

Burlington County
Workforce Investment System Plan

Needs of the Business Customer

**Description of how the Workforce Needs of Employers will be Addressed by the
Burlington County One-Stop Career Center System**

There are two broad categories of One-Stop Career Center customers identified, job seekers and employers. Within these two categories, customers can have very different needs. The Burlington County One-Stop Career Center System will meet these varying needs through an individualized approach to each customer. The bottom line for the employer customer is having access to employees that have the skills and abilities that meet their needs and will assure the prosperity of their business.

Whether an employer or a job seeker accesses services electronically or through contacting One-Stop Career Center staff, their needs will be accommodated as efficiently as possible. Employer customers in particular will receive services tailored to meet their individual needs. The Burlington County One-Stop Career Center has instituted a “pledge” of service for businesses. This pledge is disseminated to all business customers and is used to ensure customer satisfaction (Attachment D).

The Burlington County One-Stop Career Center System offers a variety of services to employers through a seamless approach. Through the One-Stop System, employers will have a single point of contact to provide information about current and future skills needed by their workers and to list job openings. They will benefit from a single system for finding job-ready skilled workers who meet their needs.

The Internet has changed the way everyone conducts business, from delivering information and services electronically, to performing financial and other transaction-based functions. The One-Stop is no exception. The Internet is a dynamic, cost-effective tool for communicating valuable One-Stop service information to job seekers and employers, as well as, to share information between partner agencies.

The Burlington County One-Stop system must actively engage in an employer outreach effort to increase the use of the One-Stop Career Center System and the valuable components of the Workforce New Jersey Public Information Network (WNJPIN). Marketing and education revolving around getting employers to use the One-Stop Career Center System and the Internet more often as their primary resource for meeting their business needs is a priority.

Convenience, ease, cost benefiting and the accessibility to quality employees will be the primary selling points to encourage local employers and human resource personnel to outreach to the local One-Stop Career Center System to fill openings in their companies. The employer customer must be made aware that most job seekers in New Jersey now post their resumes on the WNJPIN Internet site (this includes all people receiving public assistance). Businesses also need to realize that all types of employees, from entry level to executive level can be easily found via the One-Stop Career Center System and WNJPIN.

The One-Stop, will provide employers with the skilled workers they need and develop a high quality workforce that can adequately respond to employers needs. In turn, new employers will be attracted to the Burlington County area thus benefiting the Burlington County economy.

Burlington County's One-Stop Career Centers are committed to linking employers to qualified job applicants by offering the following standard services:

- Access to services regarding placement, recruitment, and other labor exchange services;
- Access to customized screening and referral of qualified applicants;
- Access to job listings, job orders, and aid in preparing job orders;
- Access to customized training services
- Access to America's Job Bank to post job vacancies;
- Access to America's Talent Bank for searching and screening resumes which can then be put through a computerized skills matching process;
- Information about tax incentives for hiring public assistance recipients, displaced workers, etc.;
- Access to an assessment of skills of current workers;
- Labor Market Information;
- Access to transportation information;
- New Jersey Occupational information;
- Information about unemployment and disability;
- Information about the Professional Services Group and other county or state business organizations.

Burlington County has expanded its focus on services provided to employers through the use of Wagner Peyser funds, which would include:

- Employer seminars and conferences;
- Interviewing facilities available at the One-Stop Career Center;
- Job fairs.

Employer relations' representatives will work closely with the area businesses to identify employment needs. Employers who are seeking workers can contact the One-Stop Career Center and connect with the representatives to place a job order or they may want direction on how to enter the job order directly into WNJPIN. An employment counselor of the One-Stop Career Center will also be able to advise the employer of current labor market trends or conditions, as well as, explain the services available through the system.

Together, the employment counselor and the employer will determine the minimum qualifications needed for the job, job specifications including wage, shift, work hours, job site location and minimum qualifications and directly record them into the job order bank. The One-Stop Career Center employment counselor can facilitate a job match at the time of entry of the job order. Customers meeting the qualifications are identified for immediate referral or further screening upon the employers' request. If there is an

inadequate number of “matches”, the employment counselor will work with the employer to modify the job specifications to identify more potential referrals.

The Burlington County One-Stop System will be geared to better understand targeted businesses and industries in order to refer appropriate applicants, who may potentially be successful in filling their needs while at the same time, utilizing workforce information and labor market information to educate employers on workforce issues.

Upon request, individual pre-screening, mass recruitment, and job fairs will be made available to employers through the One-Stop Career Center. The One-Stop will provide quality, accessible and comprehensive employment related services that will respond to the needs of the employers.

Employers need timely responses, qualified applicants, personalized service and direct access to applicants. If the employer would rather work on a self-service basis, the staff of the One-Stop will be able to educate the employer on how to conduct their own search for applicants.

