

MERCER COUNTY WIB PLANNING GUIDELINES
DRAFT

I. Labor Market Analysis

A. Mercer County's Regional and Local Economy

(1) According to data provided by the State, the unemployment population hardest hit in Mercer County are high school educated males (58.6% of April, 2009 UI claimants) ranging in age from 25-54 who worked in the following occupations: Professional and Business Services, Transportation and Material Moving, General Production, Management, Construction, Sales and Related, Building and Grounds and Food Preparation and Serving representing a total of 2,674 individuals.

(2) In order to assist this population in the most effective manner, the WIB has consulted *Real Time Jobs in Demand* (April, 2009) and has targeted the largest number of emerging trends and projected openings for Mercer County in Professional and Business Services that encompasses the following fields:

- Computer Support Specialists (620 average number of projected openings)
- Network and Computer Systems Administrators (470 average number of projected openings)
- Management Analysis (550 average number of projected openings)
- Supervisors and Managers of Retail Sales Workers (950 average number of projected openings)

(3) As cited above, the highest levels of unemployment in Mercer County is in the area of Professional and Business Services followed by Education and Health Services.

(4) Green jobs expected to be created or expanded in Mercer County includes the City of Trenton and its huge inventory of houses for rehab and new construction. Green jobs have been identified in the areas of environmental retrofitting, auditing, and weatherization. Opportunities also present for green job workers to be trained as cost estimators, truck drivers, computer technicians, manufacturing workers.

Using the data supplied by *Real Time Jobs in Demand*, the Mercer County WIB Director and One Stop Operator have held a series of meetings with WIB committees, the Mercer County Community College and Mercer County Technical School to formulate plans to provide training for our hardest hit populations. Through the use of UI data a large part of the planning process has been to discuss training curriculum for a range of training of skills levels.

(B) Mercer County's Labor Pool:

According to data that supplies information on gender, race and educational attainment, there are more unemployed males recorded in April, 2009 (which translates into a decrease from this time last year); unemployed females has risen by .07% while unemployed males dropped .07% for the same time period. For African Americans the data shows that overall this population has experienced a steady increase in unemployment since 2007 by 1.2%.

(C) Data Sources used to obtain labor market information includes *Real Time Jobs in Demand*, State Unemployment Data as well as research gathered by members of the WIB Youth Investment and Healthcare Committees.

II. ARRA Planning Process

(A) The groups and stakeholders that participated in the local planning process include Members of the WIB Youth Investment Council and Healthcare Committees. Planning meetings were also held with the President of Mercer County Community College and representatives, the Superintendent and representatives from the Mercer County Technical School and several WIB meetings.

(B) The local and regional planning processes and meetings consisted of the following:

- WIB Healthcare meetings on 3/17/09 and 4/20/09 updated on stimulus and discussed areas of healthcare with short training time frames as well as customized training for incumbent workers and OJT for dislocated workers (discussed ways OJT can be coupled with Governor's incentive for new hires);
- Youth Conference held on 1/29/09 hosted workshops in *Green Job Exploration*, *Health & Science*, and *Employer Expectations*;
- YIC meeting on 3/5/09 focused and planned presentations by YIC members regarding area opportunities in Science & Technology, Healthcare, Green Jobs and Construction; actual presentations took place on 3/25/09 by members;
- YIC meeting on 4/22/09 discussed update on stimulus and youth services proposal;
- 4/2/09 regional meeting with representatives from Monmouth, Middlesex, Mercer, Hunterdon and Ocean Counties on Bulk Training at Monmouth County One Stop to discuss positives/negatives of regional bulk training;
- 4/6/09 meeting with Superintendent of Mercer County Technical School, Virgen Velez and Beverly Mills regarding bulk training and possibilities through Tech School;
- 4/9/09 meeting with Provost of Mercer County Community College Kerney Campus, Virgen Velez and Beverly Mills regarding youth training under stimulus;
- 5/15/09 meeting with Mercer County Community College President, Donald Generals, V.P Academic Affairs, Elizabeth Muoio, Director Mercer County Economic Development, Virgen Velez and Beverly Mills to discuss bulk training.

- (C) Structures and processes discussed to support changing needs and economic trends include remediation assistance, especially for the lower skilled population. Initial testing will be performed by One Stop; further discussed at 4/6/09 meeting partnering with Literacy Volunteers of America to have space at the Technical School to assist with ESL and ABE. Technical School also discussed offering BOOST as part of the curriculum to assist with Healthcare and Medical terms along with life Skills/job readiness training required by all youth.

