



**John J. Heldrich Center for  
Workforce Development**

# **Evaluation of One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey**

May 2016



**EVALUATION REPORT**

## About the Heldrich Center

The John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University is a research and policy organization devoted to strengthening New Jersey's and the nation's workforce during a time of global economic change. The Heldrich Center researches and puts to work strategies that increase workers' skills and employability, strengthen the ability of companies to compete, create jobs where they are needed, and improve the quality and performance of the workforce development system. Since 1997, the Heldrich Center has experienced rapid growth, working with federal and state government partners, Fortune 100 companies, and major foundations. The Center embodies its slogan "Solutions at Work" by teaming with partners and clients to translate cutting-edge research and analysis into practices and programs that companies, unions, schools, community-based organizations, and government officials can leverage to strengthen the nation's workforce. The Center's projects are grounded in a core set of research priorities:

- > Disability Employment
- > Education and Training
- > U.S. Labor Market and Industry
- > Unemployment and Reemployment
- > Work Trends
- > Workforce Policy and Practice

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# Executive Summary

**O**ne-Stop Career Centers are a fundamental component of New Jersey's workforce development services. Each year, the One-Stops serve more than 260,000 job seekers and thousands of employers.

The One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey, like those across the nation, are comprised of collaborations of different agencies that provide services to people seeking jobs, career advice, and support for education and training. These agencies also provide services to employers. Different funding streams support the various agencies and programs, and each funding stream has its own rules, regulations, performance measures, and expectations. Each agency has its own history, culture, and way of doing things. Melding these different programs and agencies together into a unified approach to customers is never easy.

In advance of the impending implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJLWD), in partnership with the State Employment and Training Commission (SETC), commissioned the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University to conduct an independent evaluation of New Jersey's One-Stop Career Centers. NJLWD and SETC tasked the Heldrich Center with identifying areas where NJLWD could improve its operations and processes to better serve job seekers. Timed with the start of WIOA implementation, this fresh look at many aspects of One-Stop Career Center operations offers the opportunity for New Jersey to build a One-Stop Career Center system for the 21st century.

As requested by NJLWD, the evaluation of One-Stop Career Centers undertaken by the Heldrich Center included four distinct activities:

- > Process evaluation of the New Jersey One-Stop Career Centers,
- > Customer satisfaction survey,

- > Quasi-experimental evaluation of occupational skills training, and
- > Data summary of the characteristics of workforce customers served.

## Organizational Context of the One-Stop Career Centers

A fundamental component of the state's workforce development services, One-Stop Career Centers serve more than 260,000 job seekers a year and thousands of employers. By virtue of the requirements of federal legislation, however, the One-Stops operate in a complex organizational environment. The One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey are comprised of collaborations between NJLWD and multiple local government agencies, including the county (or city) Workforce Investment Boards (commonly known as WIBs), county social services agencies, and local education department personnel, among others, all providing services to people seeking jobs, career advice, and support for education and training. The One-Stops also serve employers. Separate funding streams support each of the various agencies and programs they deliver; each funding stream has its own rules, regulations, performance measures, and expectations; and each agency has its own history, culture, and way of doing things. Melding these different programs and agencies together into a unified approach to customers presents a challenge to every One-Stop Career Center in the nation. NJLWD commissioned this evaluation to identify how it could provide the best possible services to job seekers within this context.

## Evaluation Findings and Recommendations

This evaluation established that NJLWD has built a solid foundation upon which to build a modern One-Stop Career Center system. The data analysis presented in Chapter 3 demonstrates that NJLWD's

occupational training programs help job seekers earn more, while the qualitative research summarized in Chapter 1 shows that the Jersey Job Clubs are providing meaningful assistance to job seekers to assist them in reconnecting to the labor market. This executive summary presents the major areas for improvement that emerged from the Heldrich Center's evaluation activities. Detailed findings and recommendations are included in Chapters 1 through 4 of this report and the Appendix.

**Area for Improvement #1. New Jersey is a particularly diverse state and One-Stop Career Center operations must be flexible enough to respond to and reflect this diversity.**

Some One-Stop Career Centers serve predominantly inner-city residents, while others serve suburban and rural populations. There is diversity of language, culture, size of the public assistance population, types of available education and training services, and economic sectors. The data summary of characteristics of workforce customers illustrates that customers in the different workforce areas vary quite a bit by race and ethnicity, and somewhat by educational level and age group. The data show that there is little variation within each workforce area over time, meaning that each tends to serve a relatively stable mix of customers from year to year.

The implication of this diversity is that each One-Stop needs a slightly different approach and mix of services in order to appropriately serve its customer population. One-Stop Career Centers also need to integrate further into their communities in order to take advantage of resources in the community and to offer resources to the community.

To some extent, this type of diversity of One-Stop operation is already occurring, but it could be significantly enhanced. Because the One-Stop Career Center system is comprised of both statewide and local partners, the challenge is to balance a degree of statewide consistency with flexibility in order to respond to local needs in a way that engages **all** of the partners in each One-Stop Career Center in a local planning process and appropriately utilizes the strengths of each partner.

**Area for Improvement #2. Because support for training and education is highly valued by job seekers and contributes to higher employment rates and earnings, the processes used for such approval must be updated and streamlined.**

In focus groups, job seekers said that they highly value the training assistance and tuition waivers secured through the One-Stop Career Centers. In the customer satisfaction survey, those who had received training reported significantly higher levels of satisfaction with the services they received than people who had received only basic services. The quasi-experimental evaluation of WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker training programs showed that participation in training resulted in higher post-training employment rates and earnings compared to matched comparison groups.

Clearly, support for education and training has value and is an important component of the One-Stop Career Centers. The One-Stop Career Center process evaluation found that the current processes utilized by job seekers to secure this support are often time-consuming and cumbersome, and sometimes not informed by the latest available information on employer demand. Further, there is sometimes a “disconnect” within One-Stops between staff who handle occupational training tuition support approval and those who handle “tuition waivers” at state institutions of higher education, even though both support additional education and training for job seekers. These approval processes need to be integrated and streamlined at each One-Stop Center. Also, up-to-date labor market data and information about employer hiring requirements must be used to inform training and education decisions made by job seekers.

**Area for Improvement #3. Although job seekers displayed moderate levels of satisfaction with the services they received from One-Stop Career Centers and the evaluation team encountered many competent and dedicated workforce professionals at the One-Stops, there is room for improvement in customer service.**

Customer satisfaction with One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey is roughly on par with customer satisfaction with government agencies nationally, although customer satisfaction varied significantly

among workforce areas. And while many of those who had exited from services expressed strong positive opinions about their One-Stop experiences, a smaller, though sizable, proportion expressed extremely negative opinions about their One-Stop experiences. In conducting focus groups and observing One-Stop staff, Heldrich Center researchers encountered many state and local staff who were dedicated to helping the unemployed obtain skills and return to work.

The One-Stop process evaluation found that job seeker experiences with the reception function were mixed, at best, with many people staffing the reception function lacking both sufficient knowledge of services and customer service skills. Many customers also complained that accessing services was not easy or straightforward, and a number said that their calls were not returned or that there was little follow-up. Some One-Stops need more bilingual staff capacity.

**Area for Improvement #4. Technology systems are increasingly important to accessing services, but there are issues with some systems. Also, many job seekers are not computer-savvy.**

Job seekers and One-Stop staff offered mixed reviews of Jobs4Jersey, the main system used for matching job seekers to jobs. It appears to work better for higher-skilled and highly computer-literate job seekers. It seems to be less helpful for non-computer-literate and non-English-speaking job seekers, and in some areas this represents a sizable proportion of the population. Also, the Unemployment Insurance claims technology system was the target of many customer complaints.

A related issue is that computer literacy in general is an essential skill for almost all jobs, and the One-Stops have very limited capacity to equip non-computer-literate job seekers with basic computer skills. This is an area that needs attention.

**Area for Improvement #5. In terms of both employer and job seeker services, Talent Networks hold promise as a sector-based approach, but need to be integrated further into the One-Stop Centers.**

Some One-Stop Centers have closer relationships than others with the Talent Networks. One-Stop staff and managers reported that both the effectiveness of Talent Networks and the applicability to a particular local area varies. The state should consider infusing the Talent Network or sector approach even further into One-Stop Center operations in areas where a particular sector is strong.

**Area for Improvement #6. There are issues with staffing, staff allocations, and staff development that need to be addressed at almost every One-Stop Career Center.**

Job seekers who participated in focus groups were generally very positive about their interactions with state and county staff, especially their counselors. However, managers and staff at many centers reported being so understaffed that they can barely accomplish mandatory requirements, and said that there is little time for individualized services, which job seekers value highly. Other managers and staff reported that staff vacancies are going unfilled. These staff reported that it is not clear to them either how NJLWD staffing allocations are made among the One-Stops or how staffing decisions are made by local One-Stop operators. In the context of declining federal allocations for workforce services, many of these complaints are understandable. At other One-Stops, however, staff indicated that they were not overworked but were, in fact, underutilized.

It is also not clear how staff time is actually utilized at many One-Stop Centers. Many staff tend to be busy in the morning but less so in the afternoon. Many job seekers schedule but do not show up for individual appointments with staff. There is a need to track how staff time is used with an eye toward providing more individualized services.

It also appears that staff development has received little attention in the past several years. It should be a priority going forward. NJLWD should undertake a full staffing review to ensure that staff are allocated across the state in a manner that most benefits job seekers.

**Area for Improvement #7. As resource constraints limit the ability to provide individualized services, Jersey Job Clubs hold a high degree of promise, but their effectiveness depends on the staff member leading the sessions and best practices need to be shared throughout the state.**

NJLWD's primary group service is the Jersey Job Clubs, which bring together a number of job seekers into a classroom setting and provide them with instruction and materials on various job search topics, including résumé development, interviewing, and creating a LinkedIn page. In focus groups, job seekers at many One-Stops were extremely positive about the quality of the Jersey Job Clubs and the Jersey Job Club staff person. At some One-Stops, however, job seeker reactions were less positive. Jersey Job Clubs have the potential to be an effective service (and in some locations they already are an effective service) in helping the unemployed return to work, but some Jersey Job Club leaders require additional training and the best practices from the most effective Jersey Job Clubs need to be shared widely across all One-Stops in the state.

**Area for Improvement #8. Although agencies are physically housed in the same building at many One-Stop Career Centers across the state, the advantages of co-location are not being fully realized in terms of coordination and integration of services.**

Programs tend to operate parallel to each other, rather than in a coordinated fashion. Even common functions, such as reception, assistance to job seekers in the public access resource area, and business services, are often operated separately.

While the extent of this issue varies by One-Stop Center, in most cases, each agency manager supervises his/her own staff with minimal collaboration with other agencies. In a few One-Stops visited, there appeared to be close cooperation, but this was the exception rather than the rule.

As a result of this parallel approach, it appeared that staff at the One-Stops do not always understand the job functions of the other agencies on site. Job seekers in some focus groups noted that staff of the different agencies do not seem to communicate with each other.

## Conclusion

As NJLWD moves to create a redesigned, modern One-Stop Career Center system for New Jersey, it has the opportunity to lead a system that is customer-focused and responsive to the needs of local communities. This evaluation demonstrates that NJLWD already possesses a number of strengths, notably its occupational skills training programs and the Jersey Job Clubs, upon which it can build this system. A redesigned system can take advantage of available technology and equip job seekers with the basic skills they need to be successful. It can leverage the strengths and talents of the multi-agency career center workforce by sharing many currently implemented best practices statewide.

# Chapter 1

## One-Stop Career Center Process Evaluation

by

Ronnie Kauder

William F. Mabe Jr., Ph.D.

Scott Powell, Ph.D.

Alex Ruder, Ph.D.

Maria Heidkamp

Ian Myre



### Introduction

The Request for Proposals (RFP) issued by the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJLWD) included an evaluation of One-Stop Career Center processes. One-Stop Career Centers are a fundamental component of the state's workforce development services. Each year, the One-Stops serve more than 260,000 job seekers and thousands of employers.

This process evaluation is well timed, as the state is currently implementing the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and has constructed a collaborative planning process that includes a fresh look at many aspects of One-Stop Career Center operations. In the RFP issued for this evaluation, the state acknowledged that the general structure of the One-Stop Career Centers and the services they provide had not changed significantly in more than a decade. This is an opportunity, as the RFP noted, "to create the OSCC system of the 21st century." Management in every One-Stop Career Center visited mentioned the current WIOA planning process, and had high hopes for moving the system forward under WIOA.

The One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey, like those across the nation, are comprised of collaborations of different agencies that provide services to people seeking jobs, career advice, and support for education and training. These agencies also provide services to employers. Different funding streams support the various agencies and programs, and each funding stream has its own rules, regulations, and performance measures and expectations. Each agency has its own history, culture, and way of doing things. Melding these different programs and agencies together into a unified approach to customers is never easy.

New Jersey is a particularly diverse state, and the One-Stops reflect this diversity. Some serve predominantly inner-city residents, while others serve suburban and rural populations. There is diversity in language, culture, size of public assistance population, types of available education and training services, and economic sectors.

The primary goal of this evaluation was to assess job seeker and employer customer experiences in the state's One-Stop Career Centers. While the findings and recommendations are statewide in nature, there was considerable variation among the One-Stop Centers.

### Research Questions

The Heldrich Center customized a number of key questions for each party that would be interviewed in order to define answers to the following broader research questions:

1. What are the primary reasons that job seekers visit the One-Stop Centers?
2. How are the facilities themselves, and how easy are they to access?
3. How do the customers feel about the services that are provided and about how they are treated by staff?
4. What is the division of labor between state and local staff, and how does that division of labor influence their activities?
5. How are the different statewide initiatives (e.g., Jobs4Jersey, Jersey Job Clubs, Talent Networks) being implemented and received at the One-Stop Career Centers?
6. How do customers access support for training and education?
7. Do the One-Stop Career Centers tailor their services to meet the specific needs of job seekers in their communities?
8. Do the staff at the One-Stop Career Centers have the resources needed to do their jobs effectively and efficiently?

9. How integrated are the services and staff at the One-Stop Career Centers?
10. How do the One-Stop Career Centers determine whether their services are effective?

## Background on Legislation, Terminology, and Responsible Agencies

Since 1998, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) has been the principal federal law governing investment in the nation's workforce development system. Under WIA, the governors designated local workforce areas, and local Workforce Investment Boards (WIB) were established in partnership with the business community to support the local workforce development system. Services in each WIB area were delivered through One-Stop Career Centers (or simply, One-Stops), which were designed to provide job seekers with universal access to workforce services integrated across multiple agencies. State employees, supported by the Wagner-Peyser Act of 1933, delivered "employment services" and were co-located in the One-Stops alongside local (county or city) employees who were responsible for dispensing WIA funds to help job seekers obtain job training. In 2014, the United States updated its workforce legislation and passed WIOA to consolidate the workforce development system.

The state is divided into 17 local workforce areas, also referred to as WIBs. Each WIB has one or more One-Stops. This report refers to the state staff working in the One-Stops as "employment services" (ES) staff and local employees as "WIA staff" or "WIA counselors." Also co-located at many One-Stops are personnel from the New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) who assist individuals with disabilities in returning to work. In addition to staff who provide workforce development services, some One-Stops house staff supporting the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program. They assist the unemployed with their UI claims. Because the aim of WIA was to integrate employment and training services, the One-Stops serve clients supported by a variety of

funding streams besides WIA. The One-Stops support clients of three social services programs: the nation's largest social welfare program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly "Food Stamps"; and a state-funded program that dispenses cash assistance to adults without dependent children, the General Assistance (GA) program.

## Research Methods

The site visits to the One-Stops were the cornerstone of the research on One-Stop Career Center processes.

### Method of Selection of One-Stop Career Center to be Visited

The Heldrich Center worked with NJLWD to identify the One-Stop locations where the site visits would take place. Site visit selection proceeded as a two-step process, with the Heldrich Center identifying a set of nine workforce areas that would be relatively representative of the state's 17 workforce areas, and NJLWD, using its knowledge of the local One-Stop Career Centers, selecting the specific One-Stops in those nine WIBs for the Heldrich Center to visit.

This section describes the Heldrich Center's approach to selecting the WIBs where the site visits would take place. To select a sample of WIBs most representative of the full population of New Jersey WIBs, Center researchers identified WIBs that varied in terms of: geography and local labor market (north, central, south), urban, rural, and suburban; pre-enrollment earnings of customers served by each WIB; and demographics. Center researchers also sought to include WIBs of different sizes, as measured by the number of customers served. Heldrich Center researchers used population density data from the U.S. Census, employment services data from New Jersey's America's One-Stop Operating System (AOSOS) database, and New Jersey UI Wage Record data to compare workforce areas in terms of rural-urban, earnings, and demograph-



## Evaluation of One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey

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ics. Based on this analysis, the Heldrich Center identified the following nine WIBs as the preferred site visit locations.

### North

- > Morris-Sussex-Warren - similar demographics and pre-enrollment wages compared to Greater Raritan (representing Somerset and Hunterdon Counties) as well as Monmouth.
- > Hudson - serves largest percent of Hispanic customers of any WIB. It also serves fewer customers than many WIBs.
- > Newark - serves the largest African-American population of any WIB and is also a city WIB as opposed to a county WIB.

### Central

- > Union - has a somewhat even racial distribution and similar employment outcomes to Ocean and Burlington.
- > Mercer - includes Trenton and its selection helps to ensure sufficient representation of urban workforce areas.
- > Middlesex - has the largest percent Asian population and a fairly even racial distribution.

### South

- > Camden - includes the city of Camden and was included to obtain sufficient urban representation.
- > Atlantic - was selected to include the tourism industry and because of (at the time) the impending casino closures.
- > Cumberland-Salem - is a second rural WIB (in addition to parts of Morris-Sussex-Warren) to ensure that rural areas are represented in the study.

## Site Visits

Teams from the Heldrich Center visited the selected One-Stop Career Centers in the northern and central parts of New Jersey; teams from the Walter Rand Institute for Public Affairs from Rutgers-Camden visited centers in the southern part of the state. All visits were conducted during February and March 2015.

During the course of these visits, the research teams conducted the following activities:

- > **Interviews** with the NJLWD manager for the center, the workforce area manager for the center, and the WIB director for the workforce area in which the One-Stop was located. The purpose of these interviews was to determine their roles within the One-Stop system, and invite their opinions on the services provided to job seekers and employers.
- > **Focus groups with frontline staff members.** An average of eight staff members participated in each focus group. The purpose of these focus groups was to understand the responsibilities of staff and the services they provide. The focus groups were also used to measure how well staff understood the roles and responsibilities of their co-workers, and how integrated the everyday operations of the centers appeared to be.
- > **Focus groups with job seekers.** The research team also conducted in-person focus groups with job seekers, who participated voluntarily. There were usually 10 job seekers per focus group. Each job seeker was paid \$20 for his/her participation. The job seekers in focus groups were invited to participate by staff, who were asked to find people who had utilized a variety of different services. It should be noted that a few of the job seekers in the focus groups were participants in either the Community Work Experience Program (CWEP) or the Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP), and were carrying out their work assignments at the One-Stops. The purpose of these focus groups was to understand how job seekers learned about the One-Stop Centers, the ser-

VICES they used, and their opinions about the services and staff.

### Program Description

One-Stop Career Centers provide a variety of employment and training-related services to people seeking employment, training, unemployment benefits, and public assistance. They also provide services to area businesses. The services offered by One-Stop Career Centers are similar across the state. These services include:

- > Job search assistance primarily but not exclusively provided by NJLWD staff. The services include the Jobs4Jersey website and job matching tool, Jersey Job Club (JJC) activities, workshops for unemployment benefits recipients, job fairs and “positive recruitments,” and one-on-one job search assistance for job seekers. Some local workforce areas provide additional job search assistance.
- > Training assistance for job seekers interested in occupational training or further academic education. Assistance with occupational training is normally primarily provided by local staff funded through WIA Title I (soon to be WIOA). Assistance with tuition waivers for courses at state higher education institutions may be provided either by NJLWD staff or WIA staff.
- > Assistance to customers applying for unemployment benefits or needing help troubleshooting claims, provided by staff of NJLWD’s Division of Unemployment Insurance.
- > Job search, compliance, and case management activities related to GA and SNAP, provided by NJLWD staff.
- > Computer-assisted training in the on-site Learning Link, which offers instruction in English-as-a-Second Language (ESL), computer literacy, and basic math and reading literacy. This is a joint effort of the local workforce area and NJLWD.

- > Public access resource area with computers, telephones, printers, copiers, and other resources to help job seekers with their job and training searches, and with applying for unemployment benefits.
- > Staff fully dedicated to serving high-need veterans. Job seekers are screened for veteran status and referred to these staff if they meet the high-need criteria.
- > Business services to help employers with their recruitment and training needs. This is carried out by NJLWD staff and, in a number of cases, by local WIB staff, workforce area staff, or contractors.

The overall goal for One-Stop Career Centers is to create a unified, customer-friendly, high-performing system that responds to the needs of the local community.

This report presents the findings and recommendations of the Heldrich Center’s review of the One-Stop Career system in New Jersey.

### Findings

The findings are divided into the following topics:

- > Job seeker customer flow
  - Why people visit One-Stop Centers in New Jersey
  - Reception and initial assessment/triage
  - Jersey Job Club
  - Learning Link
  - Talent Networks
  - Access to training and tuition waivers
  - Extent of individualized services

- Use of labor market information
- Responsiveness to needs of customers in the local area
- > One-Stop Career Center facilities
- > Staff and staffing
- > Roles and responsibilities of One-Stop partners/ service integration/One-Stop management and partner relationships
- > Technology systems
- > Business services

## Job Seeker Customer Flow

### Why People Visit One-Stop Centers in New Jersey

**Finding #1. The majority of job seekers who visit the One-Stop Career Centers go there for the first time because they are required to do so.**

Based on interviews and focus groups, it appears that the initial visit for most job seekers who visit a One-Stop Center is the result of a requirement to show up. Estimates varied from 40% to 75%, but in focus groups with One-Stop staff most said at least half. Some are unemployment benefits recipients who must attend Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment (REA) or Project Reemployment Opportunities Systems (PROS) programs as a condition of continued eligibility for benefits. Others are applying for or complying with work requirements under GA, TANF, or SNAP.

**Finding #2. Of those customers who come in voluntarily, many appear to do so because they want to file for unemployment benefits or have other related UI-related issues. As the UI presence in One-Stop Centers diminishes, there will likely be a reduction in this foot traffic.**

Not all One-Stop Centers have a UI staff presence, so the volume of people visiting for this reason varied depending on whether UI staff were co-located at the One-Stop. Those who are there to file for benefits are normally directed by staff to use the phone system because the claims “go through” as soon as the call is finished. Customers also have the option of filing a claim online, but there are no staff to assist job seekers in doing this, and staff reported that there is a waiting period of one to two days before the claim is reviewed and approved centrally.

A number of job seekers who participated in focus groups said they felt the need to speak to a UI staff member in person because the website was ambiguous or did not answer their questions or they could not reach someone on the phone.

Managers and staff who were interviewed reported that the UI presence in One-Stop Centers will diminish further, and that in some cases customers will have to travel some distance for this service. If fewer One-Stops have a UI presence, then they will likely receive less walk-in traffic. This may reduce the number of customers that the One-Stops serve.

**Finding #3. Job seekers visit One-Stop Centers looking for a new career or training, to use the public access resource area, to attend job fairs or “positive recruitments,” or to see agencies such as Vocational Rehabilitation or other on-site partners.**

In the job seeker focus groups, walk-in customers said that they learned about the One-Stop Center through personal research (including online), referral from a friend or family member, while registering for UI, or they were referred by another organization, such as a nonprofit, community college, former employer, or veterans’ affairs organization. Some had been laid off before and knew about the center from a previous experience.

**Finding #4. There is limited outreach to non-mandatory customers about services.**

Throughout the state, very little is being done to bring in non-mandatory customers. Managers and staff felt that eliminating in-person reemployment

orientations has meant that many people who need services from the One-Stop do not learn about them and are “left out in the cold.” Apparently, the reemployment orientation function has moved to the online Jobs4Jersey, but staff feel that the online orientation is often either skipped or does not register with job seekers.

Some WIA managers mentioned that job seeker volume was down and that they were having trouble spending their WIA Adult money. They believed that this was related to the end of the reemployment orientations, which served as a source of job seeker traffic.

Some areas have special outreach programs for the formerly incarcerated, youth, veterans, and others. In some places, staff mentioned different types of advertisements (posters, radio ads, etc.) but only one job seeker out of 83 who participated in focus groups mentioned any sort of ad.

Even though information on the One-Stops is available online, job seekers reported that it was difficult to find out what services were available to them, or determine what they had to do to see a counselor. Some UI claimants said they would like to have known about the services earlier in their unemployment periods.

Staff in some centers called their services the “best kept secret around.”

### Reception and Initial Assessment/Triage

#### **Finding #5. Job seeker experiences with the reception function were mixed, at best.**

In two centers visited, job seekers uniformly found the reception staff to be patient, courteous, readily accessible, and helpful. They said that these staff knew how to deal with angry people and were always polite and helpful.

There were mixed reviews and many complaints in all of the other centers. In four centers, job seekers said that some staff were rude and lacked customer service skills. In several centers, job seekers said that it was difficult to access services if one did not know what they wanted. In other centers,

job seekers reported that reception was extremely bureaucratic or confusing, or that reception staff gave incorrect or incomplete information. In some centers, there were both positive and negative reviews of reception, depending on who was staffing the function at the time the job seeker visited.

In many centers, participants on work assignments through CWEP or SCSEP staff the reception function completely or partially. Although these CWEP and SCSEP participants may do their best to help customers, and some are bilingual, it appears that they do not understand all of the agencies and programs in the One-Stop Centers and are not trained to understand customer needs and direct customers to the most appropriate services. Also, many do not have well-developed customer service skills. In job seeker focus groups, customers expressed that the lack of knowledge among the reception staff and lack of follow-up after leaving their contact information made it more difficult for them to access services. Also indicative of the poor customer service skills among intake staff were customer complaints, both in focus groups as well as in written comments in the customer satisfaction survey, of rudeness on the part of intake staff. To the extent that CWEP and SCSEP participants have less-developed soft skills than ES or local staff, they may lack the ability to effectively serve customers who are facing significant life challenges and may be highly distressed.

#### **Finding #6. Accessing services is not easy or straightforward in many centers.**

Job seekers who were required to attend REA or PROS or other workshops seemed to understand what the One-Stops have to offer, what services are available, and what they need to do to access these services.

Job seekers who visit voluntarily had different experiences. Some centers that are still conducting reemployment orientations refer such customers to these sessions, which are held on a regular basis and serve as a group introduction to what the center has to offer. Most centers are no longer conducting these group sessions, and seem to be under the impression that they should no longer have such sessions.

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Job seekers in several centers where reemployment orientations are not held said that the key to getting good service was to get beyond reception and see a counselor. There was a feeling that it was difficult to access services if you didn't know what you wanted or exactly what to request. In one center, a job seeker said, "You have to ask to see someone in the back," meaning a counselor, a sentiment that was echoed in other centers. It is not clear whether there really is a triage or assessment function at the point of entry.

In the customer satisfaction survey, exiters were asked to express in their own words their thoughts about the services they received. A number of respondents (all of whom had exited services and so had successfully received some level of assistance) indicated that they faced problems with leaving messages and One-Stop staff not returning their calls. It is impossible to know the extent to which a lack of follow-up with walk-in customers affected the extent of the services those individuals received.

### **Finding #7. Job seekers appreciate the resources available at the One-Stops.**

Job seekers mentioned the computers, phones, fax machines, copiers, printers, and other resources of the public access resource area as positive resources for supporting their job search.

### **Jersey Job Club**

### **Finding #8. In almost all of the centers visited, job seekers rated the JJC's very highly and saw it as important and a great resource. Job seekers found the workshops and support to be very helpful. This appears to be a good use of staff time.**

Job seekers in many focus groups shared positive comments regarding the JJC's, noting that the classes and workshops were very useful. They praised both the skill-building aspects of the workshops (résumés, interviewing, networking, using LinkedIn) and the support from both peers and staff coordinators. In all centers visited, the JJC coordinator was a NJLWD staff member. In some centers, other staff conduct some of the workshops.

While the JJC's have a set of materials for coordinators to use, the JJC structure has also allowed many centers to consolidate workshops or other activities they may have been conducting before under this umbrella. It appears that the effectiveness of the JJC's is highly dependent on the quality of the JJC coordinator and the workshops, activities, and materials.

Some innovative JJC practices include:

- > A drop-in "chat session" that functions as an ongoing support group.
- > Preparation of written job search materials that participants can take home with them.
- > An emphasis on how to best use social networking sites, especially LinkedIn, in job search.
- > Videotaped interview practice, with critique.

In one or two centers, it appeared that the JJC was operating differently than in the rest of the One-Stops, or was not seen in as positive a light.

The JJC's are the means by which the One-Stops connect with the Talent Networks.

### **Learning Link**

### **Finding #9. Both job seekers and staff viewed the Learning Link positively.**

The Learning Link, a computer lab with software to help job seekers improve their reading, math, English language, and computer skills, is an important component of every One-Stop Center in New Jersey. An instructor funded through the local workforce area and a NJLWD counselor staff it. One staff member called the Learning Link the "sweet spot" of her center, as it is the only place where NJLWD and WIA staff work hand in hand.



### Talent Networks

#### **Finding #10. One-Stop managers and staff expressed mixed feelings about the Talent Networks.**

Opinions of the Talent Networks varied across One-Stops as well as across Talent Network sectors. Many expressed that the effectiveness of a particular Talent Network depended on the quality of the Talent Network coordinator and the applicability of a sector to the customer population and the local labor market. Some questioned whether the Talent Networks have returned sufficient value for the amount invested in them.

### Access to Training and Tuition Waivers

#### **Finding #11. Job seekers highly value the training assistance and tuition waivers secured through the One-Stop Centers. In every job seeker focus group, this was mentioned as the best or one of the best services offered by the One-Stops.**

Although this assistance was greatly appreciated by job seekers, there were complaints of delays throughout the process. Some job seekers felt they had to “jump through hoops for no apparent reason” in order to get the training that they wanted.