Goals of the One-Stop Career Center System to foster strong relationships with the Business Community:

1. Set a standard for a high quality workforce by being the connection point for employers, job seekers and the community;
2. Every job seeker will be carefully screened before getting a job referral. All efforts and available information will be used to assure that the most qualified people are matched with and referred to an employer;
3. Foster long term business relationships with the employers. Follow-up with the employer customers will be conducted to insure that their needs have been met;
4. Personalized service will be provided to all employer customers to assure successful relationships with the employers. The One-Stop Career Center staff is responsible for facilitating and fostering the relationship with the employers and will be eager to provide the best possible service;
5. If possible, the employer customer will work with the same person from job order to hire. It will be critical for the staff to build strong relationships with the employers in order to effectively market and recruit appropriate applicants as well as recruit new business customers;

Within the Burlington County One-Stop Career Center facility, a Business resource library will be designed to meet the employment needs of employers. The resource library will be furnished with computer resources, labor market information resources, and economic development information. This area will be staffed with a knowledgeable representative to assist the employers in reserving interview rooms, posting job openings, and accessing the appropriate labor market information and obtaining or accessing other information or supportive services they may need.

An effective system will provide many benefits to businesses. These benefits would include access to more, qualified job seekers, cost of using services is reduced in terms of

time spent, fewer duplicate contacts made for the purpose of job development, employers will be educated on the wide array of services, and the realization that they only need to use one process to access job seekers.

Small and Midsize Businesses that do not have the appropriate training resources on site, will be provided access to training videos and other resources they may need regarding wage and hour laws, OSHA standards, Equal Opportunity information. If necessary, information can be directed through workshops or through printed mediums. In the future, the Workforce Investment Board's communications task force will be developing "Tool Kits" for businesses. The tool kits, as well as, the already published Resource Guide for businesses will be available through our WEB site or at any Burlington County One-Stop Career Center System site.

Description of how Work-Based Learning Programs (including school-to-careers initiatives) Customized Training Grants, On-the-Job Training and Work Experience Training will be used to Support Employers' Needs and the Needs of the Workforce

Improving the quality of the workforce is the underlying priority of the Burlington County Workforce Investment Board. In today's strong economy, employers face worker shortages, which range from unskilled to highly skilled positions. The Burlington County One-Stop Career Center System needs to be a system that can connect with and keep pace with the workforce needs of the County.

As certain workforce/employer needs are targeted, the Burlington County One-Stop System will identify the programs and services to support the requirements of the employer customer and the workforce. Employer participation will be aggressively sought as a key element in determining the direction of work-based learning programs provided through initiatives such as School-to-Careers and Welfare-to-Work. Work-based learning programs play a crucial role in the preparation of the workforce of the future. It is critical that employers can envision that their support and involvement in these programs will benefit their ability to meet their workforce needs.

Employers are the primary source for identifying the tasks and skills needed to perform in today's workplace. They will be encouraged to provide work-based learning opportunities and mentors through local school-to-career initiatives as well as other initiatives deemed appropriate by the Youth Investment Council. Within the School-to-Careers initiatives (student internships, youth apprenticeship programs etc.), it is imperative that the students' activities at the work site are reinforced through classroom instruction. Therefore, a system will also be developed to actively engage the employers to work with teachers to produce school curricula that reflect workplace demands.

In keeping with the work first approach, Burlington County Welfare-to-Work programs attempt to move individuals into employment quickly and then utilize work-based learning as an employment development tool. These along with post placement retention efforts give clients the opportunity to learn skills on the job while meeting the demand side needs of the employers.

Customized training grants made available through the New Jersey Department of Labor will be marketed to area employers to meet their needs to stay competitive and viable in a changing economy. These grants will support employers and the overall workforce by enhancing the creation or retention of high wage, high skill jobs and raising productivity. To a large extent, the employer customer designs training programs arising out of this venue. The training can take the form of on-the-job training and/or classroom training to assist in building a highly skilled, productive, globally competitive workforce.

Over the next five years, Burlington County will expand its effort to support the training of recently hired and existing personnel, while continuing to develop new methods of extending the benefits of customized training to more employers.

On-the-Job training will be an option for the employer who would like to provide knowledge or skills essential to the full and adequate performance of a job in their particular industry. The employer will be provided up to 50% reimbursement of the wage rate of the On-the-Job training client to cover the extraordinary cost of providing the training on site, and the additional supervision needed related to the training. Of course this option will be limited in duration as appropriate to the occupation for which the client is being trained.

On-the-Job training may also be utilized for already employed workers when it is deemed that he or she is not earning a self-sufficient wage as determined by the Workforce Investment Board. This will be available to incumbent workers only if the On-the-Job training relates to the introduction of new technologies, the introduction to new production or service procedures, upgrading to new jobs that require additional skills, workplace literacy or other appropriate purposes that have been identified by the Workforce Investment Board.

On-the-Job training services will be solicited through following up on Economic Development contacts and through the employers requesting the services through the One-Stop Career Center System. Companies will be evaluated on their capability to provide appropriate employment opportunities for the County and its job seekers. Jobs must meet Burlington County wage rates and skill level requirements and must provide long-term employment for the client.