A. Goals:

Dislocated Workers:

- Expand employment opportunities in high labor demand areas
- Explore and expand employment opportunities in new technology and green occupations
- Expand training opportunities to increased number of customers
- Educate customers enabling them to make more informed career decisions
- Utilize enhanced assessment tools to provide customers more appropriate training and employment choices
- Strengthen linkages with key educational partners to enhance and expand training opportunities
- Strengthen linkages with business partners to enhance training opportunities via OJT

Low-income Adults

- Expand employment opportunities in high labor demand areas
- Explore and expand employment opportunities in new technology and green occupations
- Expand training opportunities to increased number of customers
- Educate customers enabling them to make more informed career decisions
- Provide basic and job readiness skills directly related to occupational skills
- Utilize enhanced assessment tools to provide customers more appropriate training and employment choices
- Strengthen linkages with key educational partners to enhance and expand training opportunities
- Strengthen linkages with business partners to enhance training opportunities via OJT

Youth

ARRA funds will be used primarily to provide summer employment opportunities for our young customers. For those served beyond this summer, the goals outlined for Adults and Dislocated Workers apply. Goals for those served in the summer component only include the following:

- Provide employment opportunities otherwise not available to our young customers
- Provide intensive job readiness training

- To provide youth (14-17) and young adults (18-24) with career awareness enabling them to make realistic career decisions
- To provide job readiness skills attainment enabling youth and young adults to acquire knowledge on how to successfully retain employment opportunities
- To provide young adults (18-24) with the life skills and occupational skills necessary to successfully transition into the workforce
- To provide youth and young adults with exposure to the world of work
- To provide youth and young adults with relevant valuable work experience
- To have youth view the One-Stop as a viable county resource for seeking future job search assistance
- To strengthen partnerships with community and faith-based organizations in Mercer County
- To strengthen the local economy by providing jobs

B. Re-tooling

To better meet the needs of our Business Partners, we have formed a Business Services Team consisting of One Stop State and County staff, and County Economic Development staff. The team will expand to include additional key partners to enhance its ability to outreach and have a better understanding of the needs of the business community. The team is developing a business service strategy to better serve the business community. Plan will include strategy to increase use of OJT, WOTC, and other available State/Local services and incentives as well as enhancing Positive Recruitments outreach and processes. The team will position itself as the One Stop Center for Employers, particularly with human resource managers and recruiting officers.

To better meet the needs of our Adult, Dislocated Workers, and Youth customers we will establish a working plan to meet the goals outlined in the “Goals” section above. We will utilize the enhanced technology available to us to increase customer awareness of the training and employment options available to making them creating a more informed and educated consumer of the One Stop system. We plan to implement the New Jersey Career Assistance Navigator (NJCAN) as an additional tool for this purpose. NJCAN is an Internet-based delivery system for accurate, comprehensive, current, and relevant occupational, post-secondary school and financial aid information. NJCAN contains the latest national, New Jersey, and local labor market data and projections.

It is designed to support lifelong career exploration, and career planning and decision-making through easy to use, straightforward search and sorting utilities, and an online portfolio for saving information from all system components. NJCAN also includes information on job interview preparation, resume and cover letter creation, job retention techniques, self-employment options, and military occupations.

C. New Projects and/or Expansions of Existing Projects

The Mercer One Stop plans to engage in several new projects and/or training initiatives with both existing as well as new partners. We are exploring the feasibility of creating new training in the following: Sterilization Certification which prepares individuals to obtain or retain employment in the sterilization of surgical equipment in hospitals and

off-site surgical units. New Jersey has recently imposed a requirement that all employees in this field must obtain certification in order to start or continue in this occupation. Construction Inspection – with the anticipated increase in road construction, including the NJ Turnpike expansion project, the need for road construction inspectors is expected to increase tremendously. Preliminary discussions have been held with the NJ Department of Transportation to address this need. We are exploring the feasibility of expanding our LPN (Licensed Practical Nursing) program with the Mercer County technical School to meet the shortage that still exists in Mercer County and surrounding areas. We are exploring a partnership with the Local 55 Laborers Union to provide weatherization and green construction training opportunities. To better meet the needs of our business partners (as outlined in Section B above), the One Stop Business Services Team is developing a plan to increase the use of OJT, WOTC, and other State/Local services and incentives available to the business community. Part of that plan includes strengthening local partners with the Chamber of Commerce and other economic development venues.