#### **Finding #12. The process to get into occupational training involves multiple steps and is often time-consuming. In most centers, the sequence is approximately as follows:**

- > The first step in the process is a training orientation. This is either done on site in groups with the help of a staff member, or in some cases online (known as a “Career Beacon” orientation). These orientations help job seekers understand what types of occupations they can receive training for and allow them to start thinking about what career they want to pursue. In some centers, individuals must wait a month or more for a spot in a training orientation session.
- > From there, job seekers who do not have at least 60 college credits take the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE). This test specifically

assesses job seekers’ math, English language, and reading comprehension skills to determine if they are at a level necessary for the training in which they are interested.

- > Job seekers who do not score well enough on the TABE are directed to the Learning Link, which offers courses in math, English, and reading that are designed to bring job seekers up to the required knowledge level to proceed to occupational training.
- > Once a job seeker passes the TABE (or has it waived due to college credits), he/she can schedule an appointment to see a counselor (normally a WIA staff person) one on one. There are often delays in seeing a counselor.
- > The counselor meets with the job seeker and helps to create an individual development plan. The purpose of this plan is to assist job seekers in determining what career pathway they want to pursue, and what they need to do in order to reach that goal. Through this process, job seekers start narrowing down their career options. It is the counselor’s goal to steer job seekers in the right direction so that they end up choosing an occupation that is in demand in the area.
- > Counselors use a state list of in-demand occupations as well as other sources of labor market information to determine if a job seeker would be likely to successfully find employment in a certain occupation.
- > Job seekers research approved training programs through the NJTOPPS website and may also visit the training institutions in which they are interested.
- > After selecting a training program, job seekers request training approval. Once this is received, they can begin training. There were some delays at this stage, including some instances in which funds were no longer available by the time job seekers had their programs approved.

**Finding #13. Job seekers usually choose training programs based on cost, location, interest, and familiarity with the field.**

At numerous One-Stops, job seekers stated that the financial cost of programs was the primary factor when it came to selecting a program. Job seekers understood that the maximum grant that they could get was \$4,000, so they consistently reported only seriously considering programs that were in that price range so that they wouldn't have to pay anything out of pocket. Some job seekers favored programs that were less expensive over programs that offered exactly what they wanted, but at a higher price. Many job seekers chose training programs that were easy to get to or close to home. Job seekers also mentioned that they would choose a program or an occupation due to familiarity with or previous experience in a certain field.

**Finding #14. Some job seekers who had been referred to training expressed that One-Stop staff were not fully aware of the hiring requirements for entry-level positions.**

A number of job seekers in the focus groups mentioned that after completing training and receiving an industry-recognized credential, they still were not able to get a job in fields that they were told were "in demand." A few job seekers said employers told them that the jobs they were applying for required two to three years of experience.

It is possible that the job market is over-saturated in certain areas that are popular with participants, and that employers are becoming more selective.

**Finding #15. A number of job seekers in the focus groups had received tuition waivers for courses at public New Jersey postsecondary institutions.**

In most but not all cases, NJLWD staff handled this process. It seems that tuition waivers are available only during the late enrollment period. If job seekers wish to register for the class at the beginning of the registration period, they have to pay for the program out of pocket. From interviews with staff, it appears that some New Jersey postsecondary institutions are more liberal with tuition waivers than others.

### Extent of Individualized Services

**Finding #16. Most one-on-one assistance appears to be related to occupational training or the tuition waiver process.**

As described earlier, the process of securing training or tuition waivers always involves individualized meetings with a staff member, usually a counselor. This interaction may include meaningful career counseling, but often involves little more than filling out required forms and ensuring that people are qualified to participate in training programs.

**Finding #17. One-on-one assistance with job search varies, mostly depending on NJLWD staffing levels.**

Staff in every center believed that customers greatly benefit from one-on-one job search assistance. In a few centers, NJLWD staff offer such assistance. In many centers, however, there appeared to be little staff time available for this type of service. When it does occur, individualized job search assistance helps job seekers better utilize the Jobs4Jersey/On Ramp resource, develop a résumé, and develop a job search plan.

In some centers, individualized job search assistance is provided to customers in the public access resource area.

**Finding #18. Individualized assistance is highly valued by job seekers and centers might be able to do more to satisfy this need.**

Customers rated individualized assistance very high in the customer satisfaction survey conducted for this evaluation.

Discussions with One-Stop staff and administrators revealed that many job seekers miss scheduled appointments, especially with WIA counselors. This situation offers an opportunity to at least provide additional one-on-one assistance to customers in the resource area. At the very least, One-Stop Centers should track the number of no-shows for these individual appointments to determine how staff time might be utilized in other ways.

### Use of Labor Market Information

**Finding #19. Staff members utilize different forms of labor market information when helping job seekers choose a training program.**

The primary use of labor market information within the One-Stops is NJLWD's list of in-demand occupations, which staff use in connection with the training approval process.

Some staff and managers mentioned that this list has not been updated since 2011 and may not reflect the current job market. Some managers and staff were aware that the state's in-demand occupations list is only to be used as a starting point when approving training programs. Job seekers can still pursue training for an occupation that is not on the list if they or the staff they are working with can show that the occupation is in demand in the local market. Staff usually determine this by using information from the Talent Networks, job fairs, a "top 50 jobs" list from labor market analysts, and the New Jersey Career Assistance Navigator, an online resource that presents current national, New Jersey, and local labor market information.

**Finding #20. One-Stop Career Center staff also use information provided by the Talent Networks and labor market analysts.**

Representatives of the Talent Networks made arrangements through the JJC coordinator at each center to visit and make presentations to both staff and job seekers. There were many positive comments about these presentations.

Also, one WIB director was very positive about the regional labor market information analyst assigned to the area and has gotten valuable information for use in strategic planning.

### Responsiveness to Needs of Customers in the Local Area

**Finding #21. There is limited flexibility for the One-Stop Centers to tailor services to the needs of customers in the local workforce areas.**

Staff and managers at many centers indicated that one of the major challenges in their areas is

the large number of high-need job seekers. Many of those accessing services from these One-Stop Centers, often in urban areas, have a high school education or less, few job skills, limited English language skills, and inadequate computer literacy. Some have histories with the criminal justice system. The One-Stops in these areas feel they are only able to address these issues in a limited way. Some centers have few bilingual staff and a very small ESL and computer literacy capacity. These are issues, as many of the job search and training resources are online, but many job seekers do not know how to use a computer.

The managers of different agencies have different levels of authority and report into different structures. The local One-Stop operator managers appear to have more autonomy than the NJLWD-ES managers, who seem to have to check with "Trenton" for even the smallest issues. The NJLWD-ES managers have no authority over the NJLWD-UI supervisors, who report separately to "Trenton." These structural issues limit what can be accomplished in terms of local planning and responsiveness to local needs

### One-Stop Career Center Facilities

**Finding #22. Most One-Stop Center locations are convenient and easy to access.**

Most of the One-Stop Centers visited were in locations that were convenient to public transportation. However, one or two centers were in physical locations that are not easy — or are virtually impossible — for people to reach by public transportation, reducing ease of access for people without cars.

**Finding #23. The quality of facilities varies across the state.**

Some of the centers visited were relatively new, clean, and bright. Others were older and had a tired, cluttered appearance. Some were crowded or had poor building layouts. One center had virtually no windows or natural light and was called a "cave" by one of the managers interviewed. In two areas visited, the WIB directors interviewed men-



tioned that they would like the One-Stop Center to move to more suitable facilities, and that they are currently exploring this possibility.

**Finding #24. The organization of most One-Stop Centers is practical but the centers have a bureaucratic feel and style. In centers with a UI presence, the UI setup is especially so, with customers, seated in chairs lined up in rows, waiting for their numbers to be called.**

In centers with a lot of job seeker traffic — usually those with large public assistance populations — there were lines out the door in the morning or at the beginning of the month.

**Finding #25. The extent of partner co-location in One-Stop Centers varies dramatically across the state.**

One center visited was comprised entirely of local workforce area staff and had no NJLWD staff presence. Another One-Stop Center had only one or two local workforce area staff on site and all the rest were NJLWD staff, while the rest of the local workforce area staff were stationed in another One-Stop Center.

Some centers have a UI presence while others do not. Many centers have DVRS on site. One center visited was also co-located with the “to-work” staff of the local social services agency. Some centers have other programs on site, such as the SCSEP or prisoner reentry programs.

Having all or most services available in a single location is more convenient for customers and makes it easier to coordinate and integrate services. Co-location is a necessary ingredient in a unified One-Stop system, but does not by itself bring about coordinated services to individuals.

## Staff and Staffing

**Finding #26. Job seekers who participated in focus groups were generally very positive about their interactions with staff, especially their counselors. Almost all said they would recommend the One-Stop Center to a friend or relative.**

Job seekers in many of the focus groups said that staff are professional, patient, and helpful. A number said that they had good relationships with counselors, and felt that the staff cared about them. Complaints about rudeness or lack of customer service skills tended to focus on reception and UI staff, and in one case, security guards.

**Finding #27. In most of the centers visited, managers and staff complained about understaffing and unfilled vacancies of NJLWD-ES staff.**

Several NJLWD-ES managers said that their staffing had been cut by more than 50% over the past 5 to 10 years, often accomplished by not refilling the positions of people who retired. It is not clear how staff allocations are made statewide by NJLWD to the local One-Stop Centers, or between the field operations and the central office. Staff in some centers appear to struggle just to keep up with required activities. There were also some managers and supervisory staff in “acting” positions.

These reported staffing changes largely parallel the reductions in federal funding that have supported workforce programs. Between FY 2001 and FY 2013, funding for WIA Title I, for example, has declined 43% (U.S. Department of Labor, 2016).

Findings from the staff survey conducted as part of this evaluation support this finding. In response to the statement, “Our OSCC has an adequate number of staff to meet the needs of our business and job seeker customers,” the mean response was 2.7, and the response for those who identified themselves as an ES manager or staff was especially low, at 2.4 on a scale of 1 to 5, from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree.”

**Finding #28. The time demands associated with conducting required group activities and compliance functions leave NJLWD staff little time for one-on-one activities in most places.**

In at least two-thirds of the One-Stop Centers visited, it appeared that almost all of the NJLWD-ES staff time was consumed with required group activities, such as REA, PROS, and JICs, and compliance activities related to the GA and SNAP public assistance programs. In these centers, there was limited time available for one-on-one activities

with job seekers. In one center, NJLWD staff said they are not even able to keep up with the tuition waiver function, and now share it with local workforce agency staff.

Due to the requirements of state law, serving the GA population may be particularly labor intensive compared to serving other populations. In centers where there is a large GA caseload, the demands of serving this population can have a big impact on the volume of customers and the nature of services offered.

**Finding #29. Some centers do not have a UI presence and others have such a small UI presence that there were reports that this function shuts down if there are not enough staff present.**

It is the research team's understanding that NJLWD cannot afford to keep UI staff in every One-Stop Center. Nonetheless, this was felt by staff to be problematic for several reasons. First, some people interviewed felt that the UI presence brings people into the center. Second, it appears that the online and phone systems are not always clear, easy to navigate, or responsive, so UI claimants feel they need to speak to someone in person. There also appeared to be an internal practice that the UI function does not operate if too few staff are present. In one center visited in an urban area, staff reported that the function closed for a two-week period, reportedly due to inadequate staffing.

**Finding #30. While some One-Stop Centers appear to have sufficient bilingual staff capacity (primarily Spanish-English), other centers appear to need more bilingual staff.**

In one center serving a heavy proportion of Spanish-speaking customers, the UI function had no bilingual staff. Other centers expressed the need for more bilingual help for job seekers.

**Finding #31. While staff at many centers have good informal communication and understand both their own functions and those of partners, staff in other centers do not fully understand the responsibilities of partner staff.**

In some centers, staff of one agency have a lack of information or misperceptions about what responsibilities staff handle. In other centers, NJLWD and local workforce area staff understand each other's functions, but this did not always mean that they work together. In most centers, services are siloed by funding stream or agency. Knowledge of specialized partner agency functions, such as Vocational Rehabilitation, was low in most places.

**Finding #32. Both staff and managers reported few professional development opportunities for staff.**

Statewide, it appears that staff development has received relatively little attention in the past several years. Both One-Stop management and WIB directors expressed that this is an issue that must be addressed. Several people interviewed said that they expect that this situation will change with the implementation of WIOA.

## Roles and Responsibilities of One-Stop Partners/Service Integration/One-Stop Management and Partner Relationships

**Finding #33. The functions of One-Stop partners are fairly uniform across the state.**

- > NJLWD staff handle reemployment, GA/SNAP job search and case management, services to high-need veterans, and (usually) tuition waivers.
- > Within the programs for veterans, Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) staff provide services to high-need veterans and Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs) provide outreach to businesses on behalf of veterans.
- > Local staff handle Individual Training Accounts and sometimes tuition waivers.

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- > NJLWD and local staff collaborate to serve customers in the Learning Link.
- > Both NJLWD and local staff provide business services.
- > TANF case management is handled by different agencies in different places. It could be the WIA operator, county social/human services, or other agency.
- > Exceptions: where there is no NJLWD presence, the local workforce agency operates a resource area and provides some reemployment services.

**Finding #34. Generally, services are not integrated. Programs appear to operate parallel to each other instead of operating as a fully integrated system.**

In some areas, NJLWD staff and local workforce area staff are located at different sites — sometimes in different towns — within the workforce area.

Even when NJLWD staff and local workforce area staff are co-located in the same building, the advantages of co-location are not being fully realized in terms of coordination and integration of services. Even common functions, such as reception, assistance to job seekers in the public access resource area, and business services are often not integrated.

**Finding #35. There is a lack of knowledge of and communication between the systems at the One-Stop Center.**

Job seekers in focus groups expressed frustration that the staff of different agencies do not communicate with each other.

In staff focus groups, it was found that staff at the centers do not always understand the job functions of the other agencies on site. This is particularly true with regard to DVRS staff and DVRS functions.

In many centers, there appears to be minimal cross-referral. In particular, there was little connection between UI staff and staff who provide reemployment services (NJLWD or local). Job seekers identified this as one reason they were not aware of the services available to them at the One-Stop, even though they had spoken to a UI staff member.

**Finding #36. In most One-Stop Centers, there is no unified management structure.**

The extent of this issue varies from one center to another, but in most cases, the manager for each agency supervises his/her own staff with minimal collaboration with other agencies. In a few centers visited, there appears to be close cooperation, but this is the exception not the rule. This is consistent with the finding that programs usually operate parallel to each other.

**Finding #37. Some One-Stops have regular partner meetings; others do not.**

In some cases, the WIB director or One-Stop operator convenes partner meetings on a monthly basis. This provides an opportunity to share information and work more closely on common goals. In other centers, this does not happen, and agencies continue to provide services side by side but not together.

**Finding #38. In most cases, there is little interaction with the community outside the One-Stop Centers.**

Some WIB directors and managers interviewed felt that the One-Stop Centers should be more connected to their communities, partly to be able to respond to the needs of the local community (both employer and job seeker) and partly to take advantage of resources available in the community that job seekers need.

## Technology Systems

**Finding #39. Job seekers and One-Stop staff offered mixed reviews about Jobs4Jersey. Some were quite positive while others highlighted certain issues with the system.**

- > For highly computer literate job seekers with higher-level job skills, the system appears to return good “matches” on a daily basis after they work diligently to customize their profiles.
- > It is difficult for job seekers with limited computer skills to create an effective profile without working directly with a staff member.
- > The One-Stops generally do not offer training to help job seekers learn how to use the system to their best advantage. In some cases, staff (usually NJLWD) offer individualized assistance.
- > In general, Jobs4Jersey seems to be less helpful for non-computer literate and non-English-speaking job seekers, and in some areas this represents a sizable proportion of the population. Also, less-skilled job seekers often receive “matches” produced by the system that are too broad.
- > Some staff thought that reliance on Jobs4Jersey reduced the extent of their direct contact with businesses; others felt that it helped them stay in touch with employers. In some cases, employers do not enter job openings into the system themselves, but prefer to contact staff and have the staff do this for them.

**Finding #40. The UI claims technology system is old and sometimes frustrating for customers.**

NJLWD is well aware of this issue. Job seekers complained that the telephone claims system sometimes requires wait times of many hours. Even though there is an online claim system, it appears that online claims are only processed after a delay of two days. People tend to use the telephone system because the claim is processed immediately.

Job seekers also mentioned that it is difficult to get answers to questions over the phone, meaning that they tend to visit the centers to see a UI staff member.

**Finding #41. Many One-Stop Career Centers maintain duplicate databases to track the status of their customers because they are unable to obtain the information they need from AOSOS.**

One-Stop staff indicated that it was difficult for them to easily access needed information on customers. Given the limitations of AOSOS, multiple One-Stops have improvised alternative solutions, ranging from comprehensive relational databases to simple Microsoft Excel spreadsheets. One-Stops have developed separate data systems for tracking training participants, TABE scores, and staffing, among others. Despite creating the inefficiency of double data entry, One-Stop staff insist that maintaining their own data systems is necessary to effectively serve their customers and meet data requests from One-Stop system stakeholders.

**Finding #42. None of the technology systems facilitate tracking outcomes in real time.**

One frustration felt by staff and management is that there is no easy way to find out what happened to job seekers in real time. In some centers, the JJC coordinator keeps a separate Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and stays in touch with JJC participants, but the existing information systems do not facilitate follow-up with participants.

One person interviewed remarked on the unrealistic nature of the official performance targets set by the U.S. Department of Labor (expecting local areas to achieve employment rates of 80% to 90% for low- and moderately skilled populations). This individual stated that this leads to manipulation of the reporting system, which in turn leads to the official reporting system being of limited use in understanding what does and does not work in terms of serving job seekers. This may well be a nationwide issue and not just limited to New Jersey. (Some evidence of the extent of this manipulation is presented in Appendix 3.2 in Chapter 3.)

### Business Services

**Finding #43. Services to businesses are conducted by NJLWD business services representatives and other staff, by LVERs, and in some cases by local workforce staff.**

These staff reach out to businesses in the local area to partner with the One-Stops. They organize positive recruitment sessions and bring businesses into the centers to help make the connection between job seekers and local businesses in need of employees. Their goal is to satisfy employers by referring qualified candidates.

**Finding #44. Some One-Stop Centers have closer relationships than others with the Talent Networks.**

Around the state, each Talent Network comes into each One-Stop Career Center once a year to host an information session on what skills employers are seeking in that sector in local markets. These arrangements are made through the JJC coordinators in each One-Stop Center.

Business services representatives engage with the Talent Networks in additional ways. For example, they may work with the Talent Network on job fairs or positive recruitments.

### Recommendations

The One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey provide a fairly consistent range of services to both job seekers and employers, with few variations. Job seekers who responded to the statewide customer satisfaction survey (see results in Chapter 2) displayed moderate levels of satisfaction, although this varied from one workforce area to another. Job seekers who participated in focus groups generally expressed appreciation for the services they received.

The site visit teams were impressed by the dedication of the staff that participated in focus groups. These staff clearly want to help their customers and are doing their best to help them secure jobs and advance their skills. Job seekers in almost every

focus group felt that the staff supported and cared for them.

One-Stop Centers in New Jersey operate in different environments and serve customers with a variety of needs. The implementation of WIOA offers an opportunity for NJLWD to take a fresh look at the One-Stop system and the role of One-Stop Centers in the communities they serve. Workforce area managers appreciate the fact that NJLWD is taking a collaborative approach to WIOA implementation. One important goal in WIOA implementation might be to achieve an optimal combination of standardization and local flexibility that allows centers to respond to the needs in their communities.

With its emphasis on the Talent Networks, NJLWD appears to be moving in a sector-based direction. WIOA implementation offers opportunities to further engage the One-Stop system in a sector-based approach to providing services. This is one way to be more strategic in an environment in which resources are limited and the One-Stop system cannot afford to be all things to all people.

The Heldrich Center recommends that NJLWD, in concert with local workforce areas and boards, consider the following recommendations as it moves forward with WIOA implementation and planning the future of the One-Stop system.

### Job Seeker Customer Flow

**Recommendation #1.** Understanding that many job seekers are experiencing difficulty accessing services, NJLWD should reexamine its communication strategy with an eye to answering such questions as:

- > How does NJLWD communicate with the public, especially non-mandatory job seekers, about the services available?
- > How is NJLWD presenting itself?
- > How attractive, friendly, and helpful is NJLWD's current Jobs4Jersey website?



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- > Is NJLWD making the most of social media sites such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Foursquare, and Yelp in communicating with potential customers?
- > Who is NJLWD intending to communicate with?
- > Do the One-Stop Centers have a “brand,” and if so, what does that brand communicate?

It appears that NJLWD has both a communications and marketing department and a constituent relations department that could be involved in answering some of these questions. Also, local WIBs and workforce areas may have ideas about communication with the public.

**Recommendation #2.** NJLWD should allow One-Stop Centers to have in-person reemployment or other orientations if they feel that these sessions are in the best interest of the customers at their centers. This decision would be at the discretion of the ES and WIOA managers at each One-Stop Center.

**Recommendation #3.** One-Stop Centers should professionalize and integrate the reception/triage function. If resources are too limited to have a dedicated full-time professional staff position at reception, centers should consider rotating professional staff — NJLWD and WIA staff at a minimum — through this function on a regular schedule. These staff must be trained to address all common job seeker and employer inquiries, both in-person and on the telephone. In many centers, DVOP specialists have light workloads, because few eligible veterans are visiting the One-Stops. As a means to improve the identification of eligible veterans, One-Stop Centers should consider having DVOPs staff the reception/intake area when they are not working with customers. Because staff may not be eager to work the reception desk, it will be critical to cultivate buy-in by presenting these changes as ways for the center to help as many job seekers as possible. To make staff more willing to take on the intake responsibilities, the NJLWD-ES managers and One-Stop operators should each work a minimum number of hours (between one and five hours) per week staffing the reception desk.

**Recommendation #4.** One-Stop Centers should follow up on whether inquiries and calls are returned. A major complaint on the customer satisfaction survey was that people are frustrated by not getting called back, which is related to having non-professionals staff the reception/triage function. As noted by some job seekers in focus groups, this lack of responsiveness leaves the impression that the One-Stop Centers have a “don’t call us, we’ll call you attitude.”

**Recommendation #5.** Share best practices among the JJsCs. In most centers, this initiative was functioning well. NJLWD should facilitate sharing of materials and practices. NJLWD should also ensure that the best features of the JJsCs — such as the full range of workshops — are uniform across the state; some centers appear to be diluting the material or combining several workshops into one.

**Recommendation #6.** Continue the Learning Link in its current form, as a joint effort of NJLWD and the local workforce areas. It appeared that centers have flexibility in the mix of courses offered through these learning centers.

**Recommendation #7.** Consider integrating the Talent Network approach even further into One-Stop operations. This would involve training One-Stop Centers in understanding the advantages of a sector-based approach, so that they would see Talent Networks as a valuable asset rather than an effort competing with them for support from the state. This type of infusion might mean that specific One-Stop Center staff would specialize in sectors that have a sizable presence in their workforce areas. It might also involve prioritizing training in targeted sectors in local workforce areas.

**Recommendation #8.** One-Stop Centers should integrate and streamline the training approval process. In the vast majority of centers, this process seems cumbersome and time-consuming right now. The tuition waiver and training approval process should also be further integrated. To accomplish this integration and streamlining, NJLWD should consider convening a work group of both NJLWD and workforce area staff to identify best practices and guidelines, looking at the process from the customer’s point of view.

**Recommendation #9.** It is critical to update the demand occupations list. The Heldrich Center is aware that an effort is under way to produce such a list by Talent Network sector. The Heldrich Center cannot emphasize enough the importance of having a resource that is current, as One-Stop Center staff rely heavily on this list to advise job seekers.

**Recommendation #10.** There is a need to increase staff knowledge of the methods and hiring processes used by employers. In addition to the demand occupations list, One-Stop Center staff should be trained to use real-time labor market information to look at what employers that advertise online prefer in terms of education, credentials, and experience.

**Recommendation #11.** One-Stop Centers should track how staff time is actually used with an eye toward providing more individualized services, which both job seekers and staff rate highly. For example, many job seekers schedule but do not show up for individual appointments with staff. This is particularly true for appointments with WIA staff as part of the training approval process. One-Stop Centers should track this no-show rate and ensure that staff are redeployed in ways that serve job seekers. One local area has created a robust database for helping its staff track appointments that other local areas could adopt.

**Recommendation #12.** NJLWD should allow the centers more discretion to address the needs of the local community. This means giving NJLWD-ES managers greater autonomy. They should be allowed to put their knowledge about the populations they serve to greater use, in collaboration with their WIOA partners. To take this a step further, NJLWD should extend some sort of carrot, such as additional funds that centers can bid for or match, if they have an idea about how to serve their local communities in new or different ways.

### One-Stop Career Center Facilities

**Recommendation #13.** As leases expire, NJLWD should take the opportunity to improve One-Stop facilities, especially in places that are inconvenient for job seekers or are not pleasant work environments for staff. In two areas visited, the local work-

force area was actively seeking alternate space for the One-Stop Center.

**Recommendation #14.** In existing One-Stop Centers, NJLWD should find ways that they can be configured so that they are more pleasant environments for job seekers and less bureaucratic in style and feel.

**Recommendation #15.** If possible, the key workforce agencies (NJLWD, local workforce area) should be fully co-located for ease of job seeker access to services. In two of the centers visited as part of this evaluation, one agency was dominant, with a minimal presence of the other.

### Staff and Staffing

**Recommendation #16.** NJLWD should review the process used to allocate its staff among One-Stop Centers and between the central office and the field. Some centers appeared to be adequately staffed while others struggled to keep up with customer volume. It is possible that job seekers who visit for particular reasons, such as GA/SNAP compliance, or have particular characteristics, take more or less staff time to serve. NJLWD should conduct a full staffing review in order to ensure that staff are properly allocated across the system and communicate with local offices to explain funding limitations and how staffing allocations are made.

**Recommendation #17.** Where a UI presence remains in One-Stop Centers, NJLWD should clarify UI practices, such as whether services are provided to customers if there are only one or two UI staff present.

**Recommendation #18.** NJLWD should examine whether there are bilingual (primarily Spanish-English) staff present in all One-Stop Centers and all customer-facing functions (e.g., UI) where this is needed, and take action to adjust staffing where needed.

**Recommendation #19.** There must be greater understanding among partners in each One-Stop Center. Staff must understand not only their own

roles and responsibilities but also those of partner agencies and staff as well.

**Recommendation #20.** There is a need for much more staff development and capacity building to support service provision. By all accounts, staff development has received little attention in the past several years. There are many areas where capacity building is needed, including basic customer service, assistance in the public access resource area, using labor market information to provide career guidance, and team building. It is critical that this capacity-building effort include local workforce area staff and NJLWD staff, as well as possibly others, such as DVRS, UI, and social services.

### Roles and Responsibilities of One-Stop Partners/ Service Integration/One-Stop Management and Partner Relationships

**Recommendation #21.** One-Stop Centers should integrate the staffing of common functions, including, at a minimum, reception/triage, assistance to job seekers in the public access resource area, and employer services. Both ES and WIA staff should work on these functions so that they are interchangeable. All staff should receive the same training and be expected to do the same thing. In business services, LVERs should be on the employer services team, as they are already reaching out to employers.

**Recommendation #22.** In every One-Stop Center, the local workforce area and NJLWD should establish a unified management structure. While some centers have unified management structures, many do not, and this is reflected in services that are provided parallel to each other rather than together. In order to better coordinate services, a more unified management structure is needed. One person needs to be responsible for what happens in each building. One person must be responsible for organizing partner meetings or bringing people together.

There is no formula or single way to accomplish this greater unity, and structures can vary from one workforce area to another or even from One-Stop to One-Stop within a workforce area. In some centers, the One-Stop operator is clearly in charge, while in others the ES manager is in charge. Sometimes the WIB director is the convener. Regardless of which approach is used, there must be a management structure where someone is the point person for the entire operation at each center.

**Recommendation #23.** One-Stop Centers must have more formal communication and partner meetings that will lead to better coordination among partners. The goal of this effort is to use the total resources of each center in a way that serves job seekers and employers while not overburdening any one agency.

**Recommendation #24.** In order to accomplish greater local coordination, NJLWD should review the level of authority and autonomy currently afforded to local NJLWD-ES managers, with an eye to allowing them more independence and flexibility so that they can work on a more equal basis with their WIOA counterparts.

### Technology Systems

**Recommendation #25.** One-Stop Centers should teach customers how to use Jobs4Jersey to best advantage. NJLWD should consider developing a group workshop that all One-Stop Centers can use to accomplish this, accompanied by one-on-one assistance following the workshop.

**Recommendation #26.** While NJLWD is well aware of the issues with the aging UI system, it is important to address this issue as soon as possible. This will save staff time and create fewer headaches for customers and staff.

**Recommendation #27.** As NJLWD develops the requirements for a new case management system as a successor to AOSOS, it should conduct a thorough study of the duplicate data systems that every One-Stop operates.



### Business Services

**Recommendation #28.** In consultation with local WIOA areas, NJLWD should consider orienting the business services function in a more sector-based direction, consistent with the Talent Network effort. This would give One-Stop Centers a more strategic framework in which to operate.

### Reference

U.S. Department of Labor. (2016). *Budget authority tables: Training and employment programs*. Retrieved from <https://www.doleta.gov/budget/bahist.cfm> on April 29, 2016.

## **Chapter 2**

# **Job Seeker Customer Satisfaction Survey**

by

**William F. Mabe Jr., Ph.D.**

**Tim MacKinnon**

To assess customer experiences with New Jersey's One-Stop Career Centers, the Heldrich Center and the Bloustein Center for Survey Research (BCSR) designed a questionnaire for One-Stop customers in New Jersey. In collaboration with the Heldrich Center and the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJLWD), BCSR collected three waves of survey data via mail and web from a sample of 6,586 New Jersey One-Stop customers. This effort resulted in the collection of 1,082 surveys from respondents who exited from either Core (585), Training (330), or Intensive (167) services. After adjusting for respondent refusals, eligibility, and reliability of contact information, the overall American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) response rate was 20.3%, including 24% each from Training and Core respondents and 15% from Intensive.

