info Line.</p> <p>ES Enter youth program provide a database.</p> <p>ES Publicize youth inventory.</p>
<p>Complete consolidation of youth planning, policy and oversight process between the WIB's Youth Council and of the Middlesex County Council for Children's Services</p>	<p>EC Established Youth Investment Council (YIC) as the convener of a broad spectrum of youth serving agencies.</p> <p>EA Membership of Youth Investment Council includes members of Council on Children's Services.</p> <p>EC Conducted several joint planning activities.</p> <p>EA Plan and program data are shared on a regular basis between both councils.</p>	<p>ES Identify additional issues and councils can partner.</p>
<p>Create a continuum of services model that provides every youth accessing services through year round activities with counseling, case management and connection to ongoing programs and services.</p>	<p>ED Developed RFP for local youth services which included continuum of services model.</p>	
<p>Build the quality of local youth programs</p>	<p>ED Developed general youth services standards.</p> <p>EA Require youth to complete 20 hours per year of community service activities.</p>	<p>ES Monitor and refine youth services.</p> <p>ED Develop customer satisfaction youth programs.</p>

Goal #3: Consolidate the fragmentation that presently exists among youth programs to develop an integrated network of youth programs and services so that youth have access to needed programs and services.

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Progress</i>	<i>Next step</i>
Establish youth portfolios as a system wide tool.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopted Youth Portfolio system to reinforce individual youth accomplishments and facilitate interorganizational communications. Adopted standards for specific information that must be maintained in the portfolios. Required all youth services contractors to use the portfolio. Developed and distributed youth portfolio to contractors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand the youth portfolio s Integrate portfolio review into practices.
Develop youth assessment standards and protocols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopted a protocol requiring assessment of youth that includes assessing for basic skills and work readiness. The Youth Council is now stipulating that all youth providers under contract must use CASAS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train youth providers on use
Create Youth One Stop Career Centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed initial list of potential sites. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify sites for the establish locations for Youth One Stop C Identify mechanisms to raise the YIC and support the develop One Stop Centers. Establish standards for You Centers. Identify current programs ar should partner with Youth One services and <u>develop</u> linkages. Integrate Youth One Stop at existing One Stop Center. Evaluate Youth One Stop S areas for improvement.
Cultivate new youth initiatives to broaden the programs and services available to youth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established youth career awareness committee under the Youth Council. Conducted youth focus groups. Developed a plan for sponsoring a Youth Career Fair in late 2002. Youth Investment Council identified the School Counts Program as an important new initiative for Middlesex County. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify funding to support th Program. Develop strategies for includ experience and academicserv youth programs. Conduct a Youth Career Fa

Goal # 4: (*Expanded*): Focus on the full development of a comprehensive and integrated system in Middlesex County.

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Progress</i>	<i>Next steps</i>
<p>Assess and monitor local labor market trends; provide analysis to the workforce development system.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnered with United Way of Central Jersey to conduct a comprehensive needs analysis. State Labor Market Analyst presented local labor market information to Planning Committee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request additional pres periodically. Urge State to update its Information more frequently.
<p>Convene community workforce forums on specific topics.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One Stop Operations Committee supports monthly community speakers. Conducted forum on Census 2000 for businesses Conducted a Planning Forum on Literacy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct forum on Literacy Identify additional forum Conduct forum on Trans
<p>Review progress toward strategic plan and update Plan to reflect current needs and future directions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual reviews were conducted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to prepare and Analyze Strategic Plan and United Way COMPASS Study conducted. Continue to re-evaluate strategies every five years
<p>Increase financial resources to expand program services and support local area workforce development efforts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Began to investigate the potential for a 501(a) or 501(c)(3) status. Secured a \$212,600 JARC Transportation grant to transport low income individuals to employment. Secured WomenIn the 21st Century Grant for \$85,000 As noted earlier, secured a \$3 million training grant for high technology firms. Secured a \$300,000 literacy grant. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete research on 501(c)(3) status. Continue to respond to opportunities. Develop county- wide grant collaborative.

Goal # 4: (*Expanded*): Focus on the full development of a comprehensive and integrated system in Middlesex County.