Program Planning for Dislocated Workers, Adult, Youth and Green Jobs:

Adult discussion with MCTS included offering training in the following areas:

- Health Technology (radiology, phlebotomy) in the allied health fields
- Plumbing
- Welding
- Masonry (consult with Bricklayers Union)
- Basic Electrical
- Sterilization Program (all personnel must be certified by August, 2009)
- Construction Inspection (collaboration with DOT to provide entry level training in asphalt testing)

Dislocated Worker discussion with MCCC included possible bulk training in credit and non-credit courses for in the following areas:

- Computer support, administration, engineering and programming,
- Basic entry level workplace, supervisory and management skill training,
- Certificate programs in CNA, Medical Coding & Billing, Dental & Pharmacy Tech,
- MCCC offered to host Job Fair(s) to market specifically to dislocated workers who are most likely unaware of training opportunities
- Invite employers from *Real Time Jobs in Demand* to a Career Fair at MCCC

Youth services will consist of the following through the One Stop:
(planning meeting dates and proposed youth activities described above)

D. It is our intent to ensure that all populations served under the various funding streams are provided the guidance and tools necessary for them to make informed decisions about their training and employment options. To serve the Adult population it has been our experience that “word of mouth” has been an effective method of attracting them as well as our partnerships with both Faith-based and community-based organizations. To serve the Dislocated Worker population, we have effective partnerships with both the Labor

Exchange and UI staff that provide us with the needed access. We will utilize UI data providing characteristics of claimants to help us target various populations for specific training opportunities i.e. claimants earning higher wages and/or possessing higher education levels, etc. We will also coordinate with the Professional Services Group co-located at our One Stop to outreach the higher skilled dislocated worker.

We will work closely with the One Stop Veterans Unit as well as the Mercer County Office of Veteran Services to outreach our veteran population. The Mercer County Board of Social Services (which administers the County’s public assistance programs) has a unit co-located at the One Stop which facilitates our reaching out to that population.

F. WIB will utilize all available resources to determine how best to meet the needs of our adults and dislocated workers. These resources include *Real Time Jobs in Demand*, UI claimants characteristic, in addition to input from our training counselors and employer partners.

- 1) Use of LWD bulk training – it is our intent to partner with LWD. We are exploring the specific training areas and our financial commitment.
- 2) Use of locally developed contracting – we are exploring the feasibility of developing training opportunities in the following: LPN, Sterilization Certificate, Road Construction Inspection, Intensive Job Readiness/Occupational Training for Adults
- 3) Use of ITA – it is our intent to continue offering customer choice and expanded training opportunities via ITAs
- 4) Use of OJT – it is our intent to intensify our outreach efforts to our business partners to increase the utilization of OJT and WOTC
- 5) Use of apprenticeships – need to explore this as we have not been very successful in the past

The projects/initiatives listed above and in Section C. New Projects and/or Expansion of Existing Projects are in the development stages. Additional details will be available in the final plan.

	April-June 2009	July-September 2009	October-December 2009	January-March 2010	April-June 2010	July-September 2010
# of Dislocated Workers Enrolled LWD Bulk Training		25	55	80	105	
# of Dislocated Workers Enrolled Local Classroom Industry Strategies		25	35	50	50	
# of Dislocated Workers Enrolled in ITAs		35	45	65	75	
# of Dislocated Workers Enrolled in OJT		2	10	15	20	
# of Dislocated Workers		0	0	0	0	

Enrolled in Apprenticeships						
# of Dislocated Workers Enrolled in Other Initiatives		0	0	0	0	

	April-June 2009	July-September 2009	October-December 2009	January-March 2010	April-June 2010	July-September 2010
# of Adults Enrolled LWD Bulk Training	0	15	35	50	60	
# of Adults Enrolled Local Classroom Industry Strategies		5	8	8	10	
# of Adults Enrolled in ITAs		10	25	35	35	
# of Dislocated Workers Enrolled in OJT	0	2	12	15	15	
# of Adults Enrolled in Apprenticeships		0	0	0	0	
# of Adults Enrolled		0	0	0	0	

Youth Priorities/Key Issues:

2. Goals for the Summer Program can be found under A. Goals.

3. 3 – 9 are outlined below:

Our ACES program provides the following benefits to Youth:

- Earn a paycheck
- Opportunity to learn different career options
- Opportunity to gain hands-on work experience
- Opportunity to learn necessary coping skills to successfully navigate everyday life situations
- Prepare for a future career
- Learn marketable skills
- Receive valuable feedback on work performance
- Learn about community resources
- Gain valuable skills necessary for academic and employment success