The following sections provide a detailed description of the survey methodology, describe the characteristics of the survey respondents, and present the Heldrich Center's findings from the survey.

## Survey Methodology

To assess customer experiences with New Jersey's One-Stop Career Centers, the Heldrich Center and BCSR designed a questionnaire for customers who received services from a One-Stop in New Jersey and were exited from services in December 2013 and between April 2014 and October 2014, planned and executed the sample design, and collected data. This section describes each of these research tasks.

### Questionnaire Design

The design of the questionnaire was a collaborative effort involving NJLWD, the Heldrich Center, and BCSR. Design of the instrument began with a thorough review of the survey materials that BCSR used in 2005 when it conducted a customer satisfaction survey of New Jersey One-Stop Career Center customers. Slight modifications were made to facilitate an updated and efficient, yet comprehensive, assessment of One-Stop customer services.

## Sample Design

The sample was initially designed to be four waves with a target of 1,200 completed interviews, including 600 from Core and oversamples of 300 each from Training and Intensive. This plan was based on the assumption of consistent response rates and consistent sample list quality across service types. However, issues with list quality resulted in uneven response rates across categories. Thus, modifications after each wave were instituted based on lessons learned. The final sample parameters are shown in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1. Sample Parameters**

|           | Wave 1 | Wave 2 | Wave 3 | All Waves |
|-----------|--------|--------|--------|-----------|
| Core      | 1,000  | 500    | 1,040  | 2,540     |
| Training  | 500    | 600    | 720    | 1,820     |
| Intensive | 500    | 1,000  | 726    | 2,226     |
| Total     | 2,000  | 2,100  | 2,486  | 6,586     |

More specifically, modifications were made because the quality of postal and email contact information was best for Core, a bit worse for Training, and worst for Intensive (see Table 2.2). As shown, within each wave, both the percentage of sampled respondents who did not have a working listed email address or a working postal address rose when comparing Core, Training, and Intensive.

## Data Collection

BCSR implemented three waves of data collection, with varied, tailored design protocols for each. Wave 1 respondents were mailed a first-class envelope containing an invitation letter and a blank survey (see Appendix 2.1) on April 25, 2014 and, if they did not respond, were sent a total of six follow-up emails between May 12 and December 15, 2014, inviting them to complete the survey online.

Wave 2 individuals were first sent three email invitations to complete the online survey between August 4 and 11, 2014, and if they did not respond, were mailed a first-class envelope containing an

**Table 2.2. List Quality Comparison**

|           | Wave 1 |              |             | Wave 2 |              |             | Wave 3 |              |             |
|-----------|--------|--------------|-------------|--------|--------------|-------------|--------|--------------|-------------|
|           | N      | Bad/No Email | Bad Address | N      | Bad/No Email | Bad Address | N      | Bad/No Email | Bad Address |
| Core      | 1,000  | 7%           | 6%          | 500    | 6%           | 4%          | 1,040  | 4%           | 6%          |
| Training  | 500    | 40%          | 14%         | 600    | 44%          | 10%         | 720    | 34%          | 12%         |
| Intensive | 500    | 53%          | 19%         | 1,000  | 52%          | 14%         | 726    | 45%          | 14%         |

invitation letter and a blank survey on August 20, 2014. Wave 2 individuals who had not responded were sent three subsequent follow-up emails between September 3 and December 15, 2014.

Wave 3 respondents were mailed a first-class envelope containing an invitation letter and a blank survey on November 5, 2014 and, if they did not respond, were sent a total of six follow-up emails inviting them to complete the survey online between November 12 and December 15, 2014. The survey was closed on January 21, 2015.

Table 2.3 shows the distribution of completed responses by wave, mode, and service type. As can be seen, the web was a much more efficient delivery vehicle of completed surveys across all service types, especially considering that the cost for a web survey is negligible compared to a mail survey, which requires printing and postage. Overall, including all waves, initial targets for completed interviews were exceeded for Training and almost achieved for Core, but not met for Intensive.

Table 2.4 presents the number of surveys distributed to and completed by exiters by month and year.

## Response Rates

In calculating survey response rates, the Response Rate 4 calculator that is supplied by AAPOR takes into account factors such as respondent refusals, eligibility, and the reliability of contact information. Thus, it provides a more complete picture of survey response. Table 2.5 presents these data.

The official overall response rate for the survey was 20.3%. There was not much difference between rates in wave 1 (21%), wave 2 (19%), and wave 3 (21%). By service type, the highest response rate

was for Training (24%). The Core response rate of 24% was virtually identical to that for Training, while the response rate for Intensive lagged behind (15%). Response rates by service type held across all waves for the most part, with slight variation being found during wave 1, which saw slightly lower comparative response rates among Training respondents and slightly higher comparative rates for Intensive.

**Table 2.3. Completed Surveys**

|                 | Mail | Web | Total |
|-----------------|------|-----|-------|
| Wave 1          |      |     |       |
| Core            | 58   | 178 | 236   |
| Training        | 21   | 47  | 68    |
| Intensive       | 11   | 26  | 37    |
| Wave 1 Total    | 90   | 251 | 341   |
| Wave 2          |      |     |       |
| Core            | 23   | 92  | 115   |
| Training        | 28   | 91  | 119   |
| Intensive       | 26   | 52  | 78    |
| Wave 2 Total    | 77   | 235 | 312   |
| Wave 3          |      |     |       |
| Core            | 69   | 165 | 234   |
| Training        | 44   | 99  | 143   |
| Intensive       | 21   | 31  | 52    |
| Wave 3 Total    | 134  | 295 | 429   |
| All Waves       |      |     |       |
| Core            | 150  | 435 | 585   |
| Training        | 93   | 237 | 330   |
| Intensive       | 58   | 109 | 167   |
| All Waves Total | 301  | 781 | 1,082 |

**Table 2.4. Months of Exit from Services of Survey Respondents**

| Month and Year | Number of Questionnaires | Number of Responses |
|----------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| December 2013  | 2,000                    | 341                 |
| April 2014     | 1,335                    | 202                 |
| May 2014       | 310                      | 49                  |
| June 2014      | 455                      | 61                  |
| July 2014      | 1,720                    | 330                 |
| August 2014    | 388                      | 43                  |
| September 2014 | 334                      | 47                  |
| October 2014   | 44                       | 9                   |
| Total          | 6,586                    | 1,082               |

**Table 2.5. Response Rates**

|           | Wave 1 | Wave 2 | Wave 3 | All Waves |
|-----------|--------|--------|--------|-----------|
| Core      | 24.1%  | 23.6%  | 22.8%  | 23.5%     |
| Training  | 21.2%  | 25.3%  | 25.2%  | 24.1%     |
| Intensive | 16.9%  | 14.1%  | 13.7%  | 14.6%     |
| Total     | 21.4%  | 19.3%  | 20.5%  | 20.3%     |

## Survey Respondents

The Heldrich Center and BCSR received responses from job seeker customers who exited from Core, Training, and Intensive services. The original goal was to obtain 600 completed surveys from exiters from Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Core services, 300 WIA Training exiters, and 300 WIA Intensive exiters. Whereas responses from WIA Core exiters very nearly met the intended response target and responses for WIA Training exceeded the target, a combination of the limited number of WIA Intensive exiters relative to the numbers of WIA Training and WIA Core exiters and worse contact information for Intensive exiters resulted in lower-than-anticipated responses from Intensive exiters. Table 2.6 displays the breakdown of survey respondents by the three exiter categories.

Table 2.7 shows that there was wide variation in responses across WIA areas. Whereas more than 23% of One-Stop customers who exited from the Bergen Workforce Investment Board (WIB) completed the survey, only 9% of exiters from Newark did so.

**Table 2.6. Responses by WIA Exiter Category**

| Service Category | Completed Responses |
|------------------|---------------------|
| WIA Core         | 585                 |
| WIA Training     | 330                 |
| WIA Intensive    | 167                 |

**Table 2.7. Responses by Workforce Investment Board**

| WIB                          | Number of Responses | Number of Surveys Distributed | Percent |
|------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|---------|
| Atlantic-Cape May            | 58                  | 270                           | 21.48%  |
| Bergen County                | 71                  | 303                           | 23.43%  |
| Burlington County            | 40                  | 272                           | 14.71%  |
| Camden County                | 48                  | 365                           | 13.15%  |
| Cumberland-Salem County      | 50                  | 434                           | 11.52%  |
| Essex County                 | 66                  | 499                           | 13.23%  |
| Gloucester County            | 52                  | 377                           | 13.79%  |
| Greater Raritan              | 35                  | 331                           | 10.57%  |
| Hudson County                | 19                  | 171                           | 11.11%  |
| Jersey City                  | 31                  | 223                           | 13.90%  |
| Mercer County                | 31                  | 204                           | 15.20%  |
| Middlesex County             | 48                  | 222                           | 21.62%  |
| Monmouth County              | 58                  | 349                           | 16.62%  |
| Morris-Sussex-Warren         | 141                 | 927                           | 15.21%  |
| Newark                       | 21                  | 231                           | 9.09%   |
| NJLWD Trenton Central Office | 210                 | 887                           | 23.68%  |
| Ocean County                 | 49                  | 267                           | 18.35%  |
| Passaic County               | 27                  | 98                            | 27.55%  |
| Union County                 | 27                  | 156                           | 17.31%  |

More than a third of exiters were unemployed at the time they completed the survey. Table 2.8 displays the employment status of survey respondents.

Table 2.9 presents the employment status of survey respondents by WIB. (The numbers do not total 100% because the response categories “Refused” and “Other” were omitted to simplify the table.)

**Table 2.8. Employment Status of Survey Respondents**

| Employment Status  | Percent of Respondents |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| Employed Full Time | 32.89%                 |
| Employed Part Time | 17.35%                 |
| Unemployed         | 38.73%                 |
| Refused            | 0.48%                  |
| Other              | 10.55%                 |

**Table 2.9. Employment Status of Survey Respondents by WIB**

| WIB                          | Employed, Full Time | Employed, Part Time | Unemployed |
|------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------|
| Atlantic-Cape May            | 31.6%               | 24.6%               | 35.1%      |
| Bergen County                | 33.8%               | 22.5%               | 29.6%      |
| Burlington County            | 46.2%               | 12.8%               | 33.3%      |
| Camden County                | 28.3%               | 17.4%               | 39.1%      |
| Cumberland-Salem County      | 42.9%               | 16.3%               | 34.7%      |
| Essex County                 | 19.7%               | 14.8%               | 57.4%      |
| Gloucester County            | 38.5%               | 9.6%                | 34.6%      |
| Greater Raritan              | 39.4%               | 18.2%               | 36.4%      |
| Hudson County                | 21.1%               | 21.1%               | 47.4%      |
| Jersey City                  | 39.3%               | 10.7%               | 42.9%      |
| Mercer County                | 25.8%               | 12.9%               | 51.6%      |
| Middlesex County             | 34.8%               | 19.6%               | 37.0%      |
| Monmouth County              | 38.6%               | 17.5%               | 35.1%      |
| Morris-Sussex-Warren         | 29.9%               | 20.9%               | 32.8%      |
| Newark                       | 25.0%               | 5.0%                | 65.0%      |
| NJLWD Trenton Central Office | 27.5%               | 19.0%               | 42.0%      |
| Ocean County                 | 56.3%               | 12.5%               | 22.9%      |
| Passaic County               | 34.6%               | 3.8%                | 50.0%      |
| Union County                 | 26.9%               | 23.1%               | 42.3%      |

## Survey Findings

### Overall Satisfaction

In order to gauge New Jersey customers’ overall satisfaction with the services they received, the survey asked three separate satisfaction questions, each designed to elicit somewhat different components of satisfaction:

- > What is your overall satisfaction with the services provided by the One-Stop Career System?
- > To what extent did the services provided by the One-Stop Career System meet your expectations?

## Evaluation of One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey

- > How well do you think the services provided to you by the One-Stop Career System compare with the ideal?

Using multiple questions allows for a more robust analysis, because results from the different questions can be compared. If the scores are high on all three measures, that is a better indicator of quality customer service than if the scores are high on one measure and low on the other two.

### **Finding #1. Job seeker exiters displayed moderate levels of satisfaction with the services they received from New Jersey One-Stop Career Centers.**

Overall, exiters from New Jersey One-Stop Career Centers expressed moderate levels of satisfaction with the services they received. These scores are comparable to the satisfaction ratings that consumers give to the federal government overall and somewhat lower than what they give local government. The comparison between satisfaction with workforce services in New Jersey and overall benchmarks is necessarily rough, in part because whereas respondents to this survey were asked to rate their satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 10, the national surveys ask consumers for ratings between 1 and 100. This comparison, nonetheless, indicates that customer satisfaction with One-Stop Career Center services in New Jersey are roughly on par with customer satisfaction with government agencies nationally. Table 2.10 presents these results.

### **Finding #2. Overall satisfaction varied significantly across workforce areas, with exiters in some workforce areas reporting high levels of customer satisfaction and exiters from other workforce areas expressing low levels of satisfaction.**

Job seeker customers expressed a wide variety of opinions across workforce areas. To test whether the satisfaction scores of the different WIBs were significantly different (in a statistical sense) from the mean statewide scores for each of the overall satisfaction measures, Heldrich Center researchers ran a series of one-way analysis of variance tests, using Welch's correction for possible non-homogeneous variance across the units.

**Table 2.10. Overall Customer Satisfaction Scores**

| Satisfaction Item  | Exiter Rating |
|--|---------------|
| Q1. What is your overall satisfaction with the services provided by the One-Stop Career System?              | 6.54          |
| Q2. To what extent did the services provided by the One-Stop Career System meet your expectations?           | 6.19          |
| Q4. How well do you think the services provided to you by the One-Stop Career System compare with the ideal? | 5.83          |

The data indicated that some workforce areas stood out as achieving higher customer satisfaction scores than others. The results of the statistical tests appear in Table 2.11. According to the sample data, exiters from four workforce areas (Bergen, Camden, Middlesex, and Monmouth and denoted by the exclamation points [!] in the table) expressed higher levels of satisfaction with services than did job seekers who exited from other workforce areas in the state.

At the same time, however, the data also show that individuals who exited from services in two workforce areas (Newark and NJLWD's Trenton central office, and denoted by the asterisks [\*] in the table) expressed levels of satisfaction that were significantly lower than exiters from other workforce regions in the state. In addition, although exiters from Passaic thought that One-Stop services met their needs as well as exiters from other workforce areas and agreed with exiters from other workforce areas about how close the services they were to the ideal, they indicated that they were less satisfied overall than the average exiter from other workforce areas.



**Table 2.11. Customer Satisfaction by Workforce Area**

| WIB                          | Customer Overall Satisfaction with One-Stop Services | Extent to which One-Stop Services Met Customer Expectations | How Well One-Stop Services Compare with the Ideal |
|------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Atlantic-Cape May            | 6.4  | 5.9   | 5.6   |
| Bergen County                | 7.4!   | 7!  | 6.8!  |
| Burlington County            | 6.3  | 6.1   | 5.5   |
| Camden County                | 7.5!   | 7.2!  | 7.1!  |
| Cumberland-Salem County      | 6.9  | 6.4   | 6.4   |
| Essex County                 | 6.3  | 5.8   | 5.8   |
| Gloucester County            | 6.9  | 6.4   | 6.3   |
| Greater Raritan              | 7.1  | 6.6   | 6.2   |
| Hudson County                | 7.1  | 7.3   | 6.6   |
| Jersey City                  | 6.1  | 5.8   | 5.6   |
| Mercer County                | 6.2  | 5.6   | 5.2   |
| Middlesex County             | 7.9!   | 7.6!  | 7!  |
| Monmouth County              | 7.6!   | 7.2!  | 6.6!  |
| Morris-Sussex-Warren         | 6.5  | 6.2   | 5.9   |
| Newark                       | 4.4*   | 4.4*  | 3.9*  |
| NJLWD Trenton Central Office | 5.8*   | 5.5*  | 5*  |
| Ocean County                 | 6.4  | 6.0   | 5.2   |
| Passaic County               | 5.4*   | 5.3   | 5.0   |
| Union County                 | 6.8  | 6.6   | 6.1   |
| <b>Statewide Mean</b>        | <b>6.5</b>   | <b>6.2</b>  | <b>5.8</b>  |

\*An asterisk indicates a mean score that is significantly lower (statistically at a p-value of 0.05 or lower) than the statewide mean.

! An exclamation point indicates a mean score that is significantly higher (statistically at a p-value of 0.05 or lower) than the statewide mean.

**Finding #3. Training exiters reported significantly higher levels of satisfaction with the services they received than Core exiters.**

Heldrich Center researchers then compared the overall satisfaction responses across the Core, Training, and Intensive exiters. A visual inspection of the means presented in Table 2.12 shows that Core exiters and Training exiters expressed very different opinions about the extent to which they were satisfied with the services they received. Specifically, exiters from Training rated the services

they received a full point-and-a-half (on a 10-point scale) higher than exiters from Core services rated their experiences.

To assess whether these observed differences were statistically significant, researchers conducted a one-way analysis of variance with pooled standard deviations, followed by a Tukey Honest Significant Differences test. The Tukey test is necessary to ensure that standard errors are not deflated and is conservative when analyzing groups with unequal sample sizes. The tests show that the observed



**Table 2.12. Customer Satisfaction by Service Level**

| Service Level | Customer Overall Satisfaction with One-Stop Services | Extent to which One-Stop Services Met Customer Expectations | How Well One-Stop Services Compare with the Ideal |
|---------------|--|---|---|
| Core          | 6  | 5.7   | 5.3   |
| Training      | 7.6  | 7.2   | 6.8   |
| Intensive     | 6.2  | 6.0   | 5.7   |

differences between Training and Core exiters are highly statistically significant, with p-values far below 0.05.

Exiters from Intensive services rated their experiences in between the Core and the Training exiters, but statistically their responses did not differ significantly from either of the other groups.

### Service Receipt and Satisfaction with Specific Services

The survey sought to get a sense of the prevalence of the various services that exiters had received as well as their opinions of those services. BCSR and the Heldrich Center worked with staff from NJLWD to identify service categories that NJLWD staff thought both represented the key services that the One-Stops offer and to label them on the survey in terms that would resonate with job seekers. The following services were included in the survey: Jobs4Jersey.com/OnRamp; job search assistance; résumé writing tips; career planning help; recommendations for job training; Jersey Job Club; labor market information; literacy, GED, basic skills, or other program; job interview referrals; and other workshops (non-Jersey Job Club).

Table 2.13 shows the prevalence of the various services among the respondent sample. By far, the most frequently used service was Jobs4Jersey, with three out of every four exiters (76.23%) indicating that they had used Jobs4Jersey. Many job seekers also received more intensive services. About 60% received job search assistance, while a little over a third (36.38%) had participated in a Jersey Job Club. Workshops outside of the Jersey Job Clubs were the least commonly accessed service.

**Table 2.13. Prevalence of Different Services among Survey Respondents**

| Service                                       | Percent of Exiters Receiving Service |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| Jobs4Jersey.com/OnRamp                        | 76.23%                               |
| Job Search Assistance                         | 59.09%                               |
| Résumé Writing Tips                           | 50.05%                               |
| Career Planning Help                          | 42.33%                               |
| Recommendations for Job Training              | 37.62%                               |
| Jersey Job Club                               | 36.38%                               |
| Labor Market Information                      | 32.66%                               |
| Literacy, GED, Basic Skills, or Other Program | 26.38%                               |
| Job Interview Referrals                       | 24.49%                               |
| Other Workshops (non-Jersey Job Club)         | 22.08%                               |

**Finding #4. Respondent recall errors prevent drawing any conclusions about the prevalence of the services that customers received.**

Heldrich Center researchers examined the types of services received by service level (Core vs. Intensive vs. Training). Table 2.14 shows the percentage of Core, Training, and Intensive survey respondents who indicated that they had received each of the key services that the One-Stops provide to support job seekers in their efforts to obtain reemployment. The primary finding from these data is that only 55% of Training exiters indicated that they had received a referral to job training. One would think that of all the services that NJLWD and the local areas offer, job training would be one of the easier ones for respondents to identify. Nearly half of the

**Table 2.14. Services Received by Service Level (Core vs. Training vs. Intensive)**

| Service                                       | Core   | Training | Intensive |
|---|--------|----------|-----------|
| Career Planning Help                          | 33.33% | 56.52%   | 45.58%    |
| Job Search Assistance                         | 55.31% | 61.84%   | 67.11%    |
| Résumé Writing Tips                           | 43.15% | 58.80%   | 57.14%    |
| Jersey Job Club                               | 28.08% | 47.33%   | 43.66%    |
| Other Workshops (non-Jersey Job Club)         | 15.67% | 30.71%   | 27.86%    |
| Jobs4Jersey.com/OnRamp                        | 79.89% | 75.25%   | 64.34%    |
| Job Interview Referrals                       | 17.43% | 29.17%   | 39.73%    |
| Recommendations for Job Training              | 25.63% | 55.81%   | 42.76%    |
| Literacy, GED, Basic Skills, or Other Program | 12.52% | 46.82%   | 32.39%    |
| Labor Market Information                      | 26.76% | 40.83%   | 37.32%    |

respondents who had received training indicated that they had not received training. This result indicates that given respondent recall errors, it would be unwise to rely on these data — or indeed comparable questions in other customer survey data — as a means to establish the prevalence of service receipt among One-Stop customers.

**Finding #5. Customers generally rated “higher-touch” services — those services that involved more individualized interaction between customers and One-Stop staff — higher than group and online services.**

The survey then asked respondents to rate the value of each service they had received on a scale from “Not Valuable” to “Valuable” to “Very Valuable.” Table 2.15 displays the percent of exiting job seeker customers using each service who rated the service “Very Valuable.” In general, customers rated more of the services that involved more intensive interaction with One-Stop staff as “Very Valuable” compared with group (Jersey Job Clubs and workshops) and online services.

**Table 2.15. Customer Satisfaction with Individual Services**

| Service                                       | Percent of Exiters Rating Service as "Very Valuable" |
|---|--|
| Résumé Writing Tips                           | 49.32%   |
| Literacy, GED, Basic Skills, or Other Program | 47.78%   |
| Recommendations for Job Training              | 44.08%   |
| Career Planning Help                          | 43.21%   |
| Job Search Assistance                         | 38.91%   |
| Labor Market Information                      | 38.22%   |
| Job Interview Referrals                       | 37.23%   |
| Jersey Job Club                               | 34.02%   |
| Jobs4Jersey.com/OnRamp                        | 33.55%   |
| Other Workshops (non-Jersey Job Club)         | 28.84%   |

## Survey Response Rates by Mode of Survey Administration

**Finding #6. There were no statistically significant differences in satisfaction scores by mode of survey administration.**

As explained in the methodology section, BCSR distributed the survey via both postal mail and email. Online surveys have the advantage of being extremely inexpensive to administer, but are subject to the disadvantage that they may exclude individuals who either do not have access to a computer or are not computer literate. Heldrich Center researchers sought to answer the question of whether disseminating the satisfaction survey only online would alter the feedback that NJLWD receives. To answer this question, researchers compared the mean scores on the three overall satisfaction questions using a one-way analysis of variance. As Table 2.16 indicates, the differences in means were slight and not statistically significant.

Although the satisfaction ratings may be slightly lower for mail recipients, the data indicate that if cost is an issue, NJLWD could distribute the satisfaction survey exclusively online. The one caveat to this finding is that in some low-income areas, such as Newark, it is possible that an online-only sample may miss a larger percentage of the local population compared to wealthier areas where computer usage and literacy rates are higher. The sample sizes in these data are not large enough to detect statistically significant differences by mode and WIB, so Heldrich Center researchers are not able to say definitively whether an online-only survey would produce significantly different results in some local areas than a mixed mode online and mail survey.

## Qualitative Reactions to One-Stop Services

In an effort to obtain qualitative feedback, both positive and negative, from job seekers, BCSR and the Heldrich Center included in the survey an open-ended question asking job seekers to provide additional detail about their experiences. A little over half (556 out of 1,082) of respondents provided qualitative feedback. Compared to individuals who did not answer the open-ended question, exiters who provided detailed feedback rated the services they received more negatively. These differences, shown in Table 2.17, are highly statistically significant. This is not surprising, as one might expect that people who were dissatisfied might be more motivated to vent their opinions (displeasure) with the services they received.

Because the individuals who answered the open-ended question differed systematically in terms of their overall satisfaction with services, the text responses are not representative of the population of One-Stop exiters. Nonetheless, some interesting insights can be extracted by using text mining tools.

Because the closed-ended questions provide insights into customers' overall sentiment with respect to the services they received, the Heldrich Center used the text data to assess the extent of customers' very strongly held positive and very strongly held negative opinions. Such an analysis strategy requires first that a context-specific dictionary of terms be developed. In the case of this survey, the dictionary should include the terms that a job seeker might use to describe his/her positive or negative experiences. While this form of text

**Table 2.16. Differences in Overall Satisfaction Items by Mode of Survey Administration**

| Question   | Mail | Web  | Difference |
|--|------|------|------------|
| Q1. What is your overall satisfaction with the services provided by the One-Stop Career system?              | 6.44 | 6.58 | -0.14      |
| Q2. To what extent did the services provided by the One-Stop Career system meet your expectations?           | 5.59 | 6.25 | -0.66      |
| Q4. How well do you think the services provided to you by the One-Stop Career system compare with the ideal? | 5.59 | 5.92 | -0.32      |

**Table 2.17. Differences in Overall Satisfaction Scores Between Respondents Who Did and Not Answer the Open-Ended Question**

| Overall Satisfaction Item  | Did Not Complete Open-Ended Question | Completed Open-Ended Question |
|--|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Q1. What is your overall satisfaction with the services provided by the One-Stop Career system?              | 6.6                                  | 5.2                           |
| Q2. To what extent did the services provided by the One-Stop Career system meet your expectations?           | 6.2                                  | 4.7                           |
| Q4. How well do you think the services provided to you by the One-Stop Career system compare with the ideal? | 5.9                                  | 3.6                           |

analysis cannot perfectly assess each individual’s opinion, they can give a rough sense of overall feeling.

**Finding #7. Many exiters expressed strong positive opinions about their One-Stop experiences.**

Heldrich Center researchers created a dictionary of highly positive terms that customers would likely use in the context of describing their experiences of receiving services at the One-Stop. Out of the 556 individuals who wrote responses to the open-ended question, 154 (27.7%) expressed a strongly positive opinion.

**Finding #8. A smaller, though still sizable, number of exiters expressed extremely negative opinions about their One-Stop experiences.**

Of those who answered the open-ended question, about 1 in every 10 (53 out of 556) assessed their experiences and the customer service they received in **harshly** negative terms. While many other respondents provided negative feedback about the services they received, they did so in terms that were far less harsh.

Although about twice as many exiters expressed strongly positive opinions as expressed strongly negative ones, the prevalence of strongly negative opinions (10% of those providing comments and 5% of the entire sample of 1,082 respondents, which includes the 526 individuals who chose not to write a comment) suggests that there is definite room for improvement in terms of delivering quality customer service.

**Finding #9. Because the One-Stop Career system offers a diverse set of services, it is not possible to draw specific recommendations about individual services from the open-ended responses that job seekers provided.**

In addition to gaining qualitative insight into job seekers’ overall experiences with the One-Stops, another reason for including the open-ended question was to elicit feedback on specific services that the One-Stops offer. Unfortunately, many respondents provided only general feedback on the services that they received. Some job seekers commented on the specific services that they accessed, but different job seekers commented on some services and not on others. As a result, there were few comments on any one specific service. For example, Jobs4Jersey/OnRamp received the most specific comments. But with only 29 respondents commenting on Jobs4Jersey/OnRamp, it is not possible for Heldrich Center researchers to draw systematic conclusions about the limitations of Jobs4Jersey/OnRamp. (Non-scientifically, there are a number of open-ended responses that support the Jobs4Jersey/OnRamp findings presented earlier in this report: job matches often do not accord with individuals’ skill levels and backgrounds and the system is difficult for someone with poor computer skills to use.) In the future, in order to obtain feedback on specific services, NJLWD may opt to design open-ended questions that are geared toward those specific services.

# Conclusions

Three waves of survey data were collected via mail and web from a sample of 6,586 New Jersey One-Stop Career Center customers by BCSR, in collaboration with the Heldrich Center and NJLWD. This effort resulted in the collection of 1,082 surveys from respondents who had received either Core (585), Training (330), or Intensive (167) services. After adjusting for factors such as respondent refusals, eligibility, and reliability of contact information, the overall AAPOR response rate was 20.3%, including 24% each from Training and Core respondents and 15% from Intensive.

One of the primary challenges to conducting the survey was that the quality of lists, especially in terms of existence and reliability of email contact information, was uneven across service types, with Core lists being more reliable than Training lists, and much more reliable than Intensive lists. That said, if reliable information was available, web proved to be a much more efficient and cost-effective delivery system for completed surveys; however, any investigation into changing protocol on future surveying efforts should first include a mode-effect investigation to ensure that web respondents do not differ from mail respondents across important characteristics and/or response patterns.

Overall, Heldrich Center researchers found moderate levels of satisfaction with One-Stop services, but with some very high and some very low levels of satisfaction in different workforce regions and significantly higher levels of satisfaction among Training exiters than among Core exiters. Given some of the highly negative opinions that job seekers expressed in the open-ended survey items, there likely is significant room for improvement in customer services skills among some One-Stop staff. At the service level, higher-touch services generally earned higher satisfaction scores compared with online and group services. Finally, with respect to survey administration, NJLWD may consider the possibility of collecting survey data primarily using an email/online distribution strategy. To the extent that detailed service-level feedback is desired, open-ended questions that explicitly reference specific services may improve the chances of garnering the needed information.