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Progress</i>	<i>Next steps</i>
Establish WIB sign-off protocol for local plans and grant proposals requiring or seeking WIB support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Protocol has been developed and distributed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Evaluate effectiveness and revise.
Develop a community-wide plan to address youth and adult literacy needs. (former goal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Conducted an assessment of literacy needs. Surveyed literacy providers, education agencies, community and faith-based organizations and private business. ✓ Prioritized literacy service needs. ✓ Prepared a comprehensive literacy strategic plan that begins the process of creating a county-wide literacy system. ✓ Developed a Literacy Resource Directory. ✓ Developed a brochure to market literacy services. ✓ Identified obstacles to expanding literacy services, which were communicated to the State. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Develop a work plan to Literacy Strategic Plan. ✓ Develop a plan to evaluate effectiveness of literacy programs ✓ Develop methods and strategies to evaluate effectiveness of literacy programs. ✓ Institute professional development process for practitioners.
Develop a plan for establishment of full service literacy and training center.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Renovations for Middlesex County Community Learning Center at Roosevelt have begun. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Complete Middlesex County Community Learning Center renovations. ✓ Begin delivery of services in Fall 2002. ✓ Include Literacy Volunteer County in Center's service ✓ Develop a Recruitment Plan ✓ Develop a Marketing Plan for business.

Goal # 4: (*Expanded*): Focus on the full development of a comprehensive and integrated system in Middlesex County.

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Progress</i>	<i>Next steps</i>
<p>Increase literacy resources, services and programs for youth and adult literacy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Secured a \$300,000 literacy grant to increase services. ✓ Created a partnership with Literacy Volunteers to integrate their services into the literacy delivery system. ✓ Expanded ESL programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Establish resource labs Centers. ✓ Develop an assessment ✓ Develop workplace literacy targeted to specific growth clusters. ✓ Develop computer literacy ✓ Expand work readiness in local demand occupations
<p>Develop a plan to provide services to incumbent workers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The plan for the Middlesex County Community Learning Center at Roosevelt calls for conducting training targeted to those presently underemployed (incumbent) workers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Implement services directed to incumbent workers. ✓ Explore partnership with customized job training programs
<p>Continue regional planning workgroups, regional partners and staff capacity building with Quad</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ KMI project on utilities and health care industry is <u>in process</u> ✓ Quad staff development conducted on Assessment, Performance Measures, Customer Satisfaction. ✓ Workgroups on Forms, Testing & Assessment, Procurement, Capacity Building formed. ✓ Submitted Grant Application for H1B Health initiative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Continue to explore meeting information sharing with regional partners including economic data, regional activities, job fairs, and training efforts.

APPENDIX B

Memorandum of Understanding between

The Middlesex County
Workforce Investment Board

&

The Middlesex County Chief Elected Official

THE MIDDLESEX COUNTY WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

&

THE MIDDLESEX COUNTY CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIAL

Workforce Investment Board and Chief Elected Official

Memorandum of Understanding

This agreement entered into on this first day of July, 2002 between the County of Middlesex, a municipal corporation of the State of New Jersey located at JFK Square, in the city of New Brunswick, the County of Middlesex, state of New Jersey, herein after "CEO" and the Middlesex County Workforce Investment Board, a quasi-independent entity, created pursuant to the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, located at 506 Jersey Avenue, in the city of New Brunswick, County of Middlesex, State of New Jersey, herein after "WIB".

The purpose of this agreement is to set forth the role and responsibilities of both parties as it relates to the development, implementation and integration of a seamless workforce investment system for customers of Middlesex County.

The Parties to this agreement shall coordinate and perform the activities and services described herein within the scope of legislative requirements governing the parties' respective roles and responsibilities .

1. The parties have agreed that the Middlesex County Employment & Training Department (MCETD) shall provide the necessary staff to carry forth the policies, plan, and budget recommendations adopted by the Workforce Investment Board. Employees shall be entitled to the extent feasible to similar rights, benefits and privileges of other county employees.
2. The CEO shall be the grant recipient and the MCETD the fiscal agent for the receipt and ? disbursements of WIA grant funds.
3. The WIB/staff shall solicit and negotiate contracts and/or purchases.
4. The WIB shall provide the policymaking, planning and oversight in conjunction with the CEO.