A system has been developed that effectively matches job-seeking individuals with the job opportunities that best fit their educational and skill profile. The participants who will be recommended to fill On-the-Job training openings will possess job ready skills so that the employer customer can concentrate on the critical aspects of the workplace training. These services will be marketed to the employers of Burlington County to help them retain qualified personnel through entry level and skill upgrade training.

Another viable activity to support the needs of Burlington County employers to be used is work experience training. Work Experience training is an activity designed to help job seekers develop positive work habits and brush up on work skills while working short term with a public or private non-profit agency. Work Experience will also be made

available to customers who have not obtained unsubsidized work following the completion of core services but who are not deemed in need of intensive or training services. This support program ensures that an employer receives the appropriate candidate for the job openings they wish to fill.

A work experience program assists the customers in determining whether the occupation they are considering realistically matches their interests and abilities. This in turn will reduce the costs to employers by reducing the time and money spent on training an employee who is not job ready nor appropriate for that particular job.

Description of how Incumbent Worker Training, Post Employment Training or Job Retention Training Activities will be used to Support Business

The larger challenge that the Burlington County Workforce Investment Board has faced is the building of a human resource base for the local economy, integrating and coordinating the diverse education, recruitment, hiring, labor exchange, training and retraining efforts of institutions and employers in the community. The Burlington County Workforce Investment Board has been working toward facilitating the creation and maintenance of an effective employment and training system, which encourages the collaboration between employers and the critical entities in the workforce development system. Thus enhancing Burlington County's long-term economic success.

Historically much of the investment in company specific training has occurred outside the parameters of the public delivery systems for education and workforce development. The Burlington County Workforce Investment Board will encourage employers to work with the Burlington County One-Stop Career Center System in developing employer sponsored training programs at their sites so that training is directly related their specific needs and the needs of their incumbent workers.

In today's economy, employers recognize the importance of enhancing worker skills to maintain productivity and economic competitiveness. Traditionally, the responsibility of training existing workers has rested with the employers and the workers themselves. The Burlington County Workforce Investment Board through the One-Stop Career Center System along with its business customers will develop strategies to expand and strengthen training opportunities to improve worker's basic and occupational skills and prevent worker dislocation.

Since the majority of employers in Burlington County are small businesses, there is great importance in addressing their training needs. However, most employers are reluctant to provide training to their existing employees because they fear that once trained they will leave for higher paying jobs with other companies within the same industry. Although this may occur on an occasional basis, we must convince employers that training their workers leads to knowledgeable workers with the skills needed to not only improve the companies productiveness, but the ability to foster improved living standards for their workers.

Through incumbent worker training, employers can train existing workers for new jobs or new job duties. They may want to train people who already are in their employment that need to upgrade their skills to advance or to retain their existing job. Persons who are employed and expected to retain jobs with their current employer, are trained so that their skills are upgraded, preventing a possible future layoff, and making their employer more productive and more likely to remain in business, producing economic gain for the county and the state.

The One-Stop Career Center System of Burlington County can facilitate successful incumbent worker training through providing a link to teaching resources and/or computer based training materials for employers who lack the internal resources for training. The One-Stop System can also provide linkages with other employers that may have similar needs to defray the potential costs of industry specific specialized training.

Through the One-Stop Career Center System, the employers will have access to updated, reliable information about all vocational, secondary, post-secondary, two and four year colleges and universities and both public and private training institutions that employers can access to address their workforce needs. This will ensure that employers can make informed decisions about which training providers to select based upon their track record as documented through the availability of local provider performance information.

Several options of training to address varying needs, can be accessed through the Burlington County One-Stop Career Center System:

- Technical training needs;
- Basic skills improvement;
- Industry specific skill training;
- Employee retention services;
- Leading edge technology training;
- High-end skill development.

Post employment services including the support of continuing education and individualized counseling will be made available to the business customer. If the need arises, short-term intervention training and intensive services will be made available to businesses whose industry incurs cyclical demands (e.g. casino skills, nurses aid training, food preparation trades, office skill upgrading, etc.). The core services which are offered through the One-Stop Career Center System will also be offered as post employment services in order to keep the job seeking customer attached to the labor market as long as possible. The Burlington County Workforce Investment Board feels that utilizing the core services, as post employment services will help realize the ultimate goal of life long learning and the building of self-sufficiency.

Business customers want to find qualified employees quickly and cost efficiently. Through the One-Stop Career Center services and post employment services, businesses can be assured that unqualified candidates are filtered out, the candidates they receive through the Burlington County One-Stop Career Center System are “certified” job ready and/or job skilled and the candidates are already screened for work ethics and

interpersonal skills. Businesses can also feel comfortable in knowing that they will receive good service and timely follow up from a single point of contact who will take the time to visit and understand their particular business, and if necessary they will have easy access to public tax and training incentives.