## Appendix 2.1. Invitation Letter and Survey

Dear <<FNAME>>,

A few weeks ago you received a letter asking for your assistance with an evaluation of the One-Stop Career System. If you have already completed and mailed back that survey, we appreciate your assistance. However, if you have not yet completed the survey, we would like to give you the opportunity to submit your responses online. We are especially grateful for your help because it is only by asking people such as yourself that we can ensure that One-Stop Career Services are as effective as they can possibly be. The survey should only take a few minutes and you may use the following link to complete it.

www.LINK

Esta encuesta es también disponible en español, si lo prefiere.

Sincerely,  
William Mabe, Ph.D.  
□ Director of Research and Evaluation





**John J. Heldrich Center  
for Workforce Development**  
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey  
30 Livingston Avenue  
New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901

www.heldrich.rutgers.edu  
hcwd@rci.rutgers.edu  
732-932-4100  
Fax: 732-932-3454

April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2014

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

We are writing this letter to ask for your assistance with an evaluation of the One-Stop Career Center Services that are provided to job seekers by the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJ LWD). In order to ensure that services are as effective as they can possibly be, we need to learn how well job seekers like you were served by their programs. The enclosed survey should take no more than five minutes of your time to complete and your answers will provide us with valuable information.

The survey is part of Rutgers University's effort to evaluate the NJ LWD's workforce system. The project is being conducted by the Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University and has been approved by the Rutgers University Institutional Review Board (IRB). If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, please call the Rutgers Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 1-848-932-0150. For questions related to taking the survey, please contact Tim MacKinnon at 1-855-326-8400, and use mailbox number five. Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. Mabe".

William Mabe, Ph.D.  
Director of Research and Evaluation



**John J. Heldrich Center  
for Workforce Development**  
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey  
30 Livingston Avenue  
New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901

[www.heldrich.rutgers.edu](http://www.heldrich.rutgers.edu)  
[hcwd@rci.rutgers.edu](mailto:hcwd@rci.rutgers.edu)  
732-932-4100  
Fax: 732-932-3454

April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2014

Querido \_\_\_\_\_,

Le escribimos esta carta para pedir su ayuda con una evaluación de los Servicios One-Stop Career Center proveídos a los solicitantes de empleo por el Departamento de Nueva Jersey de Trabajo y Desarrollo Laboral (NJ LWD). Para poder garantizar que los servicios son lo más efectivos posible, tenemos que aprender que tan bien los solicitantes de empleo, así como usted fueron atendidos por sus programas. La encuesta adjunta debe tomarse no más de cinco minutos de su tiempo para completar y sus respuestas nos proveerán información valiosa

La encuesta es parte del esfuerzo de la Universidad de Rutgers para evaluar el sistema de la fuerza laboral del NJ LWD. El proyecto está siendo llevado a cabo por el Centro para el Desarrollo de la Fuerza Laboral Heldrich en la Universidad de Rutgers y ha sido aprobado por la Junta de Revisión Institucional de la Universidad de Rutgers (IRB). Si usted tiene alguna pregunta sobre sus derechos como participante en este estudio, por favor llame a la Oficina de Rutgers de Investigación y Programas Patrocinados al 1-848-932-0150. Para preguntas relacionadas con tomar la encuesta, por favor contacte a Tim MacKinnon al 1-855-326-8400 y utilice el número de buzón cinco. Gracias por su participación.

Sinceramente,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. Mabe".

William Mabe, Ph.D.  
Director de Investigación y Evaluación

# ONE-STOP CAREER CENTER EVALUATION

Dear [NAME]

We would like to ask you some questions about your recent experience with the One-Stop Career Center services provided by the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJ LWD). Our purpose is to learn from you in order to improve the programs and services that they offer to job seekers. This questionnaire is voluntary and should take no longer than five minutes to complete. For issues related to survey administration, please contact Tim MacKinnon at 1-855-326-8400, and use mailbox number five.

Please understand that your answers will be kept confidential and that your help is entirely voluntary. There is no penalty or loss of benefits for not answering some or all of the questions. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, call the Rutgers Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 1-848-932-0150.

## Please Indicate Your Responses by Circling

- Using a scale of 1 to 10 where “1” means “Very Dissatisfied” and “10” means “Very Satisfied,” what is your overall satisfaction with the services provided by the One-Stop Career System?

|   |                |                       |
|---|----------------|-----------------------|
| <i>Very Dissatisfied</i>  | <i>Neutral</i> | <i>Very Satisfied</i> |
| 1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10 |                |                       |

- Considering all of the expectations you may have had about the services, to what extent did the services meet your expectations? “1” means “Fell Short of Expectations” and “10” means “Exceeded Your Expectations.”

|   |                |                 |
|---|----------------|-----------------|
| <i>Fell Short</i>   | <i>Neutral</i> | <i>Exceeded</i> |
| 1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10 |                |                 |

- Please indicate whether you received any of the following listed services from the One-Stop Career System and if so, please indicate how valuable that service was to you, not at all valuable, somewhat valuable, or very valuable.

| <i>Did you receive or use this service?</i>                |     |    | <i>If Yes</i> | <i>How valuable was it?</i> |                 |             |
|--|-----|----|---------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Career Planning Help                                       | Yes | No | ➡             | <i>Not at all</i>           | <i>Somewhat</i> | <i>Very</i> |
| Job Search Assistance                                      | Yes | No | ➡             | <i>Not at all</i>           | <i>Somewhat</i> | <i>Very</i> |
| Resume Writing Tips  | Yes | No | ➡             | <i>Not at all</i>           | <i>Somewhat</i> | <i>Very</i> |
| Jersey Jobs Club Workshops                                 | Yes | No | ➡             | <i>Not at all</i>           | <i>Somewhat</i> | <i>Very</i> |
| Other Workshops (Non-Jersey Jobs Club)                     | Yes | No | ➡             | <i>Not at all</i>           | <i>Somewhat</i> | <i>Very</i> |
| Jobs4Jersey.com / On Ramp                                  | Yes | No | ➡             | <i>Not at all</i>           | <i>Somewhat</i> | <i>Very</i> |
| Job Interview Referrals                                    | Yes | No | ➡             | <i>Not at all</i>           | <i>Somewhat</i> | <i>Very</i> |
| Recommendations for Job Training                           | Yes | No | ➡             | <i>Not at all</i>           | <i>Somewhat</i> | <i>Very</i> |
| Literacy, GED, Basic Skills, or other Program Enrollment   | Yes | No | ➡             | <i>Not at all</i>           | <i>Somewhat</i> | <i>Very</i> |
| Labor Market Information (Wages, Growth Occupations, etc.) | Yes | No | ➡             | <i>Not at all</i>           | <i>Somewhat</i> | <i>Very</i> |

[ID]

**-- OVER --**



## **Chapter 3**

# **Evaluation of Occupational Skills Training on Labor Market Outcomes**

by

Scott Powell, Ph.D.

William F. Mabe Jr., Ph.D.

Alex Ruder, Ph.D.

**W**ith the onset of the Great Recession in December 2007, New Jersey experienced a significant spike in unemployment, from 4.5% in November 2007 to 9.8% in October 2009 through January 2010 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). One of the state's, and indeed the nation's, primary means of fighting unemployment is to provide job seekers with occupational training. Each year, New Jersey trains thousands of job seekers to help them upgrade their skills and return to work. From 2006 to 2013, through the largest federal workforce program, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), and the largest state-funded training program, the Workforce Development Partnership (WDP) program, New Jersey provided nearly 40,000 New Jersey residents with individual training grants for occupational skills training.

The primary purpose of this chapter is to present the results of a quasi-experimental evaluation of the effectiveness of New Jersey's occupational skills training programs. It also addresses three related questions. First, did the recession change who sought training? Second, do individuals who participate in training at different types of training providers — a community college vs. a private training provider — achieve different labor market outcomes? Third, how do individuals trained specifically for occupations in the state's key industry sectors fare in the labor market after training?<sup>1</sup>

Before discussing the evaluation of training, this chapter presents a brief summary of the study's principal findings, a description of the data sources used, and the results of a descriptive analysis of the changing characteristics of training participants from 2006 through 2013. The next section presents the design, methodology, and results of the Heldrich Center's evaluation of three occupational skills training programs: WIA Adult, WIA Dislocated Worker, and WDP. The chapter then compares the employment and earnings outcomes of trainees who received training at a community college to trainees who were trained at a private training provider. Next, the chapter presents the results of a labor market outcomes comparison of individuals who received training in occupational fields closely aligned with the state's key industry sectors. The final section concludes.

## Summary of Principal Findings

**Finding #1.** After the recession began, an increasing share of training recipients in all three programs that were studied (WIA Adult, WIA Dislocated Worker, and WDP) were male, white, older, and somewhat more highly educated than pre-recession trainees. In addition, post-recession trainees also had more favorable pre-training employment histories compared with individuals who started training before the recession.

**Finding #2.** The quasi-experimental evaluation of the WIA Adult and WIA Dislocated Worker training programs shows that participation in training results in higher post-training employment rates and earnings relative to two matched comparison groups. There is modest evidence indicating that participation in WDP training also positively affects employment and earnings after training, but the smaller sample size available for the WDP analysis means that these results are not statistically significant, and caution should be taken in drawing conclusions about the effectiveness of WDP training.

**Finding #3.** Descriptive analyses of employment and earnings outcomes data for community college and private training provider exiters show that the two groups of exiters are employed in New Jersey at about the same rate following training and earn about the same amount of money.

**Finding #4.** A descriptive analysis of employment and earnings outcomes shows that individuals trained in the Healthcare and the Transportation, Logistics, and Distribution (TLD) fields — two of the state's "key industry sectors" — find employment in their related industries at about the same rates. TLD training exiters, however, generally earn more than the exiters of healthcare training programs.



### Data Sources Used for this Report

Heldrich Center researchers used two primary data sources from the State of New Jersey to conduct the data analyses presented in this chapter: America's One-Stop Operating System (AOSOS) and Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage Record data. AOSOS records the enrollment of customers in the workforce system, their demographic characteristics, the services they receive, and their exit from the system. AOSOS also tracks the participation of workforce system customers in the three largest welfare programs that serve working-age adults: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and the General Assistance (GA) program, a state-funded program that serves adults without dependent children. The UI wage data system records the wages of all employees at employers that report wages every quarter in the course of paying their UI taxes.

### Training Participants Before and After the Onset of the Great Recession

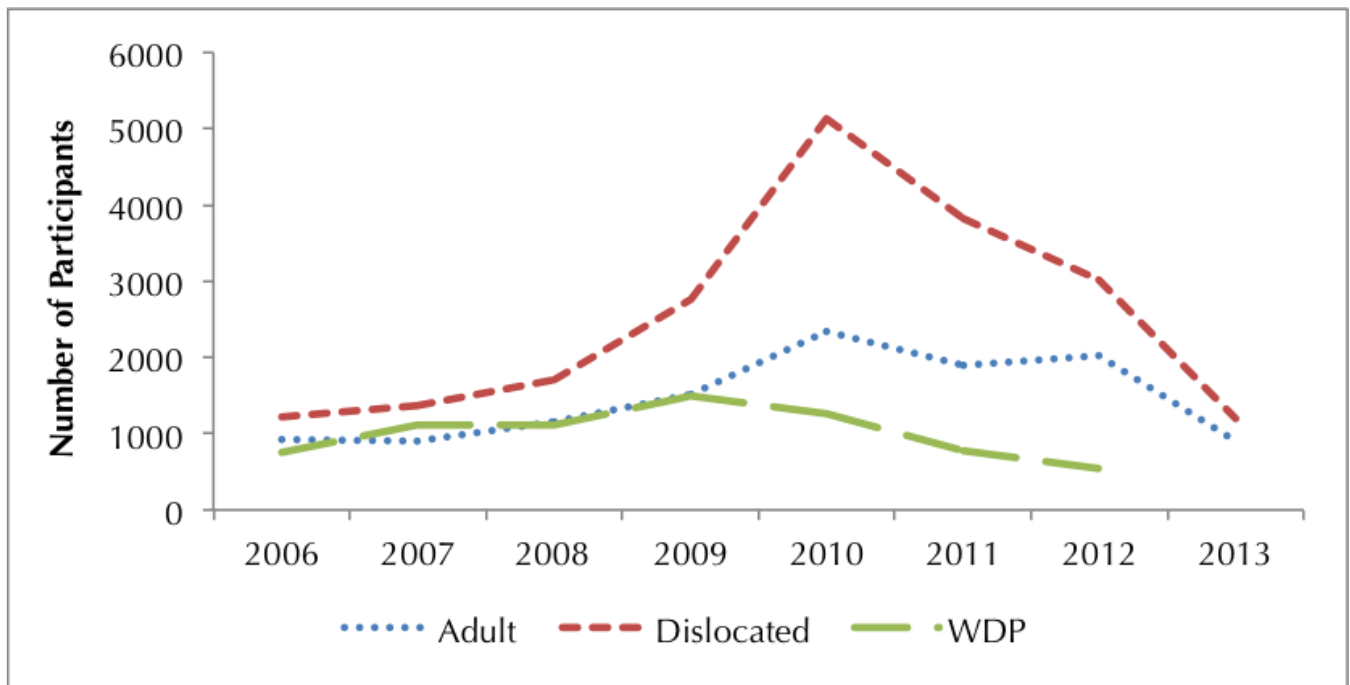
The Great Recession, which began in 2007 and officially ended in June 2009, left the nation with record levels of unemployment. In New Jersey, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate more than doubled between November 2007 and October 2009, from 4.5% to 9.8% (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). Many researchers (e.g., Elsby, Hobijn, Sahin, & Valletta, 2011; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012) have documented the different character of the Great Recession compared to previous recessions, including the higher spike in unemployment rates, the increased duration of unemployment, and the disproportionate effect on male workers, among others. Although the macroeconomic consequences of the Great Recession for the labor market have been well documented (e.g., Elsby et al., 2011; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012), less research has been devoted to the microeconomic effects of the recession on the unemployed. In the context of New Jersey's occupational skills train-

ing programs, Heldrich Center researchers asked whether the Great Recession affected who sought training through the WIA Adult, WIA Dislocated Worker, and WDP programs and studied the extent to which the characteristics of the individuals who sought occupational skills training changed from before the Great Recession to afterwards. This descriptive analysis presents interesting insights into the evolving characteristics of training recipients, which serves to place the results of the evaluation of New Jersey's training programs into context.

To examine the characteristics of training participants before and after the Great Recession, this section presents summary statistics for a number of variables for the WIA Adult, the WIA Dislocated Worker, and the state-funded WDP programs across multiple program years. These statistics are presented separately for training participants from each program, because each serves a distinct population.<sup>2</sup> In each of the charts below, Center researchers present the means for each variable for each of program years 2006-2013. Program years 2006-2008, which extend from July 2005 to June 2008, represent the pre-recession period. Although the Great Recession officially began in December 2007, the recession did not begin to have adverse effects on the labor market until the middle of 2008. Program years 2009-2013, which extend from July 2008 to June 2013, cover the recession and post-recession periods for which data are available. Thus, this chapter presents three years of pre-recession data and five years of data from the onset of the recession.

Before turning to the characteristics of the trainees, this chapter first examines how the number of training participants has changed over time. Figure 3.1 demonstrates a substantial spike in the number of individuals seeking training through the Dislocated Worker program as well as a less-pronounced but nonetheless significant increase in the number of individuals trained through the WIA Adult program. Both programs show gradual growth in training participation prior to the recession, followed by the stark increase for Dislocated Worker training and the more modest increase for WIA Adult, both of which peak in 2010 and then subside in 2011. This pattern is consistent with the large but time-limited resources that states received through the American Recovery and Reinvestment

**Figure 3.1. Number of Individuals Trained through the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and WDP Programs, 2006-2013**



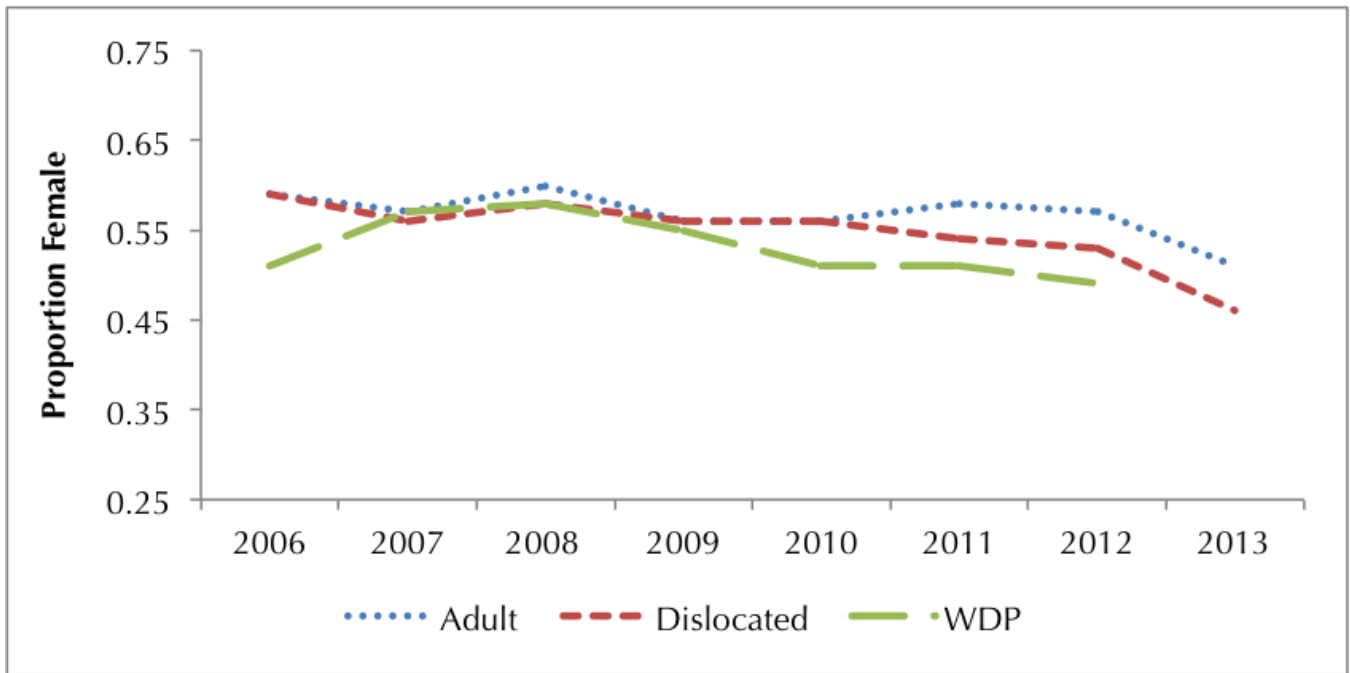
Act (Eberts & Wandner, 2013). The other point that stands out from Figure 3.1 is that the Dislocated Worker program served a greater number of trainees than the Adult program in each of the seven program years. The state-funded WDP program actually saw reductions in the number of individuals served over this period, likely the result of lower funding levels for the program (New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, 2012).

Turning to the traits of the training participants, this section first examines their demographic characteristics, which are displayed in Figures 3.2 through 3.5. Figure 3.2 demonstrates gradual change in the proportion of female participants over time. In the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, women represent the majority of trainees with at least 55% of participation through 2010. However, the data show a slight decline in this majority once the recession hits. After the recession hit, in almost every year, female participation in the WIA Adult, WIA Dislocated Worker, and WDP programs was lower year after year. Except for a slight uptick in female participation between 2010 and 2011, a general

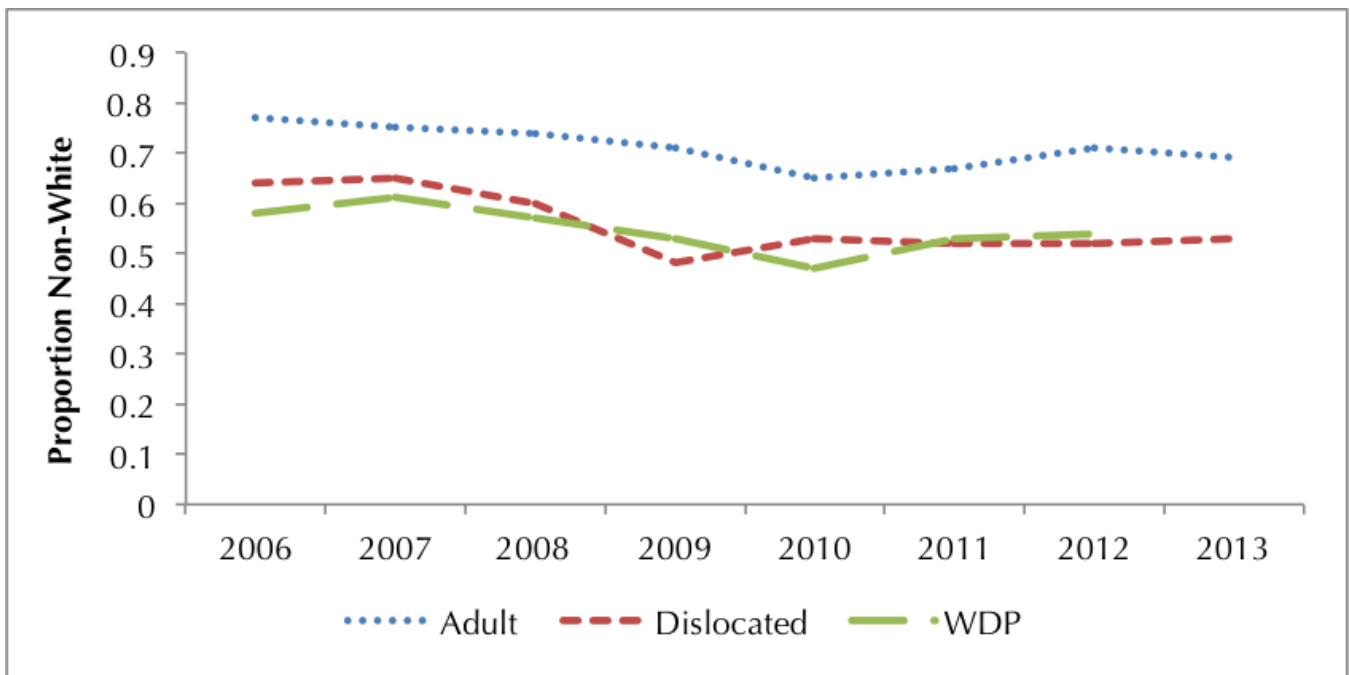
decline in female participation in the three training programs begins in 2011. The decline is especially acute from 2012 to 2013 for the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs when the female participation rate declined by six and seven percentage points, respectively.

Figure 3.3 displays the changing racial composition of training participants. In both WIA programs and WDP, non-white participants represent a substantially smaller proportion of trainees once the recession hits. This drop in participation among non-white individuals is especially acute in the Dislocated Worker program, which went from 60% minority participation in 2008 to 48% in 2009. While this number rebounded to 52% in 2011, it is still much lower than its pre-recession level. The pattern of non-white participation in WDP mirrored that of the Dislocated Worker program. While not as severe, minority participation in the Adult program dropped from 74% in 2008 to 69% in 2013.

**Figure 3.2. Proportion of Participants who are Female in WIA Adult, WIA Dislocated Worker, and WDP Programs, 2006-2013**



**Figure 3.3. Proportion of Participants who are Non-White in WIA Adult, WIA Dislocated Worker, and WDP Programs, 2006-2013**



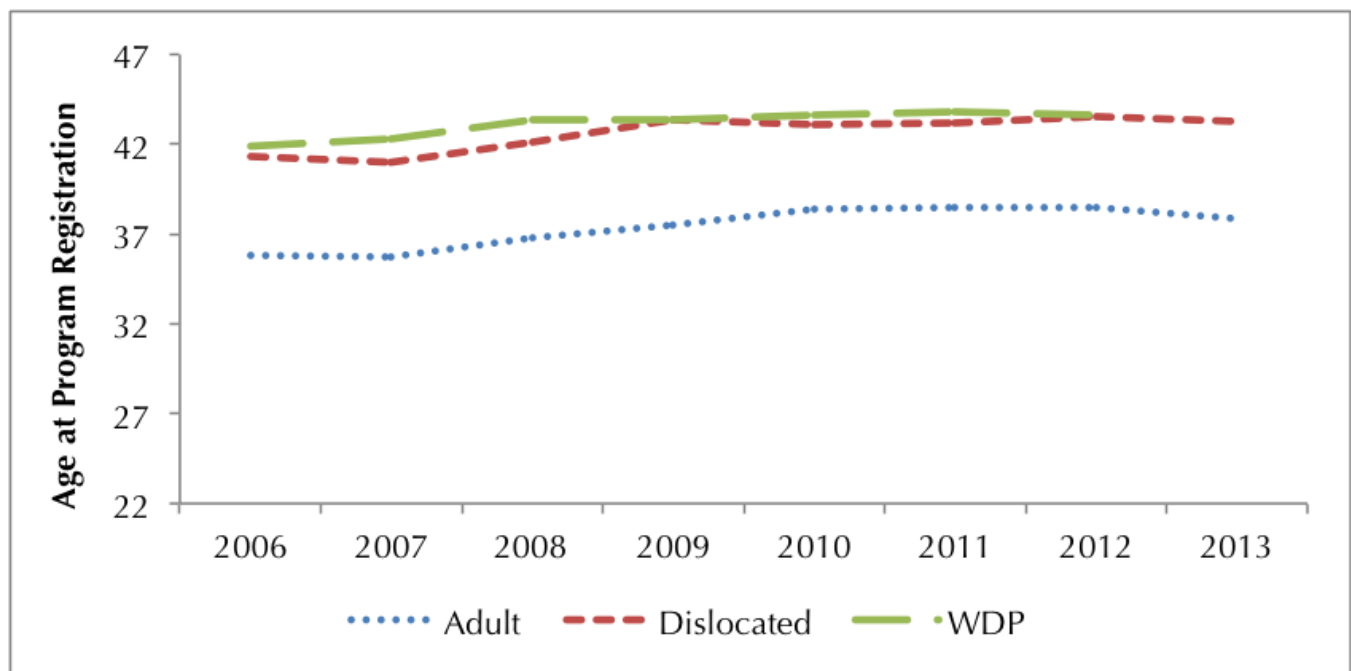
## Evaluation of One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey

Rounding out the demographic characteristics, Figures 3.4 and 3.5 demonstrate not only further differences between the WIA Adult program, on the one hand, and the WIA Dislocated Worker and WDP programs on the other, but also similar trends over time. Looking at the mean age of participants at registration and their mean years of education, it is clear that the Dislocated Worker and WDP programs serve a slightly older and more educated population than the Adult program. It is also clear that the mean age and years of education, regardless of program, increase after the onset of the recession. In summary, post-recession trainees are more likely to be male, white, older, and more highly educated than their pre-recession counterparts.