5. The WIB and CEO shall mutually agree to select a One-Stop Operator.
6. The WIB, in conjunction with the MCETD, shall be responsible for developing systems, procedures and evaluation mechanisms including technological systems for the County Workforce system.
7. The WIB and CEO agree that WIA funds shall be utilized for any allowable authorized activity or expense.
8. The WIB/staff in agreement with the CEO shall negotiate MOU's with the partners and Consortium.
9. The WIB/staff shall also be responsible for coordinating audit resolution, incident reports, and overseeing the marketing/public relations activities.
10. The funds designated by the Governor, the Commissioner of Labor or their designee for WIA activities shall be provided to the CEO/MCETD and distributed in accordance with the needs of the strategic plan developed by the WIB and approved by the CEO.
11. The WIB and CEO shall negotiate mutual performance levels for the workforce investment system for presentation and approval by the Governor of the State of New Jersey.
12. The CEO and WIB shall receive a mutually agreed upon percent of WIA funds in order to fulfill their administrative obligations.
13. This agreement shall not be construed to limit, infringe or otherwise interfere with the WIB's or CEO's ability to exercise other options available under the WIA or the regulations.
14. The WIB will, whenever feasible, participate in regional activities or plans for labor market information, planning and delivery of services.
15. The WIB/staff, consistent with the WIA, shall identify eligible providers of youth activities, training services, and if necessary, intensive services.
16. The WIB may terminate in consultation with CEO any eligible provider(s) who fails to meet the eligibility criteria or performance standards, or is non-compliant with WIA requirements/regulations.
17. The WIB shall develop and coordinate economic development strategies and employer linkages to carry out the workforce investment activities.
18. The WIB in coordination with the CEO shall promote the participation of private sector employers in the countywide workforce investment system through intermediaries such as the One-Stop Operator in order to assist such employers in meeting their hiring needs.
19. This agreement cannot be assigned, and shall be subject to mutual modification or termination upon a 30 day prior written notice sent certified mail to other party's respective address.
20. This agreement shall be subject to renewal annually unless modified or terminated by mutual written agreement.

21. This document sets forth the complete agreement between the parties. Each party will be responsible for fulfilling its obligation under this agreement.
22. This agreement shall be interpreted in accordance with the laws of New Jersey or Federal law as applicable.
23. The parties shall mutually hold harmless, defend and indemnify each other , its Board, officials, employees, agents or volunteers from any and all claims for damages, personal injury, and property damages, including costs and attorney fees resulting in whole or in part from the parties, their Board, officials, employees, agents or volunteers, acts, omissions, or activities and/or lack of performance under this agreement.

This agreement shall be effective upon both parties having mutually executed this document. The individuals signing below have the authority to commit the party they represent to the terms of this MOU, and do so commit by signing.

ATTEST:

SIGNATURE:

Anna K. Lustenberg
WIB Chairperson

David B. Crabel, Director
Middlesex County Chief Elected Official

APPENDIX C

Memorandum of Understanding between

The Middlesex County
Workforce Investment Board

and

The One Stop System Partners

APPENDIX D

Customer Credo

(Job Seeker and Employer Customer Bill of Rights)

**MIDDLESEX COUNTY
ONE-STOP
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM**

CREDO

Members and Partners of the Middlesex County OneStop Workforce Development System believe that all our customers should be treated with dignity and respect.

CUSTOMERS HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

Know the name and role of the professional with whom they are dealing.

Speak with knowledgeable, concerned, professional staff to obtain complete, accurate information delivered in a clear, courteous manner.

Access One-Stop programs, services and activities in an uncomplicated expeditious manner.

Expect that information is fully available to partnering agencies and organizations to reduce duplication and to ensure that customers are not inconvenienced

Expect that all records and discussions pertaining to their situation will be treated confidentially by staff and will be shared only when needed.

Be informed promptly when a request for services cannot be met and be referred to an alternate appropriate entity, if possible.

Receive assistance in making informed decisions, making arrangements and scheduling appointments for programs, services and activities.