Projected Number of Individuals to be Served and Spending Plan for Funds

	April-June 2009	July-September, 2009	October-December, 2009	January-March, 2010
# of Youth Enrolled in Private Sector Employment and/or organized labor		0	0	0

# of Youth Enrolled in Summer Work Experience with not-for-profits, FBCO's government, etc.		450	475	500
# of Youth Enrolled in Academic Learning		250*	275*	275*
# of Youth Enrolled in LWD Bulk Contracting		0	5	10
# of Youth Enrolled in Local WIB Classroom/Industry-Based Training		0	5	10

*Youth enrolled in academic learning are included in work experience. Numbers are cumulative

Total Amount of Funds for Summer Youth	\$1,016,862
Total Amount to be Spent by September 30, 2009	892,880
Total Amount to be Spent After September 30, 2009	123,982

Population/Eligibility:

- Must be a Mercer County economically disadvantaged youth. Economically disadvantaged is defined as meeting 70% of Lower Living Standard
- Must have one or more barriers to employment i.e. school dropout, basic skills deficient (tests below 8th grade on standardized test), pregnant or parenting, physical, mental or learning disability, offender, or need additional help to complete an educational program or secure and retain employment (little or no previous work history, needs transportation to/from work, resides in an Abbott district, resides in public housing, etc.)
- Must be 14-24 years of age at time of application
- Must be U.S. citizen or legally eligible to work in the United States
- Must be able to work 20 hours or more a week (6-8 weeks)

Selection:

A Lottery System will be utilized to determine potential participants if number of applicants far exceed number of jobs available. Potential participants will be required to provide proof of household income, age, citizenship, residency, social security card, and Selective Service registration (if applicable) to determine eligibility

Recruitment included the distribution of flyers & applications to One Stop partners including county high schools, community agencies, Faith-based organizations, local churches, government buildings, and neighborhood centers. Members of the Youth team made specific recruitment visits to the local schools (during lunchtimes) with the highest concentration of potentially eligible in school youth. Applications were also available at

the One Stop, and several Career Day events. Several articles were published in the local newspaper announcing these jobs opportunities.

Program Components:

- Youth 14-17 year old will be placed at a community/faith based agency or governmental agency for work experience and attend a weekly job readiness/life skills workshop. Youth will work 25-30 hours per week and attend the workshop 3 hours per week. Youth will earn \$7.25 per hour. Key components of the job readiness/life skills instruction may include: goal setting, job search skills, career exploration, image/attitude, time management, teamwork/leadership, communication, and decision making. Expected outcomes include attainment of a Job Readiness Certificate and return to school. This component is expected to operate 6-8 weeks beginning July 6, 2009.
- Young Adults 18-24 year old will be placed at a community/faith based agency or governmental agency for work experience for ½ day and attend job readiness, life skills, and occupational skills exploration for the other ½ day. Youth will earn at least \$7.50 per hour. Expected outcomes include attainment of a Job Readiness Certificate, return to school (to complete high school, GED or on to college), enter occupational training, or full time employment. This component is expected to operate 6-12 weeks beginning July 6, 2009.
- Ongoing One Stop Support – the Mercer One Stop Youth Team will provide ongoing support both to the youth and the worksite.

Green Training

- Within the next few months, WIB members are in the planning stages of hosting a roundtable discussion in collaboration with MCCC for members of Mercer County's green industry. Purpose is to assess training needs as well as current and future job opportunities;
- Partner with Isles and Local 55 Laborers Union on opportunities in green jobs in environmental retrofitting and green construction;
- Though not part of stimulus funding, Mercer County is part of the regional REDI grant which will recruit, prepare and train qualified candidates to fill green jobs. Mercer County will continue to work with NJ's Energy Master Plan. Through this plan the WIB will continually assess emerging types of green jobs in Mercer and work with our Community College and/or Technical School to provide the appropriate training. Within five years, it is predicted opportunities will present in areas such as weatherization, home improvement retrofit training, insulation installation, HVAC installation and maintenance training, energy auditing and rating;
- Mercer WIB plans to work closely with the County College and Technical School and will strongly promote apprenticeships and OJT's in the areas mentioned above.

(no projected numbers currently for green jobs, will have available in final report)

III. Staffing

No extra staffing; only during summer.

IV. Capacity Building

WIB has restructured One Stop Committee comprised of a small select group of private sector members to provide oversight. Committee met with SETC Acting Director, Robin Widing in March, 2009 and received a briefing. Members are aware of oversight responsibilities and monitoring under stimulus.

V. Transparency/Reporting

See above – periodic reports that are mandated by the State will be furnished to the One Stop Oversight Committee.