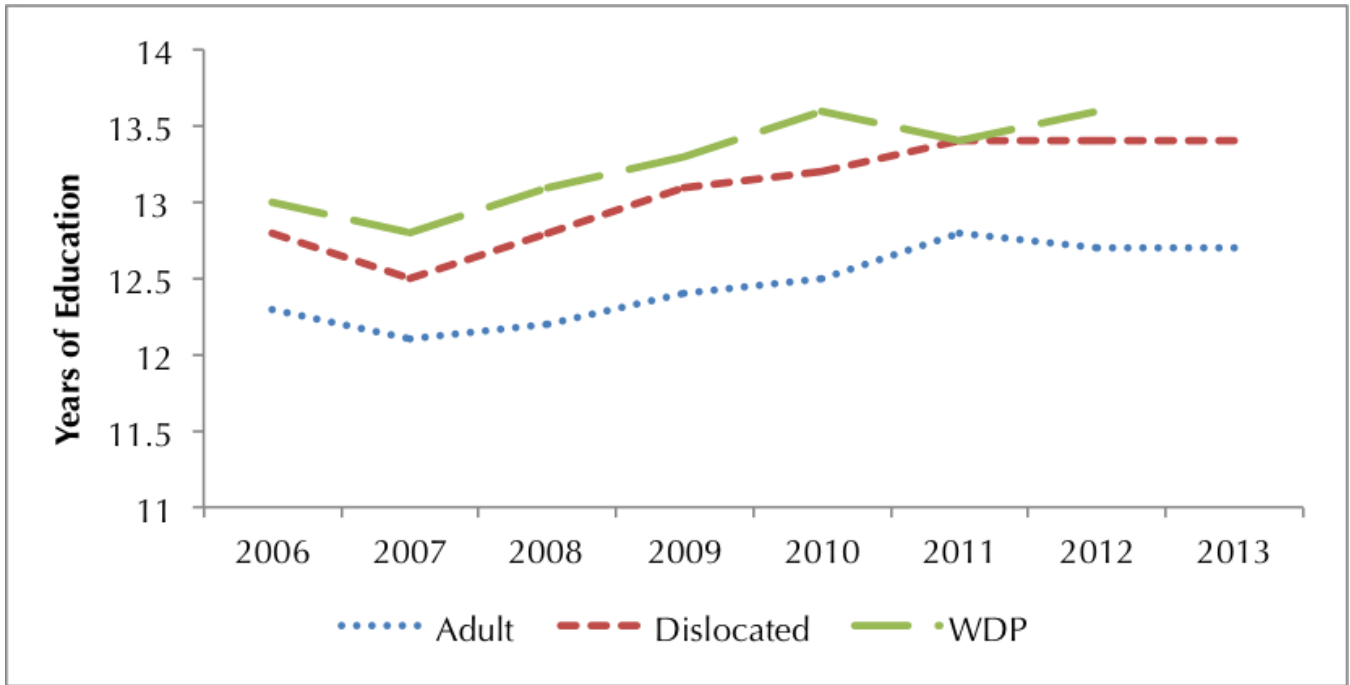
In addition to demographic traits, the pre-training employment experiences of trainees also changed from before the recession to afterward. As previous research has demonstrated, during the recession more individuals experienced significantly longer spells of unemployment. Individuals who

sought training in New Jersey were no exception to this rule. The data indicate a sharp post-recession increase in duration of unemployment of trainees. Specifically, Figure 3.6 provides a proxy for the duration of unemployment prior to WIA and WDP participation, and is arguably the most striking of all the charts in this section. Each line represents the mean number of quarters with zero wages prior to WIA registration. As with many of the demographic variables described above, Figure 3.6 provides further evidence that the WIA Adult program, on the one hand, serves a different population than the WIA Dislocated Worker and WDP programs, on the other. The Adult program trainees endure substantially longer periods without wages prior to receiving WIA assistance. Despite this difference, since the recession began, the duration of unemployment prior to training among trainees increased significantly for participants in all three programs. In fact, these durations essentially doubled between 2009 and 2011. To put these numbers in context for 2011, Dislocated Worker trainees endured, on average, at least six months

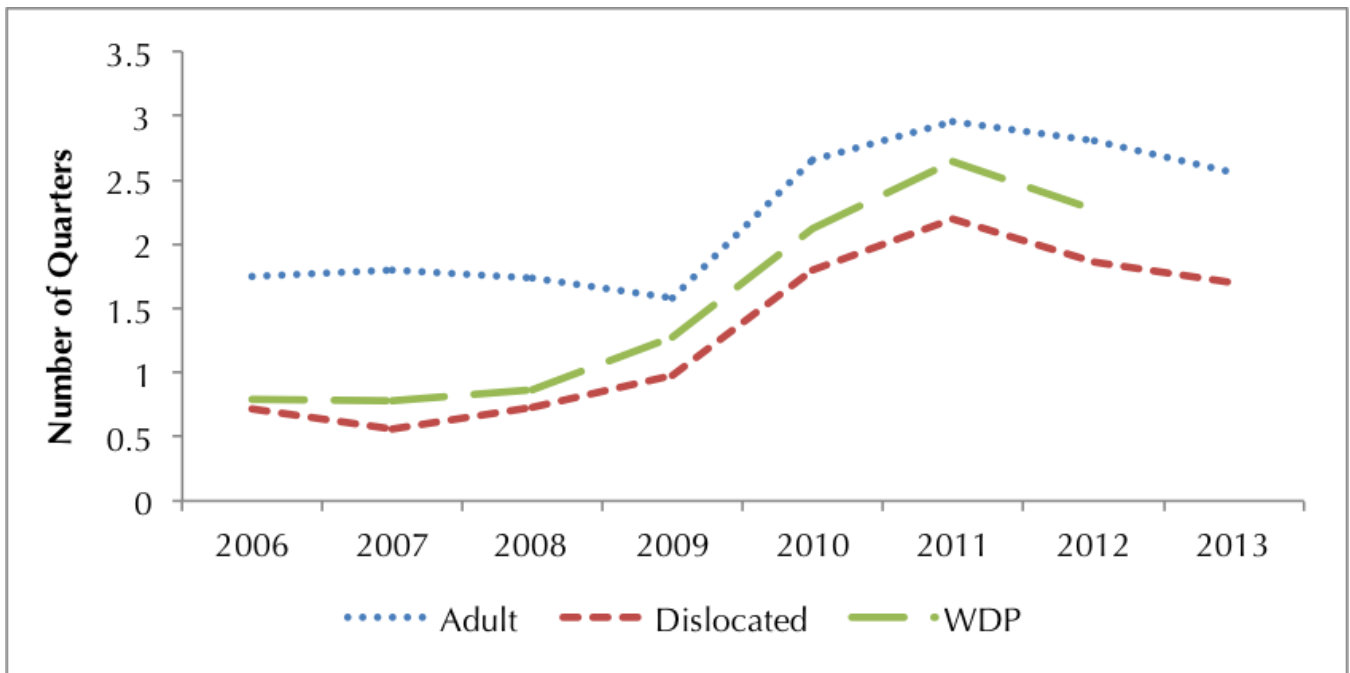
**Figure 3.4. Age of Participants in WIA Adult, WIA Dislocated Worker, and WDP Programs, 2006-2013**



**Figure 3.5. Years of Education of Participants in WIA Adult, WIA Dislocated Worker, and WDP Programs, 2006-2013**



**Figure 3.6. Number of Consecutive Quarters of Unemployment Before the Start of Training of Participants in WIA Adult, WIA Dislocated Worker, and WDP Programs, 2006-2013**



## Evaluation of One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey

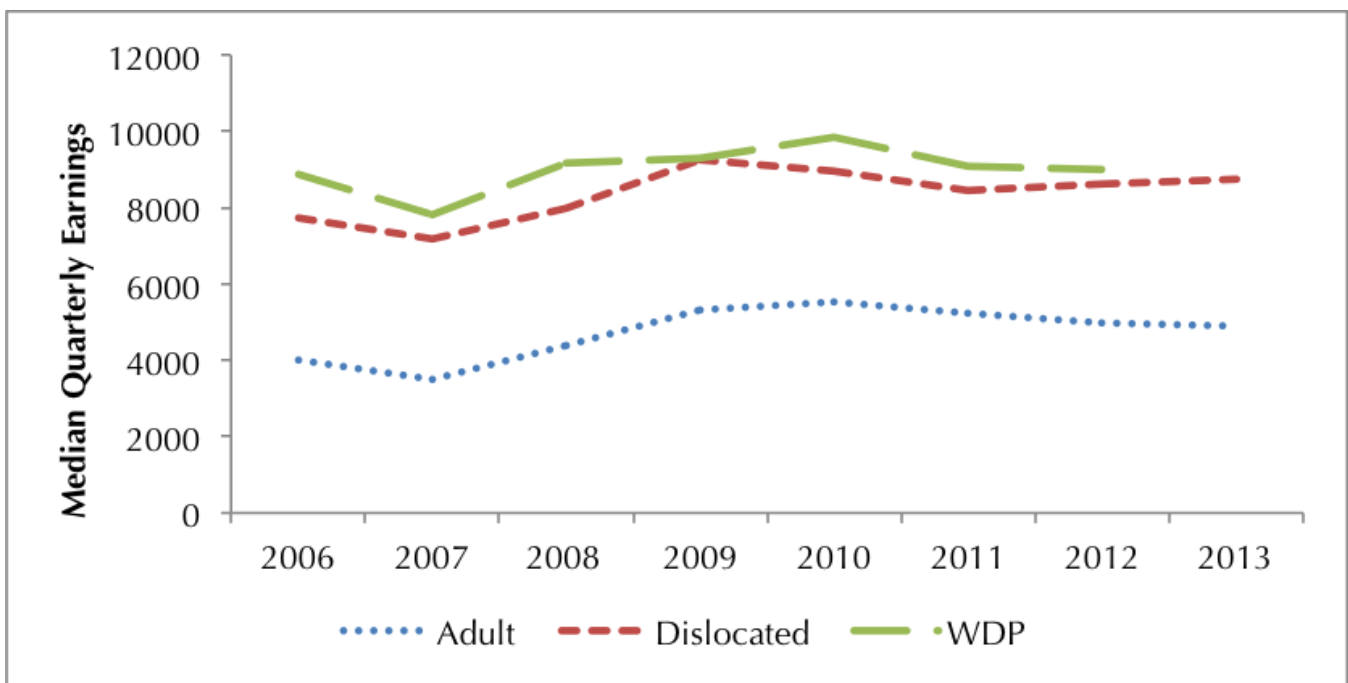
with zero wages, WDP participants endured 7.5 such months, and Adult program trainees endured nine months. These striking durations are likely a product of increasing demand for services after the recession, far exceeding the limited funding available for training programs. After 2011, the unemployment duration of participants in each of the three training programs begins to fall by roughly a month-and-a-half for participants in each of the three programs.

Heldrich Center researchers then examined whether the average pre-training earnings of trainees changed over time. In other words, did the individuals entering training in more recent years earn more or less before they started training than individuals who started training in earlier years? To estimate pre-training earnings, Heldrich Center researchers computed a quarterly, pre-training wage for all trainees, by taking the average of each trainee's earnings in the sixth quarter before training through the third quarter before training. Center researchers selected these specific pre-training quarters in order to get a more accurate sense of

each individual's true labor market value. Figure 3.7 displays the median, pre-training quarterly earnings of trainees. The data show that immediately following the onset of the recession, individuals seeking training had higher earnings than individuals who enrolled in training before the recession began. Individuals who began training in more recent years have had somewhat lower earnings than the immediate post-recession cohorts, but still higher than the pre-recession trainees.

Some of the factors that likely account for the increase in average pre-training earnings after the start of the recession are the trends shown in Figures 3.2 through 3.5. Starting in about 2009, the composition of WIA trainees begins to shift toward individuals who have a set of demographic characteristics that are associated with higher earnings. Given these demographics, it should be expected that the prior wages of trainees would be greater after the onset of the recession. This increase does occur, notably in 2009 (and 2010 for WDP). However, it remains flat through 2013, likely as a result of the increased duration of unemployment prior

**Figure 3.7. Pre-Training Median Quarterly Earnings of Participants in WIA Adult, WIA Dislocated Worker, and WDP Programs, 2006-2013**





## Evaluation of One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey

to training in those years and the well-noted wage stagnation that has plagued the economy since the start of the recession (Daly & Hobijn, 2015).

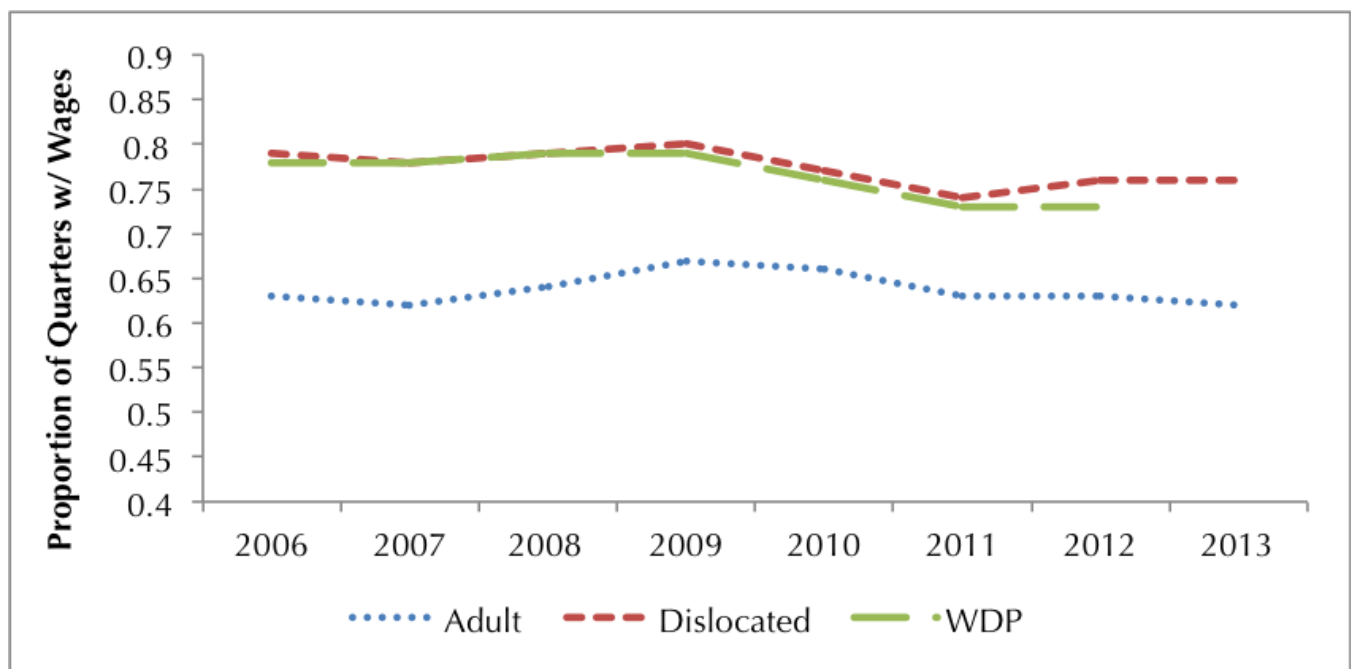
To get a sense of the trainees' pre-training labor market attachment, Heldrich Center researchers calculated the proportion of the 20 quarters prior to training in which trainees were employed. The data indicate that, overall, Dislocated Worker and WDP trainees were employed in roughly 16 of the previous quarters, on average, while Adult program trainees were employed in about 13 of them. Figure 3.8 shows that over time across all three programs, there is a very slight increase in the proportion of previous quarters employed immediately after the recession starts followed by a slight, but steady decline from 2009 onward.

Concluding the labor market variables, Figure 3.9 provides the mean prior job tenure of trainees. Due to the nature of program eligibility requirements, it is not surprising that Dislocated Worker partici-

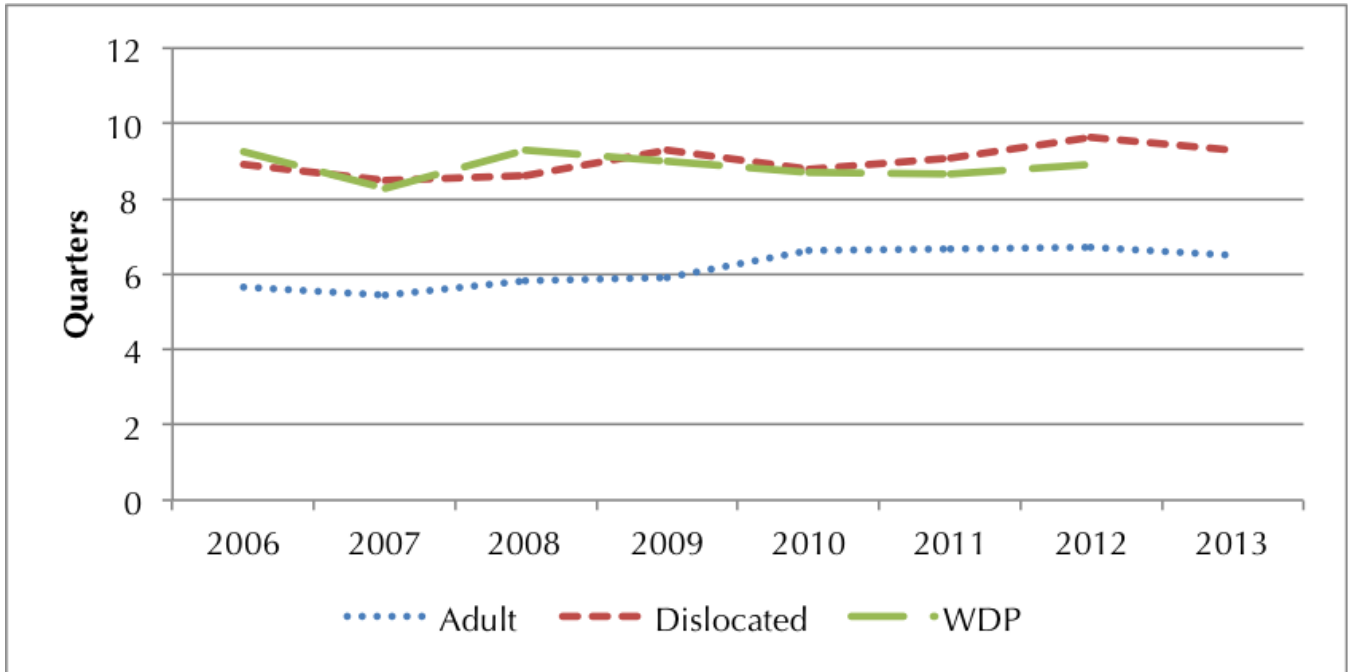
pants have longer attachments to their prior employers. WDP participants have longer job tenure, at least in part, because individuals with stronger work histories are eligible to participate in it. For the most part, tenure in the previous job is relatively stable over the entire sample period. There is, however, a modest trend among new Adult and Dislocated Worker trainees in the years after the start of the recession who show slightly higher levels of pre-training job tenure.

Finally, in addition to demographic and labor market characteristics, Figure 3.10 demonstrates an important change in the way training participants were served by One-Stop Career Centers. Each line represents the mean number of days between registering for WIA services and starting training. The most striking aspect of Figure 3.10 is that across the entire sample period, the time from registration to the start of training was far lower for WDP participants than for trainees in either of the WIA programs. This difference may be a function of

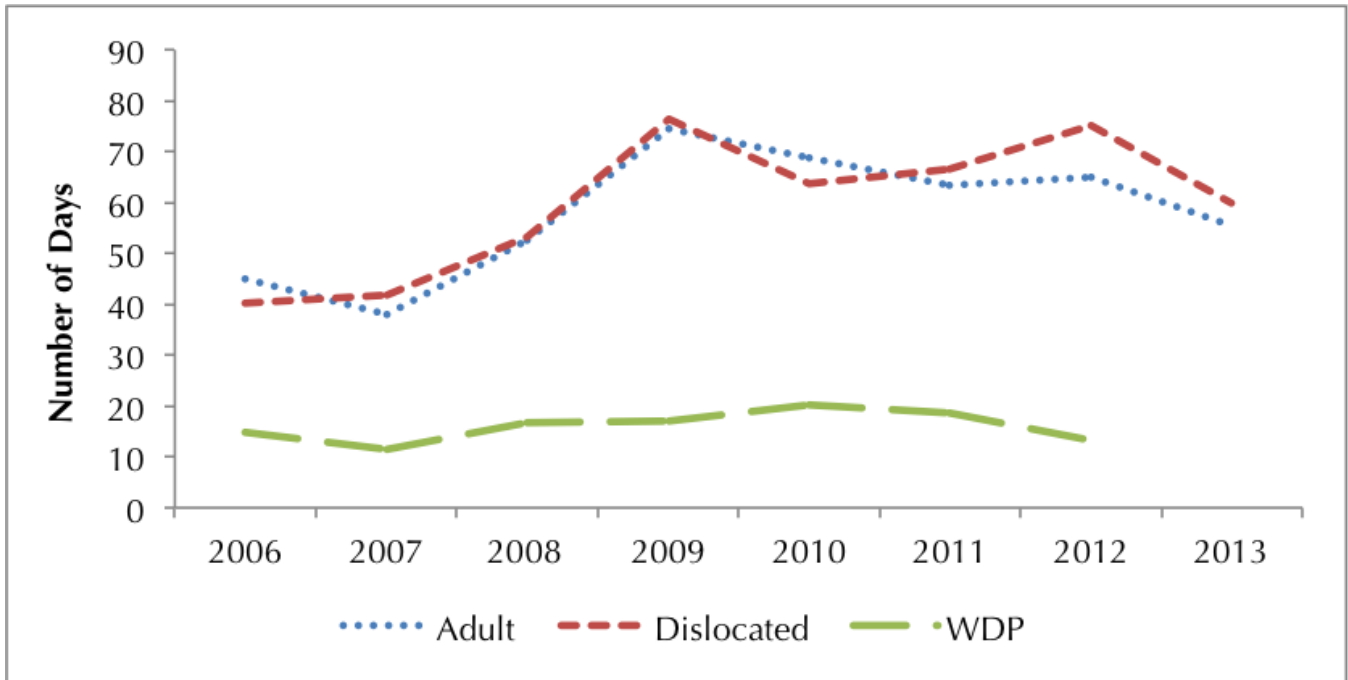
**Figure 3.8. Proportion of Pre-Training Quarters Employed for Participants in WIA Adult, WIA Dislocated Worker, and WDP Programs, 2006-2013**



**Figure 3.9. Number of Consecutive Quarters of Employment at Most Recent Employer Before Training of Participants in WIA Adult, WIA Dislocated Worker, and WDP Programs, 2006-2013**



**Figure 3.10. Number of Days between Registration and Start of Training for Participants in WIA Adult, WIA Dislocated Worker, and WDP Programs, 2006-2013**



how WIA staff allocate individuals to these training programs or the requirements and documentation needed for participation in them. Looking only at the WIA programs, prior to the recession, training participants could expect to wait 40 to 45 days to begin a training program. This time increased dramatically in 2009, reaching over 70 days for both Adult and Dislocated Worker participants. By 2013, however, this time had dropped to around 55 to 60 days. While this post-recession trend could simply be a product of having fewer participants to serve, it could also be the result of One-Stop Career Center staff becoming more proficient at implementing assessment procedures that select individuals for training (Trutko & Barnow, 2013).

In brief, the descriptive statistics show a change in the composition of individuals participating in training after the start of the Great Recession compared to before the recession began. To be more specific, after the recession began, a growing proportion of training recipients in all three programs — WIA Adult, WIA Dislocated Worker, and WDP — were male, white, older, and somewhat more highly educated. This set of characteristics has been found to be associated with more positive labor market outcomes, and the higher levels of pre-training earnings among the trainees after the start of the recession bear this out.

## Quasi-Experimental Evaluation of Occupational Skills Training

### Research Question and Research Design

This chapter addresses the question of whether and to what extent New Jersey's job training programs help the unemployed return to work and increase their earnings: what are the employment and earnings effects of the occupational skills training provided in New Jersey under two programs — the largest federal workforce program, WIA, and the largest state-funded training program, WDP?

Generating a valid answer to this question requires an answer to the more specific question of how the outcomes of WIA Adult, WIA Dislocated Worker, and WDP trainees would have been different had they not received training. To answer this question, ideally one would be able to compare the trainee's earnings in the world in which she participated in training with her earnings in the world in which she did not. This is, of course, impossible because we observe either the state of the world in which she participated or the state of the world in which she did not, but not both. The researcher must therefore compare individuals who participated in the program with individuals who did not participate but are otherwise as similar as possible to the participants.

In a perfect world, the only pre-program difference between the trainees and the comparison group of non-trainees would be that the former participated in the program while the latter did not. Purely from a research standpoint, the ideal way to develop such a control group would be to randomly assign a portion of those interested in training to receive training (treatment group) and a portion to receive some other service (control group), follow both groups as they enter the labor market, and then compare their earnings. With a large sample of prospective trainees, assignment at random would ensure that the only difference between two groups, on average, was participation in training. Unfortunately, such a research design was not feasible for this evaluation.

The next best alternative, and the strategy that Heldrich Center researchers followed, is to use observational data to generate a valid comparison group. The treatment and comparison group members must be as similar as possible on measurable characteristics, including their sex, race, age, education level, and wages they earned before training as well as on characteristics that are extremely difficult to measure, such as their motivation to succeed. Heldrich Center researchers constructed two separate comparison groups, one consisting of customers who have received an intensive service and another of customers who started training but did not complete it, using matching methods that selected for the comparison group individuals who are highly similar to the trainees on a number of observable characteristics. Heldrich Center re-

searchers then evaluated the effect of training by comparing the employment and earnings of trainees to the comparison group of non-trainees.

**Treatment and Comparison Groups.** One of the contributions of this chapter is to examine the impact of occupational training programs across multiple comparison groups. In all analyses below, the treatment group consists of all individuals who completed an occupational skills training program and who have a WIA exit date. While “training” typically refers to a wide variety of activities, including on-the-job training, occupational skills training, and alternative work experiences, the treatment group in this study consists only of individuals who started and completed an occupational skills training program that was funded by either the WIA Adult, WIA Dislocated Worker, or WDP programs.

In the first set of analyses, the comparison group consists of individuals whose “highest” level of service received in a workforce registration period was intensive services and who have a service period exit date. For a customer to have received intensive services as her highest level of services in a workforce registration period, she must have received intensive services — either one or more funded intensive services or one or more unfunded intensive services (as classified for the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, or NJLWD) but not received any type of training — occupational skills training or any other type of training. Individuals who received intensive services and occupational skills training are included in the treatment group. Individuals who received intensive services and any type of training besides occupational skills training are excluded from this analysis. Additionally, for every individual in the treatment group, Center researchers remove all instances of that trainee’s prior participation in intensive services, in order to avoid matching a treatment group member to herself.

In the second set of analyses, researchers used individuals who started a training program but failed to complete it as the comparison group. Using WIA Intensive customers as the comparison group is a common practice in much of the training evaluation literature (Hollenbeck & Huang, 2013). Given the graduated nature of WIA services, these in-

dividuals should be more similar to training participants on unobservable characteristics than job seekers who only register for the labor exchange. However, training participants are not randomly selected from the pool of all WIA Intensive customers. On the contrary, it is highly likely that trainees are selected for and/or select into training programs based on unobservable characteristics (e.g., motivation) that correlate with employment outcomes. A more appropriate comparison group for evaluating training programs would control for these unobservable characteristics that select individuals into training programs in order to eliminate the resultant positive bias in employment outcomes. Fortunately, the administrative dataset used offers just such a comparison group by identifying those individuals who begin but fail to complete a training program. These non-completers serve as the comparison group in the second set of analyses. Because completers and non-completers alike have selected into WIA participation and specifically into starting an occupational skills training program, it is likely that they are more similar in terms of their unobservable characteristics than trainees and “intensive” services recipients. Of course, no comparison group is perfect, and there may well be systematic, unobservable differences between training program completers and non-completers. Many individuals may fail to complete, for example, because they need short-term employment and drop out of training to go to work, others because they encounter unexpected personal challenges, such as childbirth, dependent care, or serious injury, that prevent them from continuing their training.

## Methodology

This section discusses the key elements of the evaluation methodology, including the unit and periods of measurement, temporal measurement, sample period, control variables, outcome variables, data limitations, and data-matching algorithms.

**Unit and Periods of Analysis.** The unit of analysis is the person plus workforce services registration quarter. This means that a single person can appear multiple times in the treatment group if he has multiple registration quarters in the period of study. In order to ensure at least eight quarters of wage

data on the entire sample, the analyses are limited to those individuals who registered for workforce services in program years 2009 to 2012 (July 2008 to June 2012).

**Temporal Measurement.** Training evaluation studies often define the temporal sequencing of an individual's path through the labor market in one of two ways. While some use a single point in time to distinguish the periods before and after participation in an employment service, others use two points in time to distinguish between the time before participation, the time spent participating in a service, and the time after the service is complete. The Heldrich Center takes the latter approach. The administrative dataset contains both a workforce services registration date and an exit date, allowing researchers to clearly identify the period in which individuals participate in the workforce system. Thus, all labor market history variables are measured backward from the registration quarter, and all outcome variables are measured forward from the exit quarter.

**Sample Definition.** In order to improve the validity of the results, Heldrich Center researchers remove a number of observations from the dataset. Those under 22 years of age at the time of registration are removed, as youth job seekers are a population with service challenges that are distinctly different from those of adults. Heldrich Center researchers also remove individuals with no earnings in the five years prior to registration, as well as those in the top 1% of previous earnings. Finally, researchers remove all observations that are missing a workforce services exit date.

### Control Variables

**Demographic Characteristics.** Heldrich Center researchers created variables for the following individual-level demographic characteristics: age, sex, race/ethnicity, level of education, and disability status.

**Labor Market History.** Heldrich Center researchers control for the wage history of each training participant, which is defined as the individual's average earnings over the 7th through 10th quarters prior to enrollment in the workforce system. Research-

ers then created a series of additional variables, including the proportion of time that an individual was employed in the five years prior to workforce services registration, the duration of unemployment prior to registration, and job tenure at an individual's most recent place of employment.

**Program History.** The Heldrich Center created four separate dummy variables to indicate whether an individual had participated in WIA, TANF, SNAP, or GA at any point in the four quarters before his workforce services enrollment quarter.

**Outcome Variables.** Heldrich Center researchers tested the effect of training on two primary dependent variables: the earnings in each of the eight quarters following the workforce services exit quarter, and employment in each of the eight quarters following the exit quarter. Earnings were calculated only for individuals who had wages greater than zero in a particular quarter. Individuals with no earnings for a given quarter were excluded from the calculations. Earnings were adjusted for inflation to the second quarter of 2014, using the mean consumer price index values for New York, NY and Philadelphia, PA (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015).

**Data Limitations.** Finally, there are several characteristics of the data used in this study that could bias the impact estimates of the training programs evaluated. First, this study includes no UI claims data. While the New Jersey Workforce Data Quality Initiative project plans to link these UI claims data to the longitudinal data system in the near future, they are not currently linked. Consequently, Heldrich Center researchers were unable to include a number of important control variables in their analysis such as the exact duration of unemployment and the receipt of UI benefits. Second, the UI wage record only provides data for those individuals employed in New Jersey. Thus, when New Jersey job seekers find work in other states, their records show zero wages. This could bias the results of this study to the extent that individuals in treatment groups have a different likelihood of finding work outside of New Jersey than those in the corresponding comparison group.

Third and most important, Center researchers were not able to disaggregate "intensive" customers by WIA program. It was only possible to examine the



entire pool of workforce customers and identify those individuals whose highest level of service received during a workforce registration period was an “intensive” service as defined by NJLWD. Thus, in the analyses that use “intensive” customers as the comparison group, the matched comparison group customers could be from the WIA Adult, WIA Dislocated Worker, WDP, or Wagner-Peyser programs. This represents a significant departure from much of the existing evaluation literature, which often limits the comparison group only to individuals who are classified as Intensive customers in the WIA program under evaluation. Also included in the comparison pool are individuals who are TANF, SNAP, and GA customers. Heldrich Center researchers attempt to mitigate problems of comparing WIA clients to TANF, SNAP, and GA customers by including in the matching model separate dummy variables for participation in TANF, SNAP, and GA, respectively, in the past year. The limitations of using such a comparison group are discussed below.

### Matching Model

Matching methods are powerful methods for identifying observations that are as similar to one another as possible in terms of their **observable** characteristics. In a perfect world, every observation in the treatment group would have a matching observation that was identical in every way except for the receipt of the treatment. Such exact matching is not feasible, so researchers developed propensity score matching (PSM), which calculates for all observations in the treatment group and the comparison pool the probability that each observation received the treatment. Each treatment group observation is then grouped with one (or more) observations from the comparison pool that has (have) the most similar propensity score(s). PSM is by far the most common method used in evaluating training programs. Recent discoveries in statistics, however, have found that PSM can lead to biased estimates that misrepresent the true impact of training programs (King, Nielsen, Coberley, Pope, & Wells, n.d.) and potentially generate worse results than not matching.

Alternative methods, such as Mahalanobis Distance Matching (MDM) and Coarsened Exact Matching, do not suffer from the deficiencies of

PSM. Heldrich Center researchers, therefore, estimate all models using MDM and evaluate the robustness of the results using PSM. Whereas propensity score matching uses a logit model to predict the probability that an individual is in the treatment group and then selects the treatment and comparison groups comprised of the individuals with the most similar propensity score, MDM measures the distance of a treatment group observation from a set of observations in the comparison pool and matches with closest comparison observation(s).