APPENDIX E

One Stop System Resource Chart

Brief Description/Area of Emphasis	Populations Served
Career Assessment Occupational Training Intensive Training	Economically Disadvantaged Over Age 18
Career Assessment Occupational Training Intensive Training	Unemployed due to layoff Displace homemaker Long Term Unemployed
Career Assessment Occupational Training Intensive Training	Economically Disadvantage Ages 14-21 In-school or out-of-school youth
The Unemployment Insurance trust fund, financed through payroll taxes, provides short-term financial protection for workers who are temporarily or permanently unemployed.	Unemployed/underemployed

Brief Description/Area of Emphasis	Populations Served
<p>The ES plays a critical role in One-Stop service delivery as the primary job matching and labor market resource for employers, UI claimants, job seekers as well as targeted groups, such as veterans.</p> <p>Some of the core services provided under ES include the following: orientations, work registration assessments, job search assistance, workshops, job development referral and placement, labor market info, career counseling, referral to training and other supportive/intensive services, outreach to employers, job listing services, followup with employers and job seekers, etc.</p>	<p>All job seekers All employers wishing to list job opening</p>
<p>The Rapid Response activities begin when news of a plant closure or mass layoff is received by the Dislocated Worker Unit through phone calls from affected companies, workers, organized labor, or any other source. The Response Team contacts the company within 48 hours, in a confidential manner, by telephone, to ascertain the validity of the information received and to offer services on unemployment insurance, reemployment programs, and retraining options. Pertinent information is obtained from the company including the type of business, permanent or temporary layoff, number of workers affected, and organized labor affiliations.</p>	<p>Displaced Workers</p>
<p>TAA is available to workers who lose their jobs or whose hours of work and wages are reduced as a result of increased imports. Under the TAA of 1974, as amended, workers whose employment is adversely affected by increased imports may apply for TAA. TAA includes a variety of benefits and reemployment services to help unemployed workers prepare for obtain suitable employment. Workers may be eligible for training, a job search allowance, a relocation allowance, and other reemployment services. Additionally, weekly trade readjustment allowances (TRA) may be payable to eligible workers following their exhaustion of unemployment benefits.</p>	<p>Dislocated Workers</p>

Brief Description/Area of Emphasis	Populations Served
<p>NAFTA is available to workers who lose their jobs as a result of North American or Mexican competition.</p> <p>NAFTA provides reemployment benefits which include classroom training, one-the-job training (OJT), job search allowances, relocation allowances, and reemployment assistance.</p>	<p>Dislocated workers</p>
<p>Middlesex County College (MCC) provides a variety of certificate and associate degree programs. With more than 550 courses in 80 different associate degree and certificate programs, there is a program that meets every career and educational goal. Some of the services provided include testing (interest/aptitude), career counseling, career workshops, eligibility assistance (veterans/financial aid), comprehensive and specialized assessments for learning disabilities, group counseling (resume building/motivational workshops, etc.), individual counseling/career planning, workplace training, adult education/literacy activities, customized training, employer outreach, employer/job listing, access to WNJPIN, followup, as well as many other services.</p>	<p>Need vocational/occupational training</p>
<p>The Adult Education and Literacy programs provide instructional programs and support services for adults and out-of-school youth, which enable them to acquire a high school diploma and/or the basic communication, computation and workplace readiness skills needed to obtain productive employment and contribute to their community as involved parents and active citizens.</p> <p>The following is a list of programs operated from the New Brunswick Adult Learning Center: Adult high school; Adult Basic Skills/GED/ESL, Evening School for Foreign Born (ESL/citizenship skills); NJ Youth Corps of Middlesex County; Work first NJ Job Search Assistance; Workfirst NJ Alternative Work Experience Program/Basic Skills/GED & ESL; Hire Attire Boutique & Men'sStore/Basic Skills for Retail Sales; Basic Skills/GED/ESL for the Workforce; Basic Skills for Culinary Arts, Project B.E.S.T. (Basic Educational Skills for Tomorrow); Project Access; and OneStop Career System</p>	<p>Adults & Out-of-School Youth Lacks high school diploma</p> <p>(Y</p>