All of the models presented below use MDM with replacement, meaning that comparison group observations can be matched with more than one treatment group observation. In addition to including all variables listed above in the MDM model, Heldrich Center researchers also exact match on sex and program year. All models estimate the average effect of the treatment on the treated with Abadie-Imbens standard errors, and all estimates are regression-adjusted using all of the control variables in the matching model (Abadie & Imbens, 2011).

The limitation of any matching strategy is that, unlike an experiment, it is unable to ensure that the **only** difference between treatment and control group members is that the former received the treatment and the latter did not. In quasi-experimental designs, it is possible that individuals who have identical observable characteristics (i.e., in terms of **measurable** demographics, prior labor market, and ability variables) may differ in important ways from one another in terms of their **unobservable** traits, such as their motivation to succeed, their family connections, their social networks, etc. Although Center researchers have created two different comparison groups that seek to ensure that the treatment and control group individuals are as similar as possible to one another on both observable and unobservable characteristics, it is nonetheless likely that this model does not capture all significant variation between the treatment and comparison groups. This issue is addressed in the discussion of the results and the conclusion.



## Training Completers vs. Customers who have Received an Intensive Service

### Post-Match Descriptive Statistics

The goal of matching is to create a comparison group of job seekers who are as similar as possible on their observed characteristics to trainees. As described above, Heldrich Center researchers find the nearest neighbor of each training participant within the comparison group of customers who

received an intensive service using the Mahalano-bis distance. One of the benefits of using a more broadly defined comparison group is that this provided a very large pool of over 300,000 individuals for the three program years under analysis. With the comparison pool being roughly 80 times larger than the Adult program training group, 40 times larger than the Dislocated Worker training group, and 100 times larger than the WDP training group, it allowed Heldrich Center researchers to obtain strong matches on the observable characteristics used in the matching model. Table 3.1 provides post-match summary statistics for variables used in the matching model.<sup>3</sup> As the table demonstrates,

**Table 3.1. Post-Match Summary Statistics**

|                                     | Adult    |                   | Dislocated Worker |                   | WDP      |                   |
|-------------------------------------|----------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|
|                                     | Trainees | Intensive Clients | Trainees          | Intensive Clients | Trainees | Intensive Clients |
| <b>Sample Size</b>                  | 6,185    | 471,200           | 12,120            | 489,683           | 3,573    | 493,168           |
| <b>Matched Sample Size</b>          | 6,185    | 6,185             | 12,120            | 12,120            | 3,573    | 3,573             |
| <b>Demographics</b>                 |          |                   |                   |                   |          |                   |
| Female                              | 56%      | 56%               | 54%               | 54%               | 52%      | 52%               |
| Age (mean)                          | 38.0     | 38.0              | 43.0              | 42.9              | 43.5     | 43.4              |
| Minority                            | 68%      | 68%               | 52%               | 52%               | 52%      | 52%               |
| Disability                          | 1%       | 1%                | 1%                | 1%                | 1%       | 1%                |
| Years of Education (mean)           | 12.6     | 12.5              | 13.2              | 13.2              | 13.4     | 13.4              |
| <b>Program History</b>              |          |                   |                   |                   |          |                   |
| TANF                                | 5%       | 5%                | 1%                | 1%                | 1%       | 1%                |
| GA                                  | 3%       | 3%                | 1%                | 1%                | 1%       | 1%                |
| SNAP                                | 6%       | 6%                | 2%                | 2%                | 3%       | 3%                |
| Workforce Services                  | 58%      | 58%               | 60%               | 60%               | 78%      | 77%               |
| <b>Labor Market History</b>         |          |                   |                   |                   |          |                   |
| Quarterly Earnings (mean)           | \$5,174  | \$5,152           | \$9,097           | \$8,953           | \$9,815  | \$9,599           |
| Quarters Employed                   | 65%      | 65%               | 76%               | 77%               | 76%      | 76%               |
| Job Tenure (quarters)               | 6.5      | 6.5               | 9.0               | 9.0               | 8.8      | 8.8               |
| Duration of Unemployment (quarters) | 2.5*     | 2.4*              | 1.7*              | 1.6*              | 1.9*     | 1.7*              |

\* Difference in means is statistically significant (0.05 level)

there are almost no statistically significant differences between the trainees and respective matched comparison groups in the WIA programs and the WDP program for the variables that were matched. The one exception is the duration of unemployment before workforce services registration, which is significant for all three programs. Given that the difference between the training and comparison groups is equivalent to about 10 days, however, the magnitude of this difference is quite small.

### Impact Estimates

This section presents the results of the quasi-experimental evaluation graphically. For both the earnings and the employment rate outcomes, the values of the outcome variable (in dollars for earnings and in proportions for employment rates) appear on the y-axis in each figure. The x-axis indicates the quarter after training. Within each figure, the diamonds represent Heldrich Center researchers' best estimate of the earnings (or employment rate) differential between individuals who received training and similar individuals who did not receive training for each quarter after training. So, in Figure 3.11, for example, the rightmost diamond indicates that trainees earned about \$950 more in the eighth quarter after completing training than non-trainees earned in that quarter.

Extending upward from each diamond is a "T" and downward is an upside down T. These are drawn to indicate the degree of confidence (computed using a statistical formula) that Heldrich Center researchers have in the accuracy of their estimate of the effect of training. Returning to Figure 3.11, there is a high probability that the true difference in earnings between trainees and non-trainees lies between \$800 and \$1,100.<sup>4</sup> In the results, Heldrich Center researchers sometimes refer to this as the "confidence band" around the estimate.

When the distance between the top of the T and the bottom of the upside down T is small, as in Figure 3.11, it indicates that researchers have a high level of confidence that the estimate is very close to the true value. When the distance is wider, as in Figure 3.19, researchers are less certain that the true value lies close to the estimate. Among the factors that significantly affect this distance are the

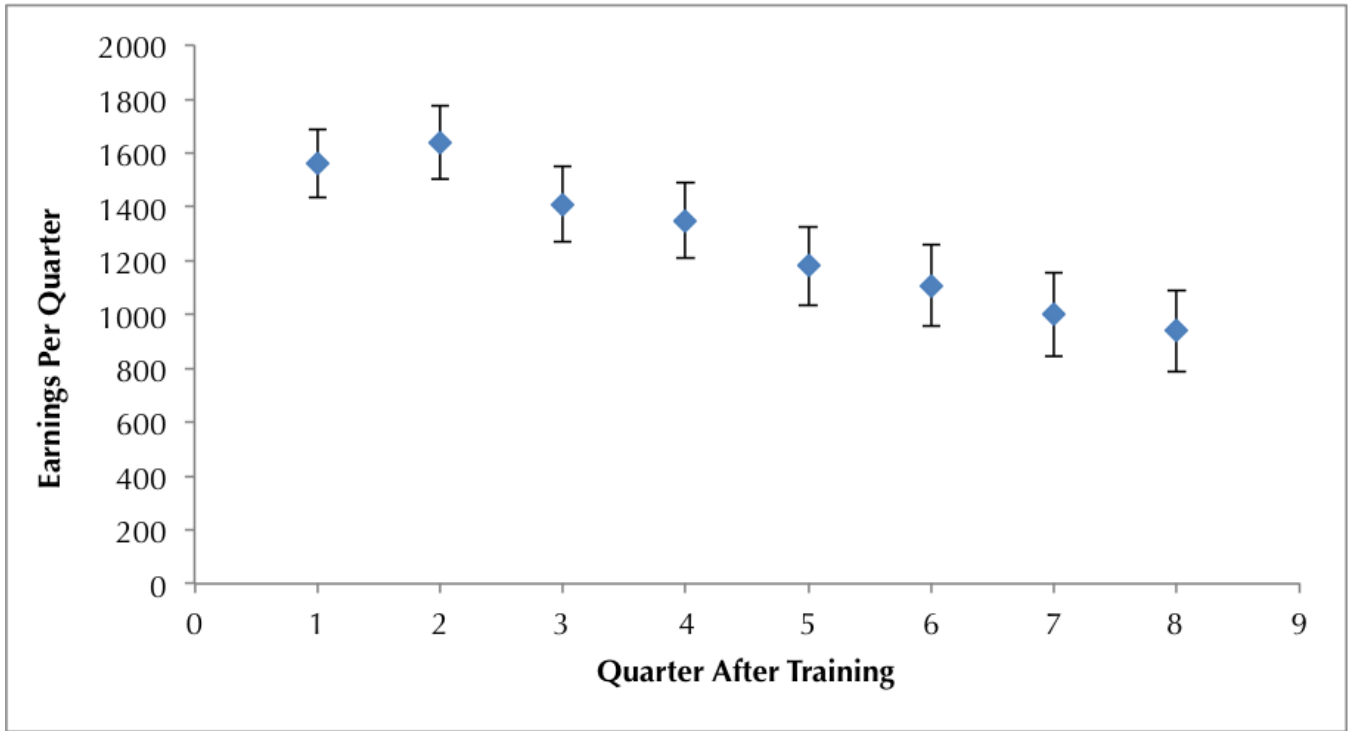
variability of the data and the number observations on which the statistical model is built and the estimate is made. In the results that follow, the reader will observe that the narrowest ranges around the estimates occur for the Dislocated Worker results, which have the greatest number of observations. The widest range around the diamonds occurs for the WDP results, which have the fewest observations.

Turning to the results, consistent with previous studies of WIA training programs, the Heldrich Center's models produced positive and statistically significant impact estimates for the Adult program. Figures 3.11 and 3.12 display the effect of the Adult training program on earnings and employment for the first eight quarters following program exit. In the first quarter after exiting training, participants earn about \$1,500, spiking to about \$1,600 in the second quarter after exit compared to their matched counterparts who only received one or more intensive services. In the second year after exit, however, this earning difference falls and appears to level off around a little more than \$900 per quarter. (As noted above, Heldrich Center researchers calculated earnings only for individuals who had wages greater than zero in a particular quarter. Individuals with no earnings for a given quarter were excluded from the calculations.)

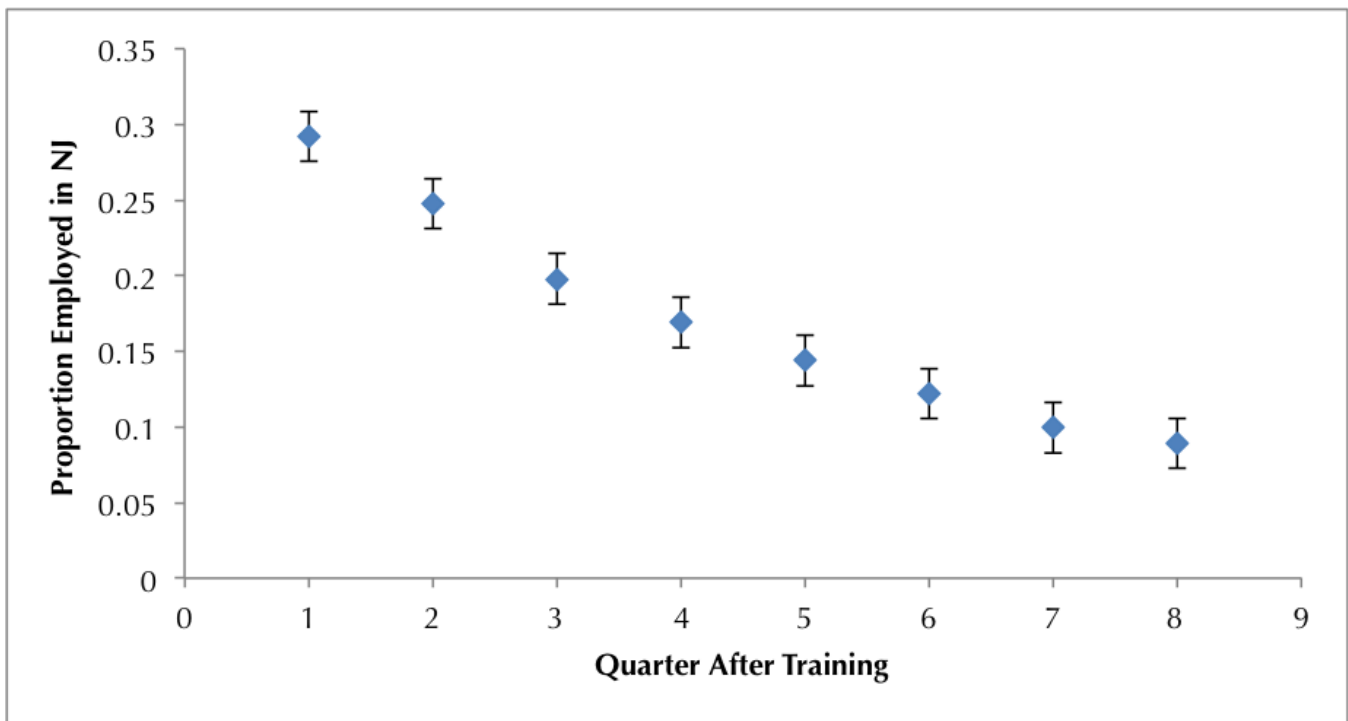
The effect on employment in Figure 3.12 gives some insight into what may be driving this trend. While trainees found work at a rate about 30% higher than those in the comparison group immediately after exiting training, this advantage falls every quarter and is down to only 10% two years after exit. Consequently, one potential explanation for the decline in the effect on earnings is that it takes comparison group individuals longer to find work. Nevertheless, the impact of training on both earnings and employment is still significant and appears to stabilize by the end of the analysis period. Finally, the estimates display a very low level of uncertainty, which is evident in the small confidence bands around each point estimate.

Unlike the Adult estimates, the impact estimates for the Dislocated Worker program represent a departure from previous studies. While many scholars (Andersson et al., 2013; Heinrich et al., 2009) have found that training programs for dislocated workers

**Figure 3.11. WIA Adult Quarterly Earnings Compared to Intensive Clients (Mean Difference in Levels Between Treatment and Comparison)**



**Figure 3.12. WIA Adult Employment Rates Compared to Intensive Clients (Mean Difference in Levels Between Treatment and Comparison)**



## Evaluation of One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey

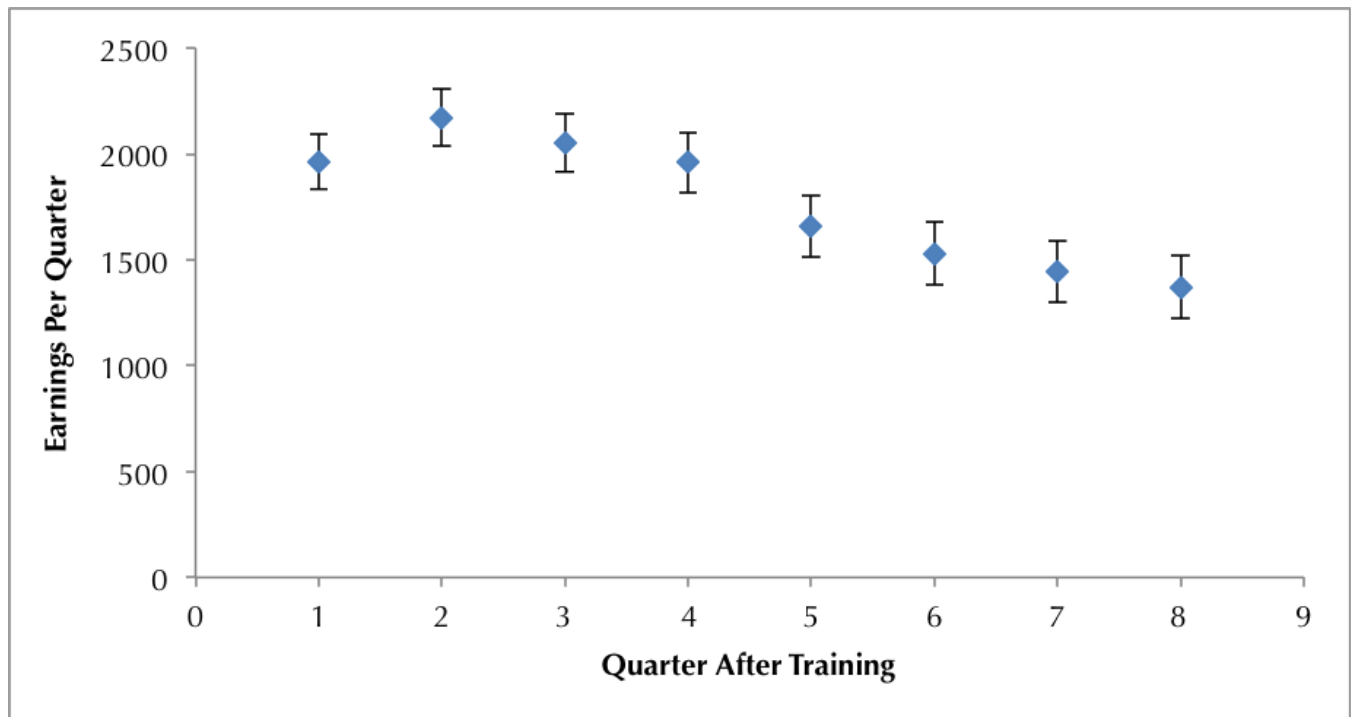
have little to no effect, Heldrich Center researchers estimate results more comparable to those of Hollenbeck and Huang (2013). As shown in Figures 3.13 and 3.14, training has a large and positive statistically significant impact on both earnings and employment, and the trends over time in the results are similar to those for the Adult program. The impact of training on earnings falls gradually from Year 1 to Year 2, and the impact on employment falls substantially from 28% in the first quarter to 11% in the eighth quarter. What stands out, however, is the magnitude of the effect on earnings. This rises to almost \$2,200 in the second quarter after training and levels off at nearly \$1,400 at the end of the analysis period.

The WDP program results mirror those of the WIA Dislocated Worker program, though the estimates fluctuate in a narrower range, albeit with a greater degree of uncertainty (wider confidence bands) than the Dislocated Worker program results. As shown in Figure 3.15, WDP trainees earn nearly \$1,900 more than the comparison group in the first quarter after training and their wages also rise relative to the comparison group in the second quarter

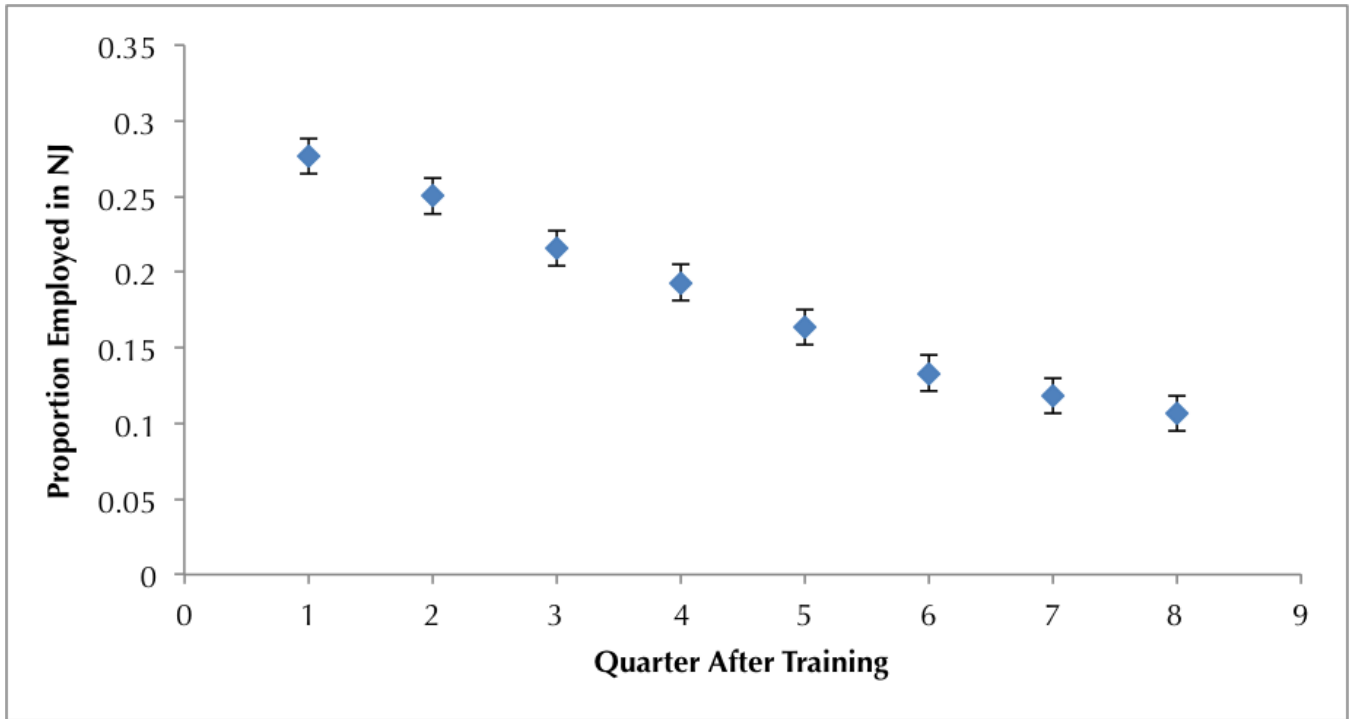
after exit, before falling to about \$1,300 by the eighth quarter after training. Because as explained earlier in this chapter, the WDP program serves a population that is similar to the WIA Dislocated Worker program population, it is not entirely surprising that the two programs achieve similar results. The similarity of the WDP and Dislocated Worker program results is interesting in light of the different incentives that the WIA and WDP programs may present counselors. WIA funding is contingent on having clients achieve positive outcomes and so it is possible that counselors could be selective in deciding whom they classify as a WIA client and whom they refer to training. The WDP program does not have the same incentives. The similarity in the outcomes is suggestive that the performance incentives of WIA are not exerting a significant effect on who receives training.

The WDP results also show a pattern that is similar to the Dislocated Worker pattern in terms of employment rates. The difference in employment rates is initially quite large (nearly 22%) and declines over time, falling to just a hair under 10% by the eighth quarter after exit. (See Figure 3.16.)

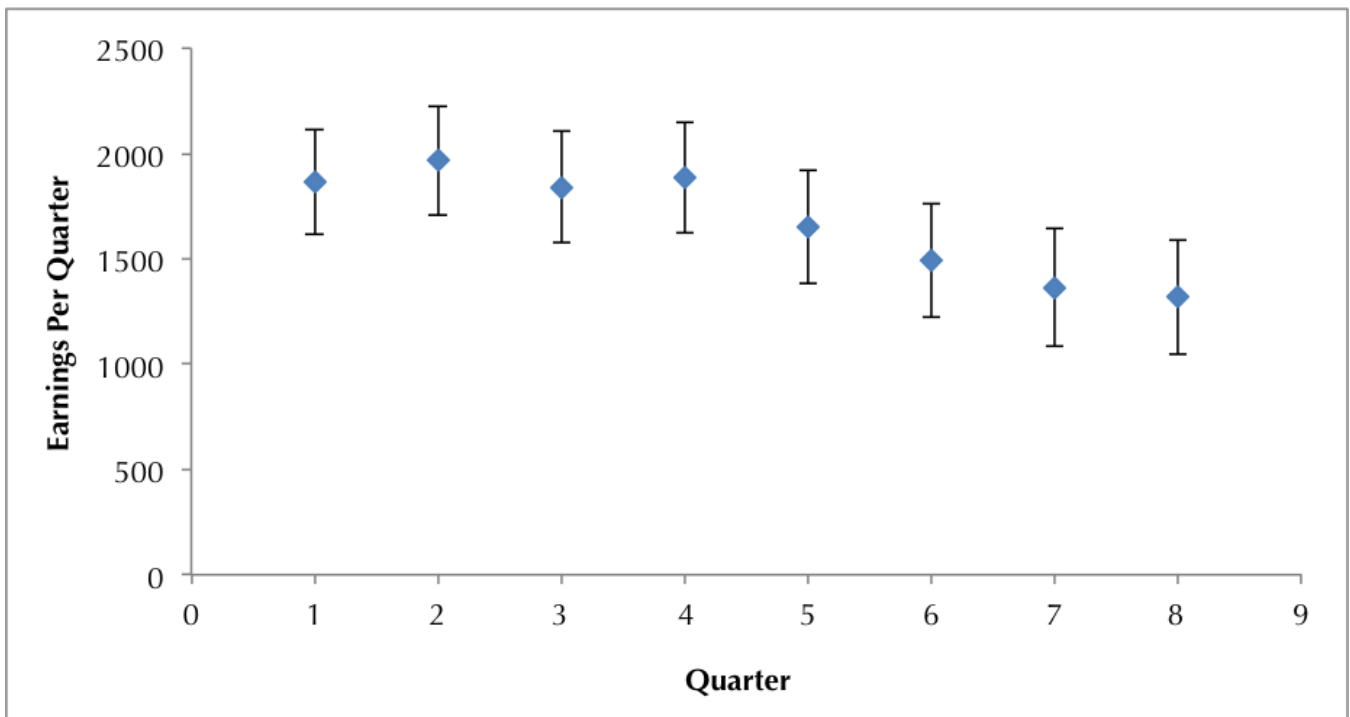
**Figure 3.13. WIA Dislocated Worker Quarterly Earnings Compared to Intensive Clients (Mean Difference in Levels Between Treatment and Comparison)**



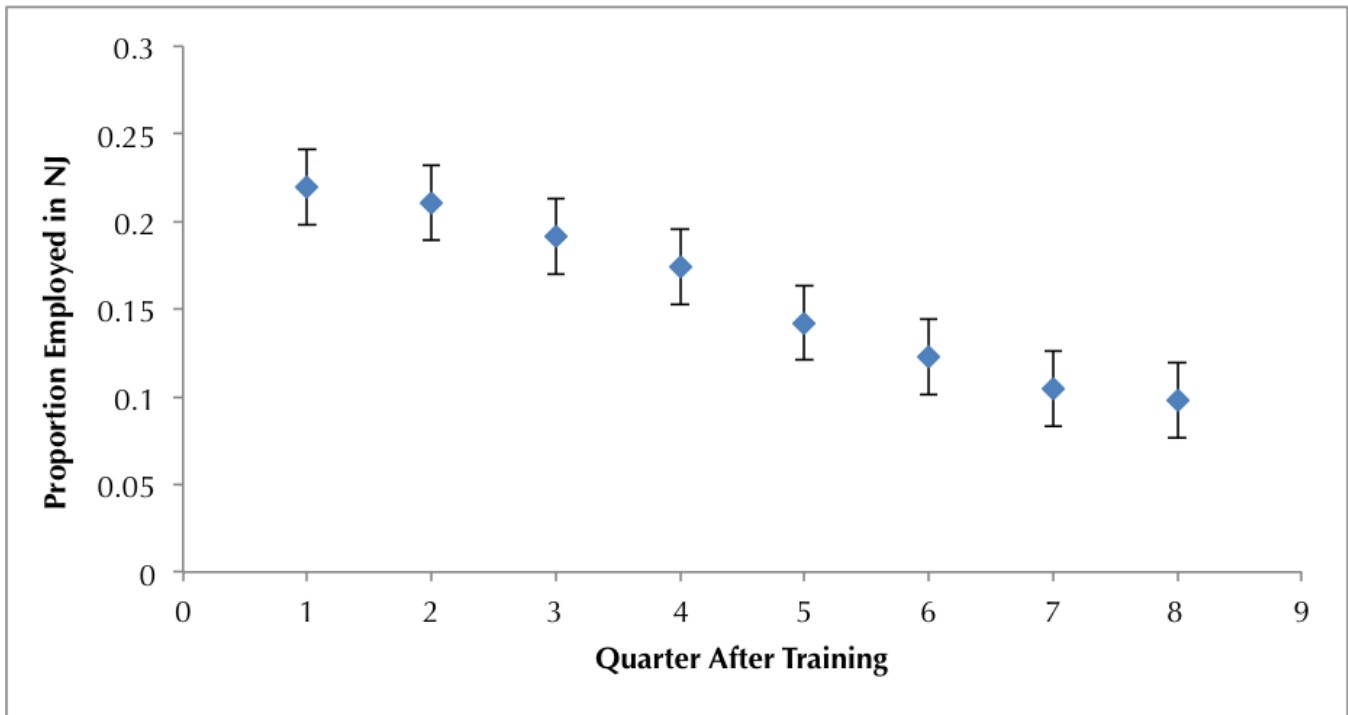
**Figure 3.14. WIA Dislocated Worker Employment Rates Compared to Intensive Clients (Mean Difference in Levels Between Treatment and Comparison)**



**Figure 3.15. WDP Quarterly Earnings Compared to Intensive Clients (Mean Difference in Levels Between Treatment and Comparison)**



**Figure 3.16. WDP Employment Rates Compared to Intensive Clients (Mean Difference in Levels Between Treatment and Comparison)**



Such large effects in each of the three programs are indeed welcome signs of training program effectiveness. However, given previous studies, the evolution of the labor market since those studies were conducted, and the unique nature of the comparison group, it is likely that these findings are positively biased. As some scholars have argued, a selection process is involved in determining which job seekers are offered WIA programs just as there is a selection process to determine who is offered a training program (Andersson et al., 2013). Since Workforce Investment Boards are held most accountable for the outcomes of WIA participants, it is likely that WIA participants have unobservable characteristics that positively correlate with labor market outcomes in greater abundance than those who are not offered WIA services. Consequently, the strong results in this evaluation could be a result of the comparison group of intensive customers from all programs (not just WIA) possessing unobservable characteristics that lead to weaker labor market performance. Fortunately, the New Jersey data permitted Heldrich Center researchers to evaluate training programs using more than one comparison group.

## Training Completers vs. Training Non-Completers

### Post-Match Descriptive Statistics

The strategy of using those who begin but do not complete training as a comparison group does not suffer from the potential deficiencies of using the “intensive” group evaluated above, as all members of the comparison group have been selected into a WIA program. Moreover, these non-completers should be more similar on unobservable characteristics to those who complete training programs than those who are WIA Intensive customers (i.e., those used as a comparison group in much of the training evaluation literature). The main drawback of this comparison group is that there are a limited number of non-completers in any given program year. Indeed, they represent less than 10% of training participants. Due to the high ratio of completers to non-completers, Heldrich Center researchers use their MDM procedure to match each non-completer to a completer, essentially handling the non-completers as the “treatment” group in the matching process.<sup>5</sup>



## Evaluation of One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey

Table 3.2 presents the summary statistics for the evaluation of training programs using non-completers as the comparison group. The match quality between training completers and non-completers is relatively strong, with no statistically significant differences for either the Adult program or the WDP program, and only one variable — employment history — demonstrates a statistically significant difference for the Dislocated Worker program. It is important to note, however, that the lack of statistically significant differences in observable characteristics between the treatment and comparison groups is partly a result of having a small sample size (i.e., few non-completers). In other words, statistically significant differences between the

treatment and comparison groups may not be seen because in actuality there are no significant differences between the two groups or because there actually are significant differences between the two but not enough data are available to be able to detect the difference. As noted earlier, the advantage of using the non-completer comparison group is that it includes individuals who are far more similar to training completers in terms of unobservable characteristics, such as motivation, than the customers who populate the intensive comparison group. The disadvantage of the non-completer comparison group is that Heldrich Center researchers are unable to rule out the possibility that the treatment and comparison groups are actually dif-

**Table 3.2. Post-Match Summary Statistics**

|                                     | Adult      |                | Dislocated Worker |                | WDP        |                |
|-------------------------------------|------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|------------|----------------|
|                                     | Completers | Non-Completers | Completers        | Non-Completers | Completers | Non-Completers |
| <b>Sample Size</b>                  | 6,185      | 434            | 12,120            | 624            | 3,573      | 165            |
| <b>Matched Sample Size</b>          | 434        | 434            | 624               | 624            | 165        | 165            |
| <b>Demographics</b>                 |            |                |                   |                |            |                |
| Female                              | 53%        | 53%            | 53%               | 53%            | 56%        | 56%            |
| Age (mean)                          | 37.0       | 37.7           | 42.5              | 42.7           | 41.3       | 41.8           |
| Minority                            | 69%        | 69%            | 55%               | 56%            | 44%        | 45%            |
| Disability                          | 3%         | 3%             | 1%                | 1%             | NA         | 1%             |
| Years of Education (mean)           | 12.3       | 12.3           | 13.0              | 13.1           | 13.1       | 13.1           |
| <b>Program History</b>              |            |                |                   |                |            |                |
| TANF                                | 5%         | 6%             | 1%                | 1%             | 2%         | 2%             |
| GA                                  | 4%         | 4%             | 3%                | 3%             | 5%         | 5%             |
| SNAP                                | 9%         | 10%            | 4%                | 4%             | 5%         | 5%             |
| Workforce Services                  | 60%        | 60%            | 63%               | 62%            | 81%        | 81%            |
| <b>Labor Market History</b>         |            |                |                   |                |            |                |
| Quarterly Earnings (mean)           | \$4,094    | \$4,152        | \$8,489           | \$8,640        | \$9,016    | \$8,461        |
| Quarters Employed                   | 61%        | 60%            | 76%*              | 73%*           | 76%        | 71%            |
| Job Tenure (quarters)               | 5.4        | 5.3            | 8.4               | 7.9            | 8.1        | 7.3            |
| Duration of Unemployment (quarters) | 2.6        | 2.8            | 1.8               | 2.1            | 1.9        | 2.2            |

\* Difference in means is statistically significant (0.05 level)

ferent in terms of their observable characteristics. Finally, because training completers were matched to the **non-completers**, this sample is distinctly different from the one used in the analysis above. In particular, this sample has generally poorer labor market history and greater interaction with human services programs.

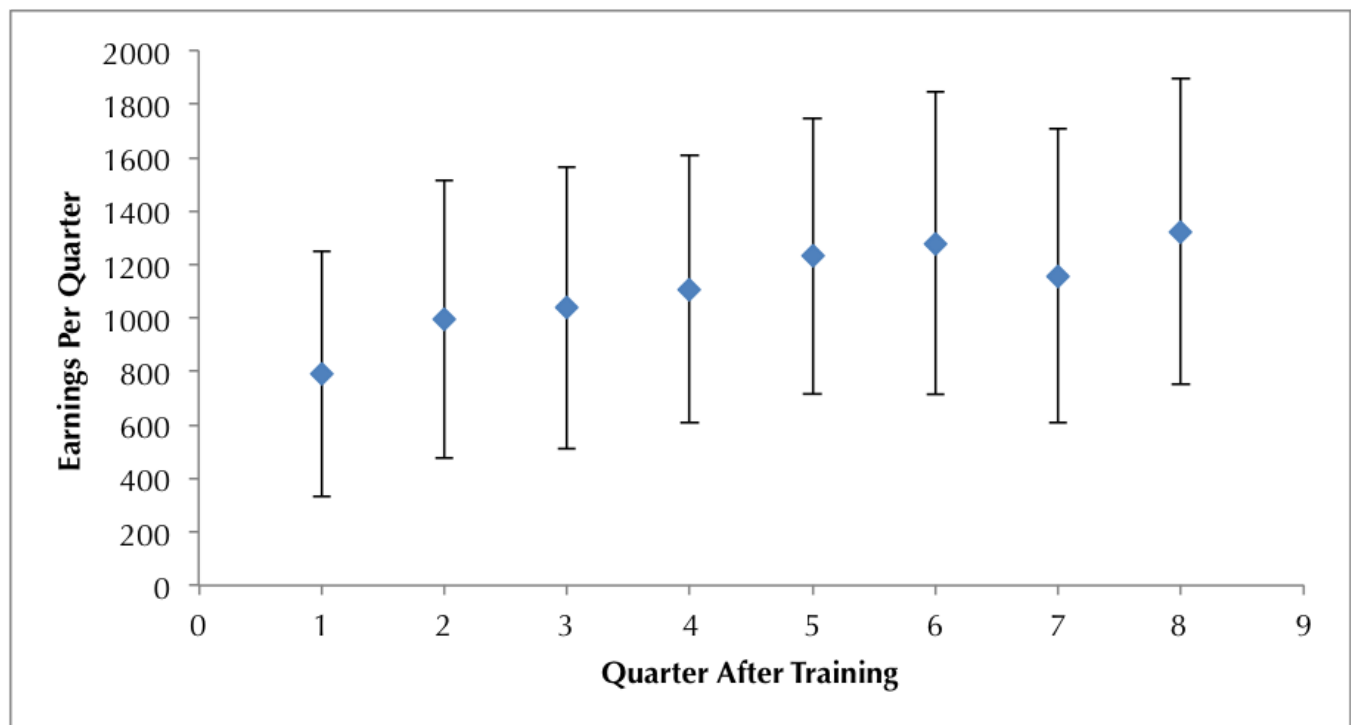
### Impact Estimates

Figures 3.17 and 3.18 present impact estimates for the effect of training in the WIA Adult program. As was true of the findings for the WIA Adult program using the “intensive” comparison group, training completers have both higher earnings and are more likely to find work after training than those who do not complete training. Two aspects of the WIA Adult results, however, stand out compared to the results based on the “intensive” comparison group. First, the earnings of WIA Adult program trainees rise over time relative to non-completers, whereas they fall somewhat over time compared to the individuals in the “intensive” group. In Figure 3.17,

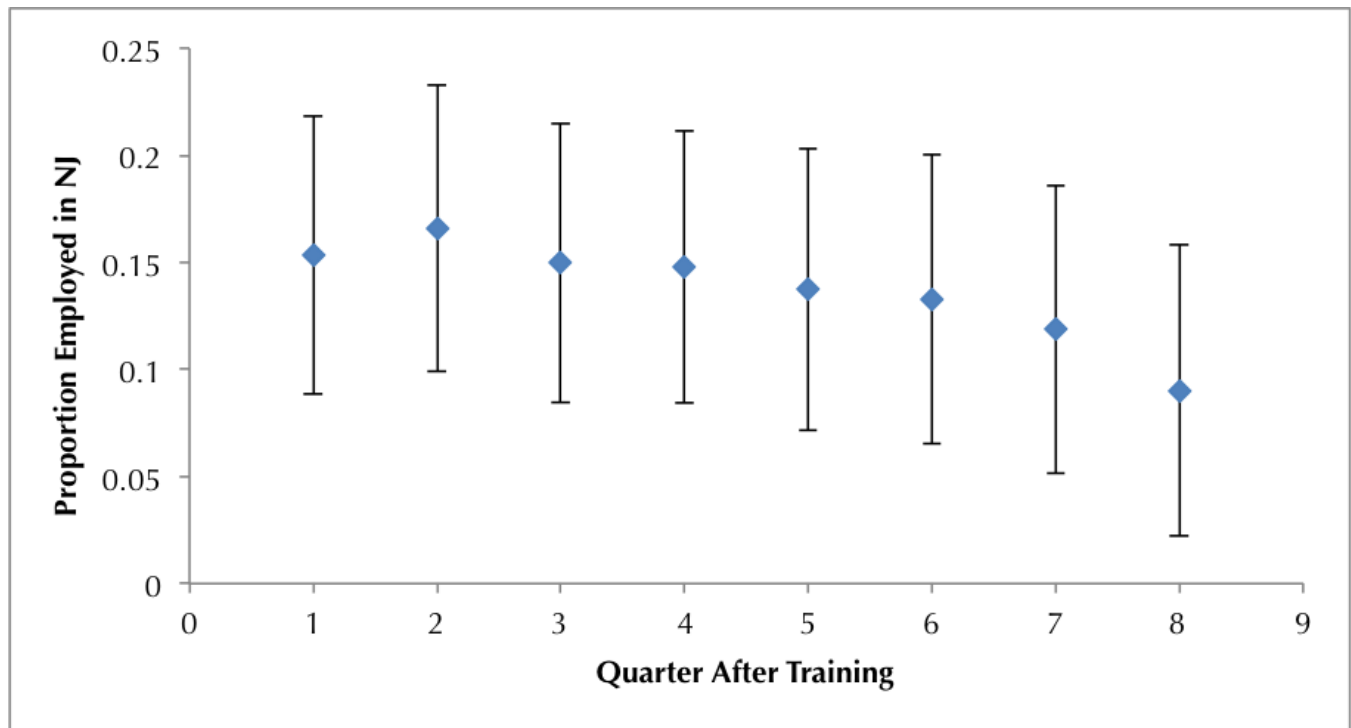
training completers earn about \$800 more than non-completers in the first quarter after exit, but this effect quickly climbs and remains consistently between \$1,100 and \$1,300 thereafter. Second, and as expected given the smaller sample size, the confidence bands around the estimates are much wider. Whereas in Figure 3.11 (“intensive” comparison group), the range from the top of the T to the bottom of the upside down T is about \$300, the range in Figure 3.17 is about \$1,000. Nonetheless, the results using both comparison groups clearly indicate that even at the bottom of the confidence band, the WIA Adult program results in higher earnings for training completers compared to non-completers (or intensive customers).

The effect on employment displays a high value throughout the first year, with completers about 15% more likely to find work than non-completers. This number continuously declines in the second year after program exit, however, falling below 10% by the eighth quarter.

**Figure 3.17. WIA Adult Quarterly Earnings Compared to Non-Completers (Mean Difference in Levels Between Treatment and Comparison)**



**Figure 3.18. WIA Adult Quarterly Employment Rates Compared to Non-Completers (Mean Difference in Levels Between Treatment and Comparison)**



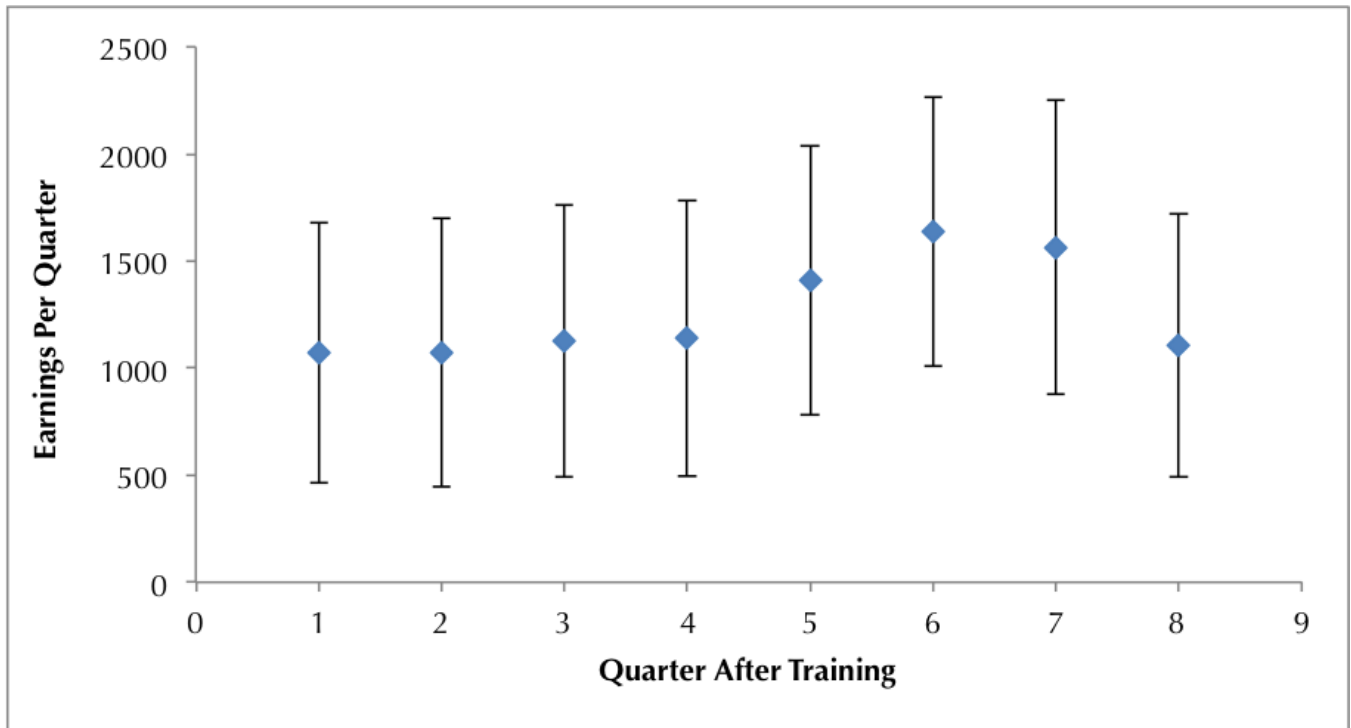
Relative to the Adult program estimates that used the alternative comparison group of intensive services customers, the impact estimates have changed a fair amount. Using the eighth quarter after exit as a reference point, using non-completers as a comparison group results in the impact on earnings rising from \$939 to \$1,322, while the impact on employment is basically unchanged at 9%. The biggest difference, of course, is that the non-completer estimates have a much higher level of uncertainty due to the smaller sample size. Nevertheless, all estimates are still statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Interestingly, the results for the Dislocated Worker program change in ways very different from the Adult program. Figures 3.19 and 3.20 demonstrate that, again, training has a positive and statistically significant impact on both earnings and employment. However, the results in Figures 3.19 and 3.20 show greater stability over time than the other analyses. While the earnings impact does rise over the period of analysis, it falls back to where it started around \$1,100 in the eighth quarter after exit.

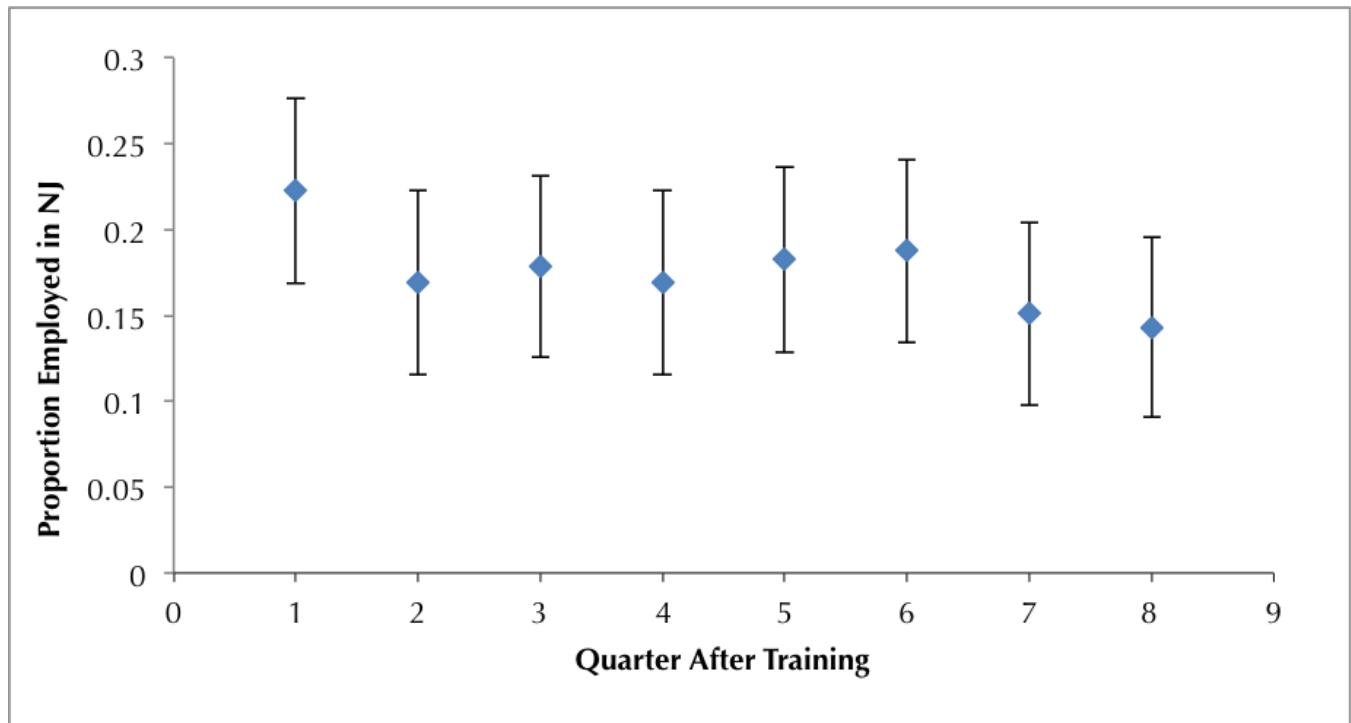
The impact on employment also fluctuates over time, but maintains a high level. Training completers are 22% more likely to find work in the first quarter, and 14% more likely to find work by the eighth quarter.

Comparing these results for the Dislocated Worker program to those in the previous section, the change in comparison group does produce a significant change in earnings impact, especially in the first few quarters after exit, when the difference between trainees and the intensive comparison group is about \$2,000 compared to a difference of about \$1,000 for the trainees vs. the non-completers. By the eighth quarter after exit, the difference in the estimates using the different comparison groups is not as stark, though still meaningful, difference of nearly \$300 a quarter — trainees earn about \$1,372 more than the intensive comparison group and \$1,105 more than the non-completers. There is also a substantial change in the impact on employment. Whereas the employment rate difference for the intensive comparison group falls markedly from about 28% to about 11%, the employment rate difference between trainees and

**Figure 3.19. WIA Dislocated Worker Quarterly Earnings Compared to Non-Completers (Mean Difference in Levels Between Treatment and Comparison)**



**Figure 3.20. WIA Dislocated Worker Quarterly Employment Rates Compared to Non-Completers (Mean Difference in Levels Between Treatment and Comparison)**



## Evaluation of One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey

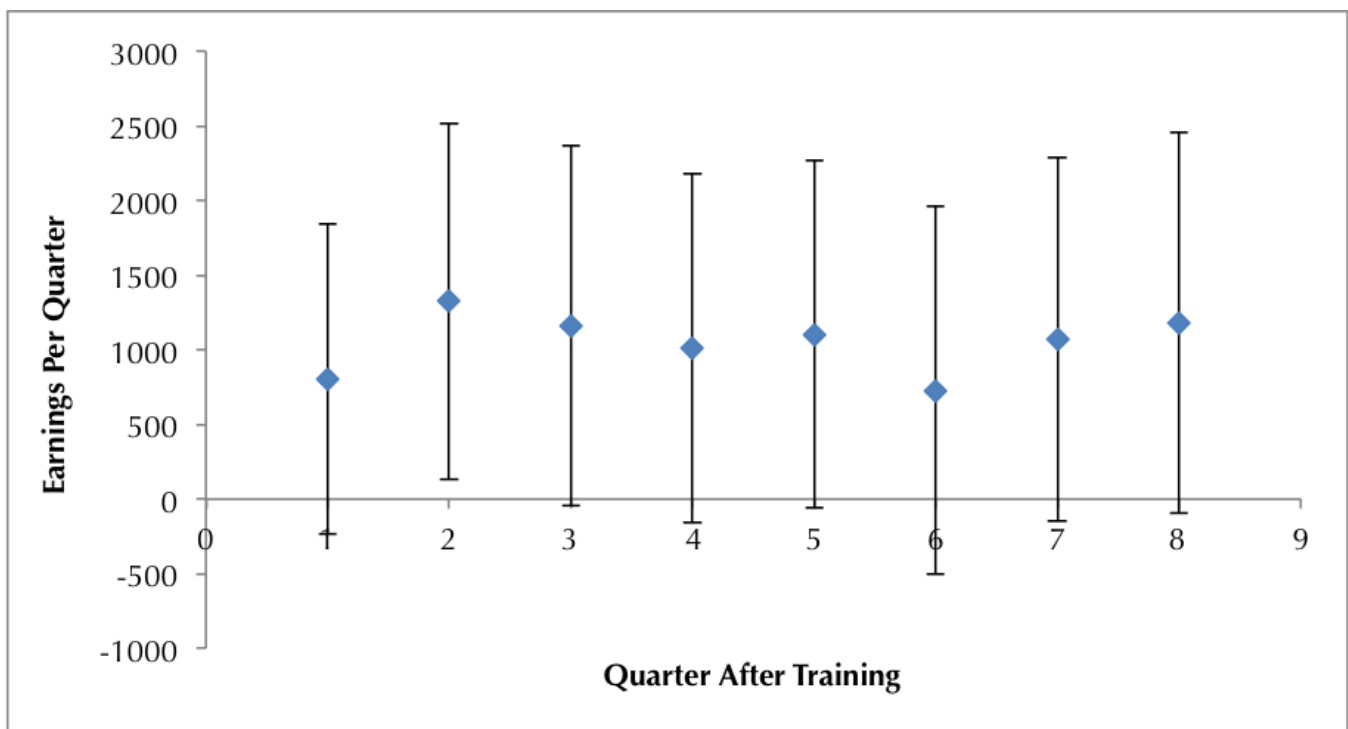
non-completers fluctuates within a much narrower band, falling from 22% higher in the first quarter after exit to 14% higher by the eighth quarter after exit.

The WDP results for non-completers are suggestive that the program may have a positive effect on trainee earnings, but Heldrich Center researchers are unable to draw a strong conclusion because the results narrowly miss being statistically significant. In other words, as shown in Figure 3.21, the Heldrich Center is unable to rule out the possibility that the WDP training program has no effect or a slightly negative effect on the earnings of trainees. The results are likely not significant because of the small sample size of 165, compared to sample sizes of 434 and 624 for the WIA Adult and WIA Dislocated Worker programs, respectively. The wide confidence intervals in Figures 3.21 and 3.22 reflect the uncertainty of the estimates. The estimates of the magnitude of the effect of participating in WDP remain similar to the effect size estimates presented in Figure 3.19 for the WIA Dislocated Worker program.

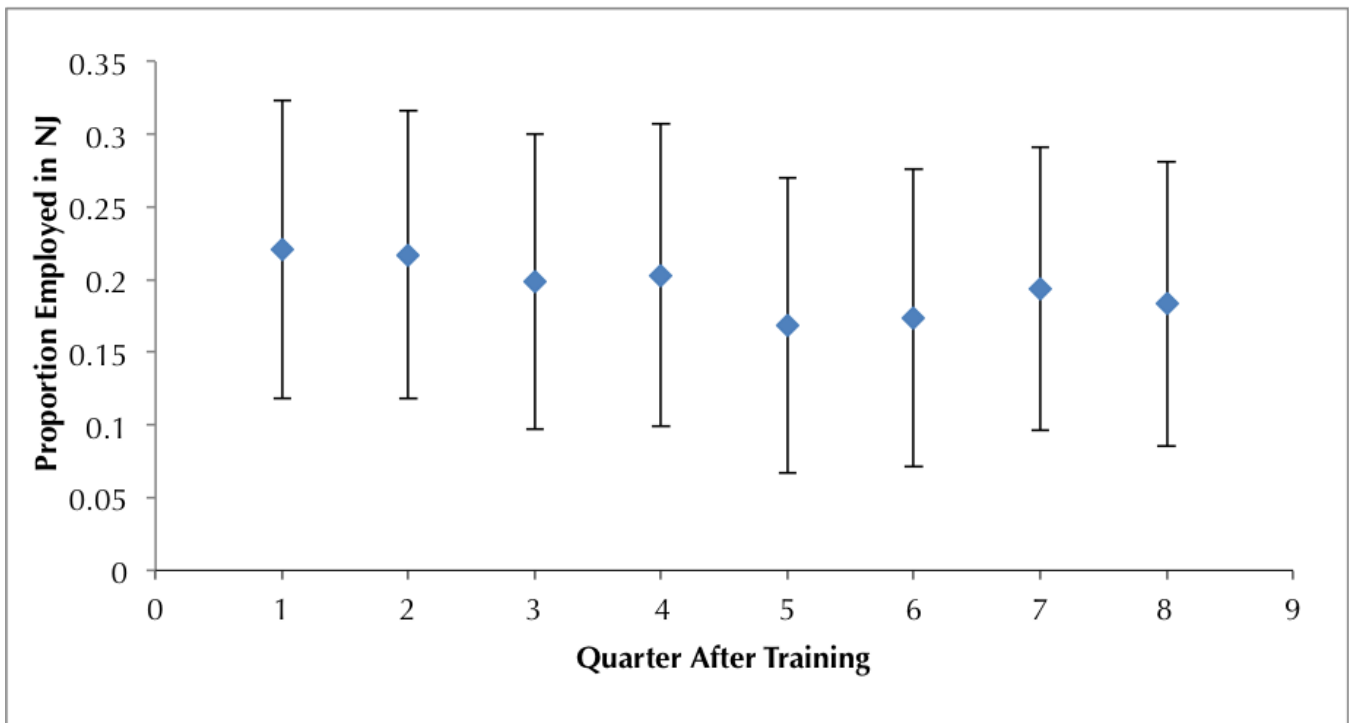
Again, the wide confidence bands around the employment rate estimates mean that Heldrich Center researchers are unable to draw strong conclusions about the extent to which WDP completers are more likely to find work than individuals who do not complete training. Throughout the post-training period, WDP trainees are about 20% more likely to be employed than non-completers.

These results are reason for cautious optimism regarding the impact of the WIA and WDP training programs in New Jersey. There are, however, still multiple reasons that these results could be positively biased, and many of these can be seen in Table 3.2. Due to a low number of non-completers, the match quality was not as high as in the analysis of trainees and intensive services customers. Moreover, the differences in the means of the matching variables, while not statistically significant, were all biased in the direction to produce positive results in this analysis. Finally, while this is unlikely to explain all or even the majority of non-completers, extenuating circumstances and life events (e.g., childbirth, illness, etc.) could explain

**Figure 3.21. WDP Quarterly Earnings Compared to Non-Completers (Mean Difference in Levels Between Treatment and Comparison)**



**Figure 3.22. WDP Quarterly Employment Rates Compared to Non-Completers (Mean Difference in Levels Between Treatment and Comparison)**



why individuals do not complete training. This is of note because Heldrich Center researchers cannot control for these instances in the analysis, and most likely have a negative effect on employment and earnings and would therefore contribute to the positive result found.

### Provider Type: Community College vs. Private Training Provider

Heldrich Center researchers also studied the question of whether individuals who participate in occupational skills training at a community college realize different employment outcomes than individuals who obtain training from a private training provider. This section compares the outcomes of individuals who attended a community college and individuals who attended a private training provider in terms both of their second and fourth quarter post-training employment rates and earnings and of changes in earnings between a year before the start of training and two and four quarters after exit.

The AOSOS data include an indicator for the type of provider that a trainee attended. The two most common types of providers, for which there are sufficient data for analysis, are community colleges and private training providers. Table 3.3 shows the number of trainees who received training from a community college and the number who received training from a private training provider between program year 2006 and program year 2013.

The comparisons presented in this section are raw, unadjusted comparisons. Sample size limitations prevented Heldrich Center researchers from using a quasi-experimental methodology to evaluate the effect of training provider type on employment outcomes. The available sample sizes for a more sophisticated provider type analysis were limited for two reasons. First, provider type is missing for many records in the AOSOS data. Second, using a quasi-experimental design would have required cutting the treatment group sample in half (or actually less than half, as some trainees either did not have a provider type or attended a provider that was not a private training provider or a community college), resulting in an under-powered sample from which it would have been impossible to estimate an effect size.



**Table 3.3. Number of Individuals Receiving Training from Community Colleges and Private Training Providers, 2006-2013**

| Provider Type  | Number of Training Participants | Percent |
|--|---------------------------------|---------|
| Community College  | 6,824                           | 15.9%   |
| Private Training Provider                                      | 29,825                          | 69.4%   |
| Total Number of Training Participants with Provider Type Value | 43,004                          | 100.00% |

The rates of employment in New Jersey after exit from training are almost identical for community college exiters and private training provider exiters across all seven years of sample data. Figures 3.23 and 3.24 show the second and fourth quarter, respectively, post-training employment rates for the two types of providers.