Brief Description/Area of Emphasis	Populations Served
<p>The WDP is a state funded program that provides training grants and Additional Benefits during Training (ABT), if eligible. This program is for displaced workers who are eligible for unemployment and are in need of training in order to gainfully reemployed.</p> <p>Some of the services provided under WDP include counseling and customized training for up to two (2) years. Customized training includes basic skills remediation, ESL, and occupational training.</p>	<p>Dislocated Workers</p>
<p>The Welfare to Work (WTW) system is comprised of government agencies, educational institutions, faith and community based organizations (CBO), and for-profit vendors.</p> <p>The Middlesex County WTW plan establishes an accessible, integrated and effective system that provides a continuum of work activities and employability development services for all WFNJ participants. Collectively, they offer a wide range of services to help people make a transition from Welfare to Work to economic independence for TANF recipients.</p>	<p>The hardest to serve TANF recipients</p>
<p>Workfirst New Jersey (WFNJ) offers a countywide comprehensive and integrated employment and training program for public assistance recipients. WFNJ is comprised of education & vocational training programs, employment & job retention services & activities, and an enhanced benefits package for program participants including, but not limited to, child care, transportation, medical and training allowances, and post-WFNJ child care and Medicaid extensions.</p> <p>The BSS has direct responsibility for intake, orientation, case management and participant referrals services; the E&T Department is responsible for providing academic/vocational assessment & occupational training opportunities either directly or via subcontracts.</p> <p>The Middlesex County program will continue current Alternative Work Experience (AWE), Job Search Assistance Programs (JSAP).</p> <p>AWE programs will additionally integrate components for adult basic education, English as a second language (ESL), job search assistance and job retention training.</p>	<p>ABAWD/FS/GA recipients</p>

Brief Description/Area of Emphasis	Populations Served
<p>The Veterans Employment & Training program is responsible for the development of job and job training opportunities for veterans through contacts with employers, promotion and development of apprenticeship and other on-the-job training positions, and the development of entry level and career job opportunities. In addition, outreach activities are carried out to inform veterans of services available to them with CBO's, DVA, VSO, veteran groups, and separation centers, as appropriate. Other services include vocational guidance and counseling as well as case management.</p>	Veterans
<p>Some of the services offered to customers by a counselor include a vocational evaluation to help identify skills, abilities, interests and job goals; guidance, counseling, and referral for individual help with problems; vocational counseling and career planning; training to learn the skills needed to gain employment; job placement; follow-up services; and as well as a range of other services.</p>	Individuals with a disability except blind/visually impaired
<p>The Workforce 55+ Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) emphasizes three (3) primary mission goals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To provide income and gainful parttime subsidized work activities for low income older persons; 2. To demonstrate how low income older workers can help respond to the delivery of their communities service needs by working in community service jobs; 3. To transition job ready older persons into quality jobs in private, public, and non-profit sectors through training and job finding assistance. <p>Over the years the focus, of Workforce 55+ has shifted from income maintenance to training and transitioning program enrollees into unsubsidized jobs with private sector and/or public sector employers.</p>	55 years of age or older and meets the income eligibility
<p>A program offered through the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is Green Thumb. This program is designed to improve the level of coordination so that eligible older individuals, under both JTPA and Title V programs, is given the best opportunity to attain unsubsidized employment. Some of the continuum of services being offered are outreach to employers, recruitment,</p>	55 years of age or older Below a specific income level

assessment, individual service strategy, training, job search assistance, placement,

APPENDIX F

Core Services Flowchart

GREETER:

Provides warm welcome and guides Customer to their next step.

Direct Customer with a UI Problem or Concern to a UI Representative.

Direct Customer to a Scheduled Appointment with a Partner Agency Staff Person

ORIENTATION

?? Group or Individual based on Customer's preference.

PUBLIC ACCESS AREA

- ?? Computers with Internet Access.
- ?? Faxes, Copier, Phones.
- ?? Computer-based & Staff-Assisted Labor Market Information and other Information
- ?? Computer-based & Staff-Assisted Job Search.
- ?? Computer-based Assessment

RESOURCE AREA

- ?? Computers with Internet Access.
- ?? Computer-based, written & Staff-Assisted Labor Market Information and other Information
- ?? Computer-based, written & Staff-Assisted Job Search.
- ?? Computer-based & written Assessment

MIDDLESEX COUNTY ONE-STOP CENTER CORE SERVICES

WORKSHOP

- ?? Using WNJPIN and the Internet
- ?? Financial Management
- ?? Using Assessments

CAREER ASSESSMENT SEMINAR

- ?? Assist Customer's in determining if they need training.

INTENSIVE SERVICES EVALUATION

?? One-on-One with Public Access or Resource Area Staff.

Referred to Intensive Services