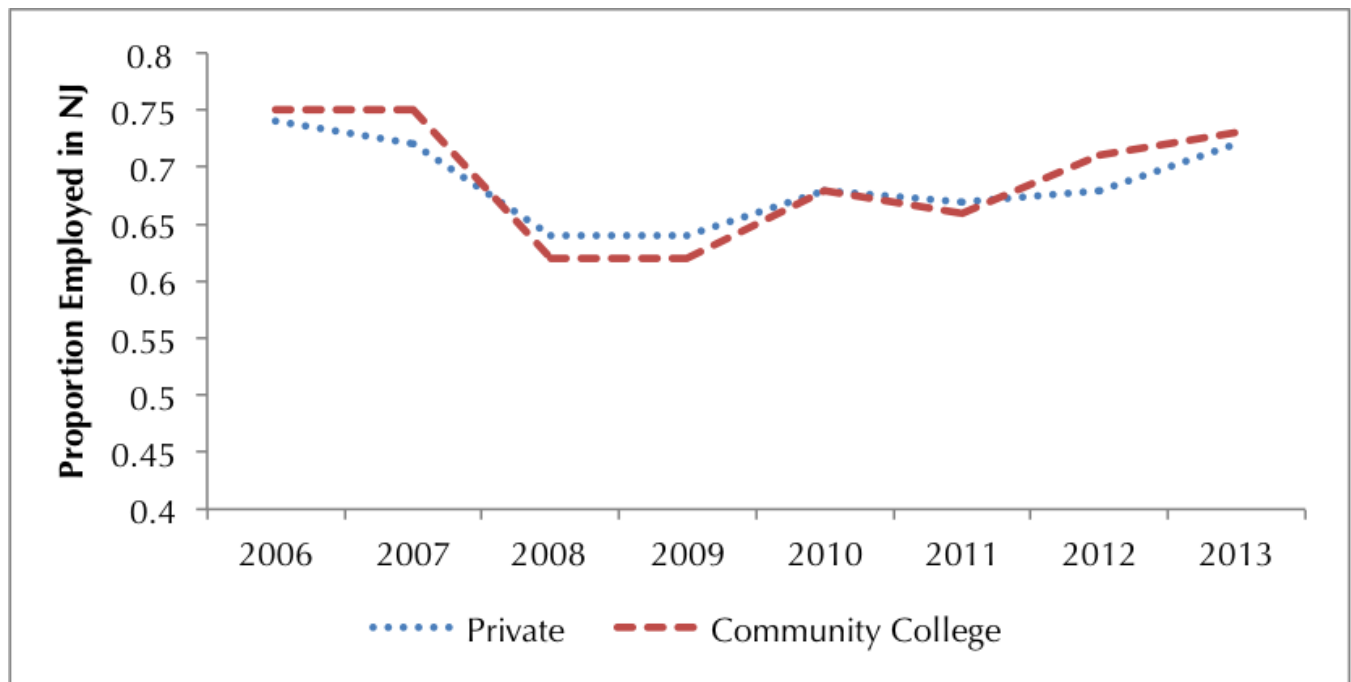
The employment rates track very closely year to year, with the significant expected dips during the recession and gradual recovery thereafter.

Throughout the sample period, with respect to earnings after completion, the differences between community college exiters and private training provider exiters are minor in the second and fourth quarters after exit. (See Figures 3.25 and 3.26.)

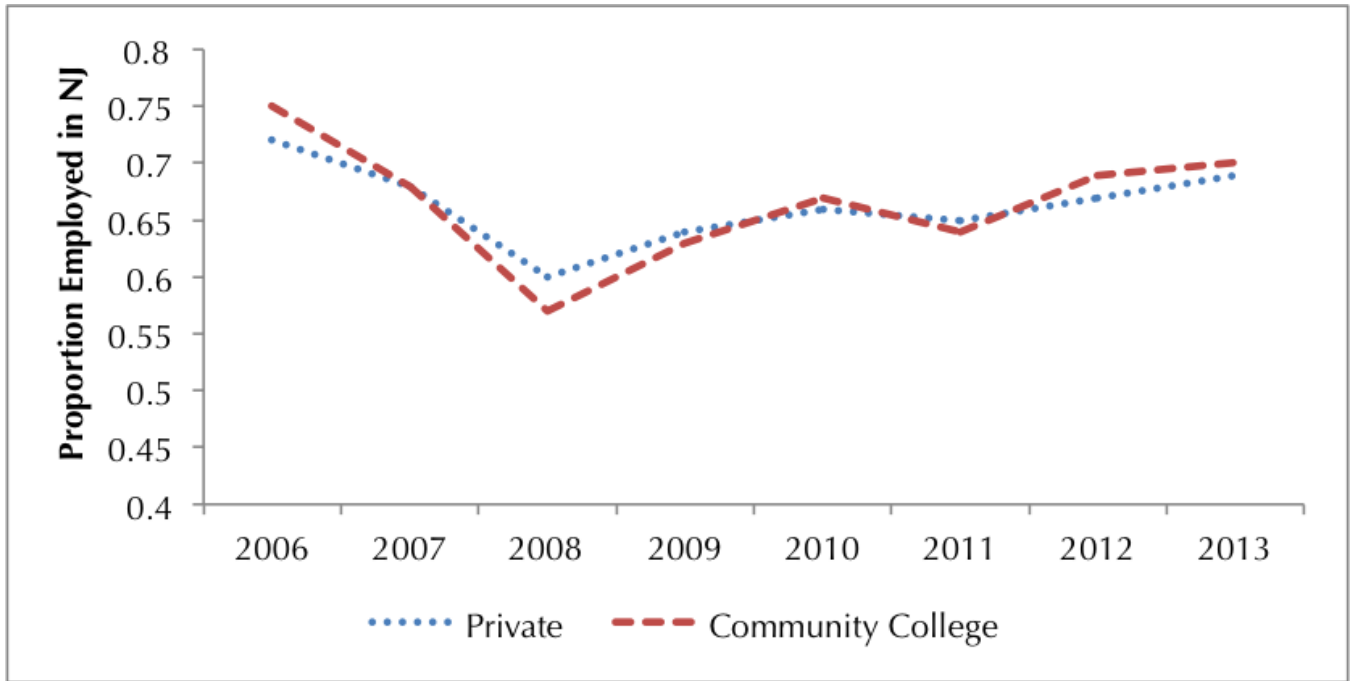
The exception is 2013, the final year for which these outcomes can be calculated. Although the chart shows a divergence in earnings in the fourth quarter after exit, because of the small number of individuals who had completed their training programs in time to have wage data for the fourth quarter after exit, the difference is not statistically significant.

Heldrich Center researchers also compared the trainees' (mean) quarterly earnings in quarters three through six before training to their second quarter after training and fourth quarter after training earnings. These charts were created by calculating how much more or how much less money each individual who attended a community college and each individual who attended a private training provider was earning after completing training relative to what they were earning beforehand. These calculations provide some insight into the extent to

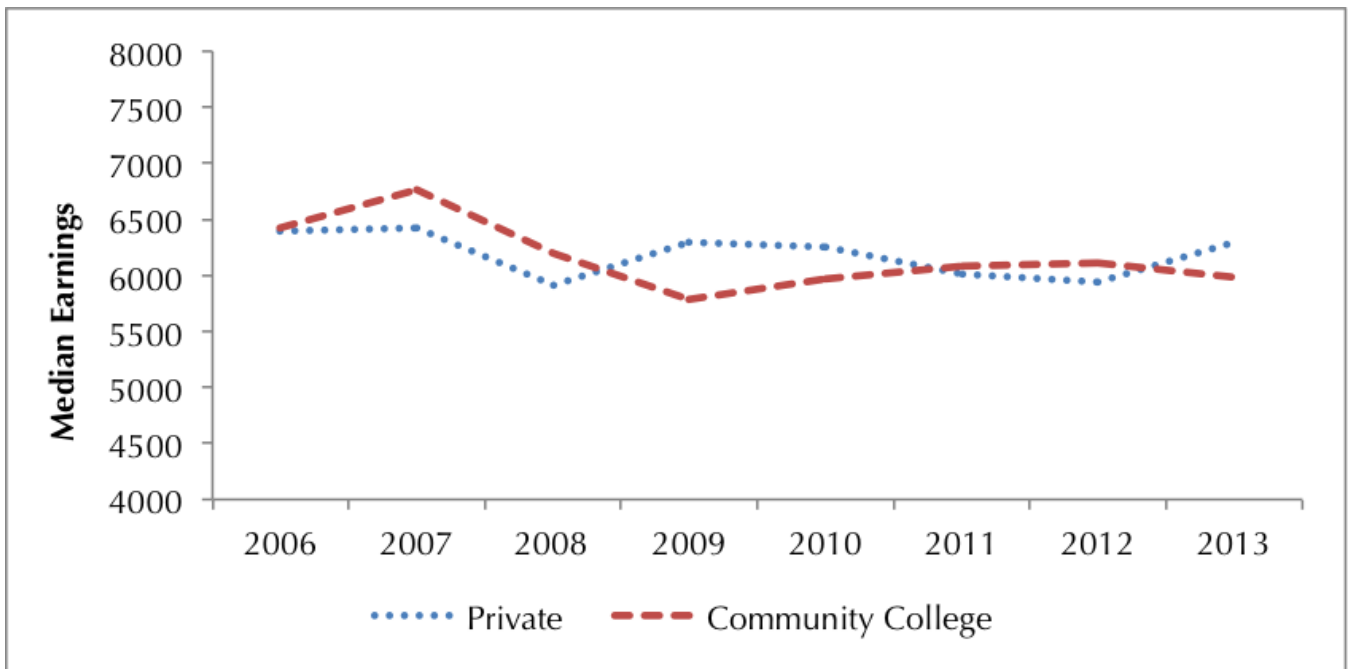
**Figure 3.23. Proportion of Exiters Employed in New Jersey in the Second Quarter after Training, 2006-2013**



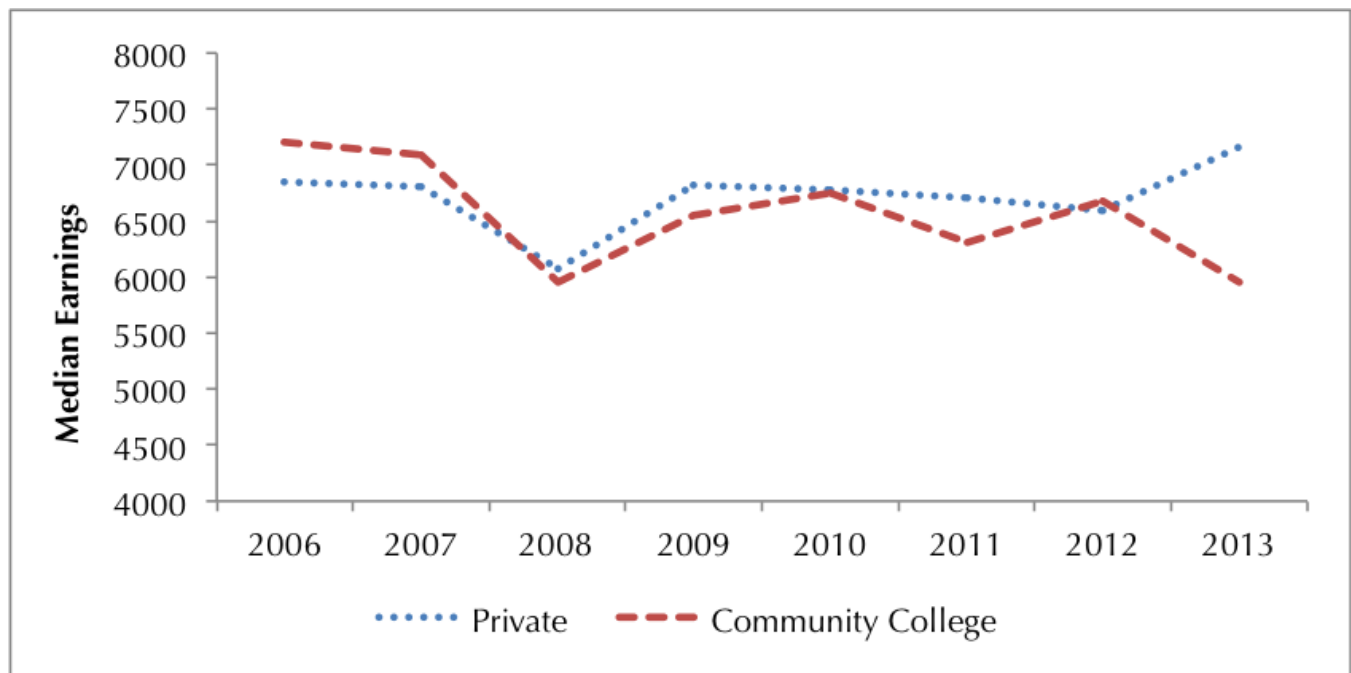
**Figure 3.24. Proportion of Exitors Employed in New Jersey in the Fourth Quarter after Training, 2006-2013**



**Figure 3.25. Median Earnings of Training Program Exitors in New Jersey in the Second Quarter after Training, 2006-2013**



**Figure 3.26. Median Earnings of Training Program Exiters in New Jersey in the Fourth Quarter after Training, 2006-2013**



which trainees are able to recover their pre-training wages. Figures 3.27 and 3.28 present these data. The first thing that stands out is that regardless of the type of training provider that an individual attended, he is not able to return to his prior earnings level within either two or four quarters after the exit from training. (This, of course, is not surprising, given the severity of the recession. While the restoration of lost wages is important, for the purpose of evaluating training, the question asked in the quasi-experimental evaluation section was not whether training completers were able to return to their previous income level as a result of training, but whether they were better off after completing training than they likely would have been if they had not participated in training.)

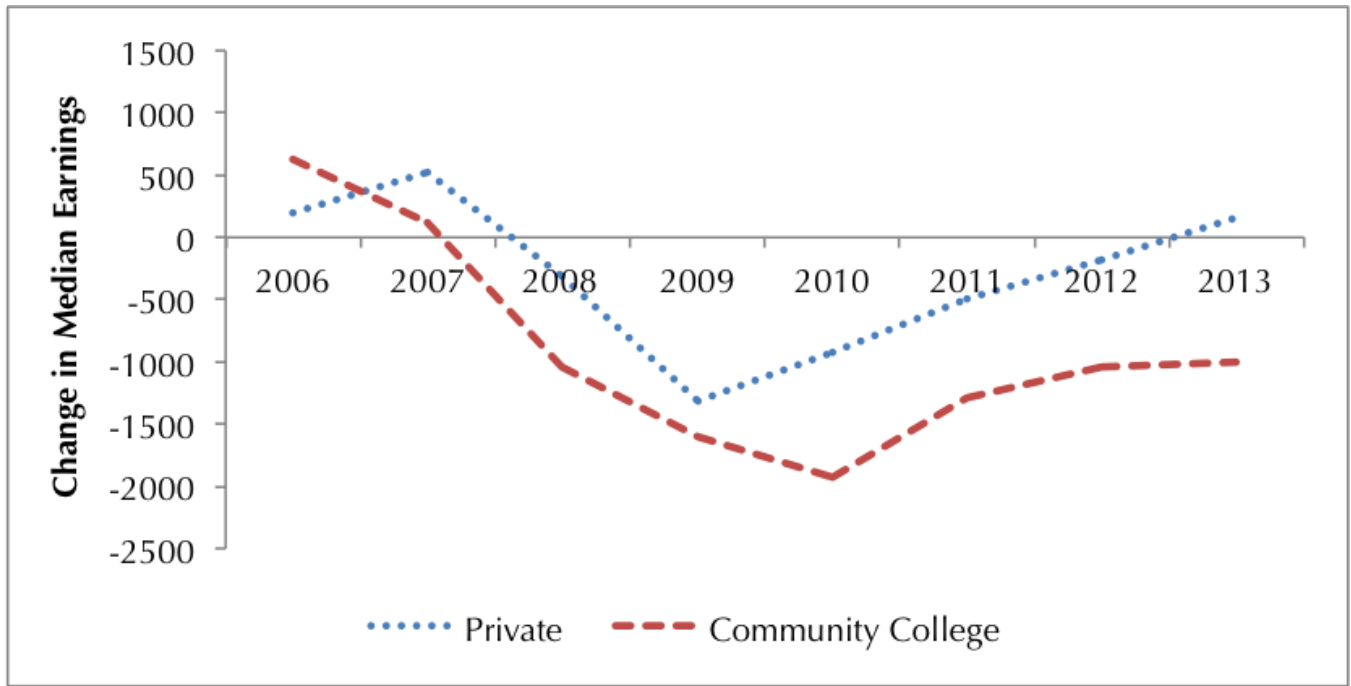
The second thing that stands out from both Figures 3.27 and 3.28 is that for most of the sample period, exiters from private training providers are earning, on average, about \$500 more per quarter than the community college exiters. (Again, the divergence in 2013 is probably best considered anomalous because of the small sample size for that program year.) As explained at the outset of this section, however, the reader is urged caution in drawing strong conclusions from these results.

## Employment Outcomes by Key Industry Sector

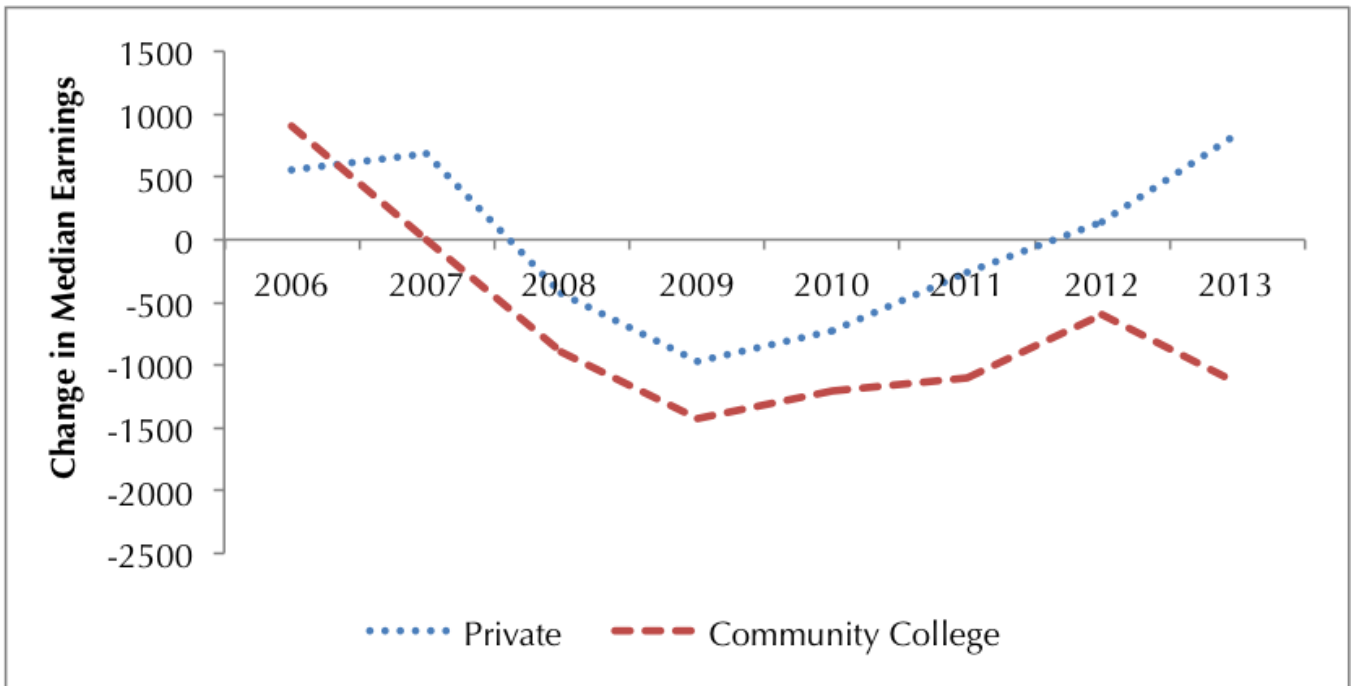
In order to streamline its investments in workforce development, New Jersey identified seven key industry sectors: advanced manufacturing; health-care; technology and entrepreneurship; financial services; life sciences; transportation, logistics, and distribution (TLD); and retail, hospitality, and tourism. NJLWD has targeted its reemployment efforts to these industries. To get a sense of how individuals trained to enter a key industry sector fared after completing training, Heldrich Center researchers studied the outcomes of trainees who received training in an occupational field closely associated with a New Jersey key industry sector.

Only two key industry sector-related occupational fields had enough trainees to be able to generate meaningful estimates of employment outcomes: healthcare (Classification of Instructional Program [CIP] code 51) and TLD (CIP code 49). Heldrich Center researchers used the North American Industry Classification System industry codes in the UI wage record data to identify the industries in which trainees obtained employment after they

**Figure 3.27. Change in Median Earnings of Training Program Exiters in New Jersey in the Second Quarter after Training, 2006-2013**



**Figure 3.28. Change in Median Earnings of Training Program Exiters in New Jersey in the Fourth Quarter after Training, 2006-2013**



## Evaluation of One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey

completed training. Table 3.4 shows the number of individuals exiting healthcare and TLD training programs in program years 2006 through 2013.

**Table 3.4. Number of Exiters of Healthcare and Transportation, Logistics, and Distribution Training Programs, 2006-2013**

| Provider Type  | Number of Training Participants | Percent |
|--|---------------------------------|---------|
| Healthcare   | 11,322                          | 27.2%   |
| Transportation   | 9,270                           | 22.2%   |
| Total Number of Training Participants with CIP Code Values | 41,701                          | 100.00% |

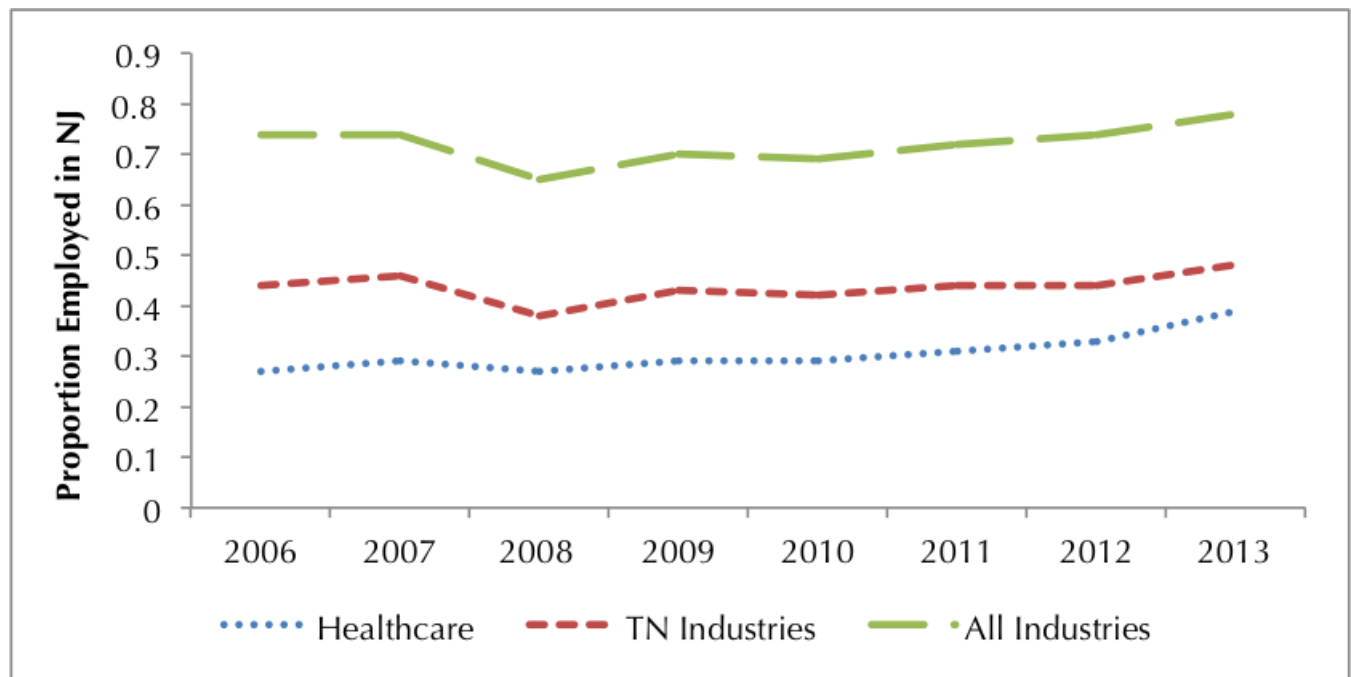
Heldrich Center researchers began by looking at the outcomes for trainees who completed training in healthcare. Figure 3.29 displays the percent of exiters who were trained in a healthcare field and were either employed in the healthcare industry (blue-dotted line), in any of the seven key industry sectors (red, short-dashed line), or in any industry

(green, longer-dashed line) in the fourth quarter after exit from training. These data show a secular upward trend that is hardly disrupted by the recession in the rate at which healthcare program graduates are finding employment in the healthcare industry. Whereas 27% of healthcare program completers from program year 2006 were employed in the healthcare industry in the fourth quarter after exit, by 2013, 39% of healthcare program exiters were working in the healthcare industry.

Nonetheless, many individuals trained for a healthcare field did not enter the healthcare industry. During the sample period, about two-thirds of the employed healthcare program training completers were employed in a non-healthcare industry in the fourth quarter after completion. Many ended up working in one of the other key industry sectors.

Because the UI wage data do not contain occupational information, it is impossible to infer the type of job that healthcare trainees employed in any industry are doing after completion of training. Although there is a relatively close linkage between healthcare occupations and the healthcare industry

**Figure 3.29. Proportion of Exiters from Healthcare Programs Employed in the Fourth Quarter after Exit, by Industry**



## Evaluation of One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey

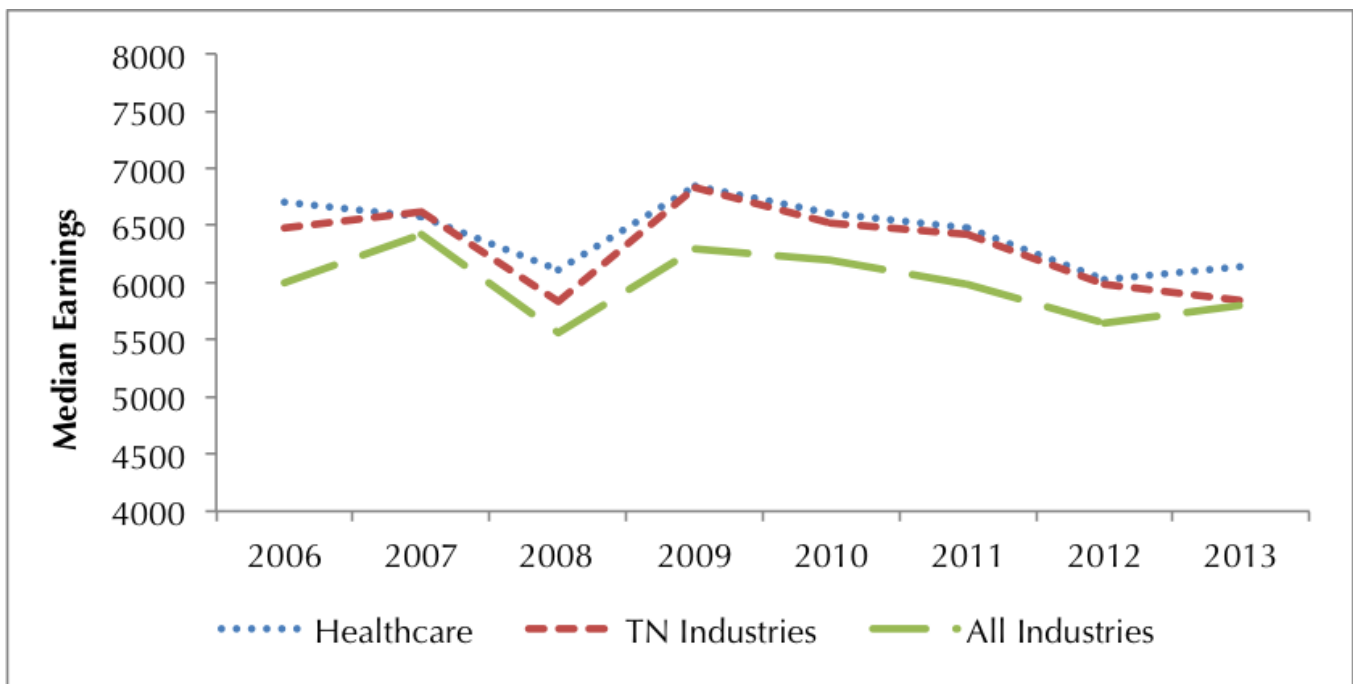
(i.e., nurses typically work for healthcare industry employers such as hospitals and nursing homes), there are many healthcare occupations outside of the healthcare industry. For example, both schools and prisons employ nurses. By the same token, even if a trainee is trained for a specific healthcare occupation and is employed by a healthcare firm, it is impossible to know whether that person is working in a healthcare occupation or is instead working in the healthcare industry in a non-healthcare job, such as accounting, computers, or custodial services.

Heldrich Center researchers also examined the earnings of healthcare program completers by industry. Figure 3.30 shows the median earnings of healthcare program completers who were employed in the healthcare industry (blue-dotted line), in any of the seven key industry sectors

(red, short-dashed line), or in any industry (green, longer-dashed line) in the fourth quarter after exit from training.

These individuals clearly earn more if they find work in a key industry sector than if they get a job in a non-key industry sector, but their earnings are about the same throughout the sample period whether they are working in a healthcare industry or in one of the other key industry sectors. Interestingly, the earnings of healthcare program completers dip significantly for those individuals who exited during the recession and then recover quickly in 2009, only for graduates in each successive year to see lower fourth quarter earnings. In fact, healthcare program completers in 2013 are earning about the same, on an inflation-adjusted basis, as the individuals who exited these programs during the recession. Although Heldrich Center

**Figure 3.30. Median Earnings of Exiters from Healthcare Programs Employed in the Fourth Quarter after Exit, by Industry**





## Evaluation of One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey

researchers lack the data to be able to explain this downward earnings trend, it is possible that this wage decline is reflective of the trend in the broader economy of wage stagnation. It is also possible that the emphasis on training healthcare workers has resulted in an oversupply of such workers, putting downward pressure on wages, but the increase in the rate at which more recent healthcare program completers have been able to find work in the healthcare sector contradicts this explanation somewhat.

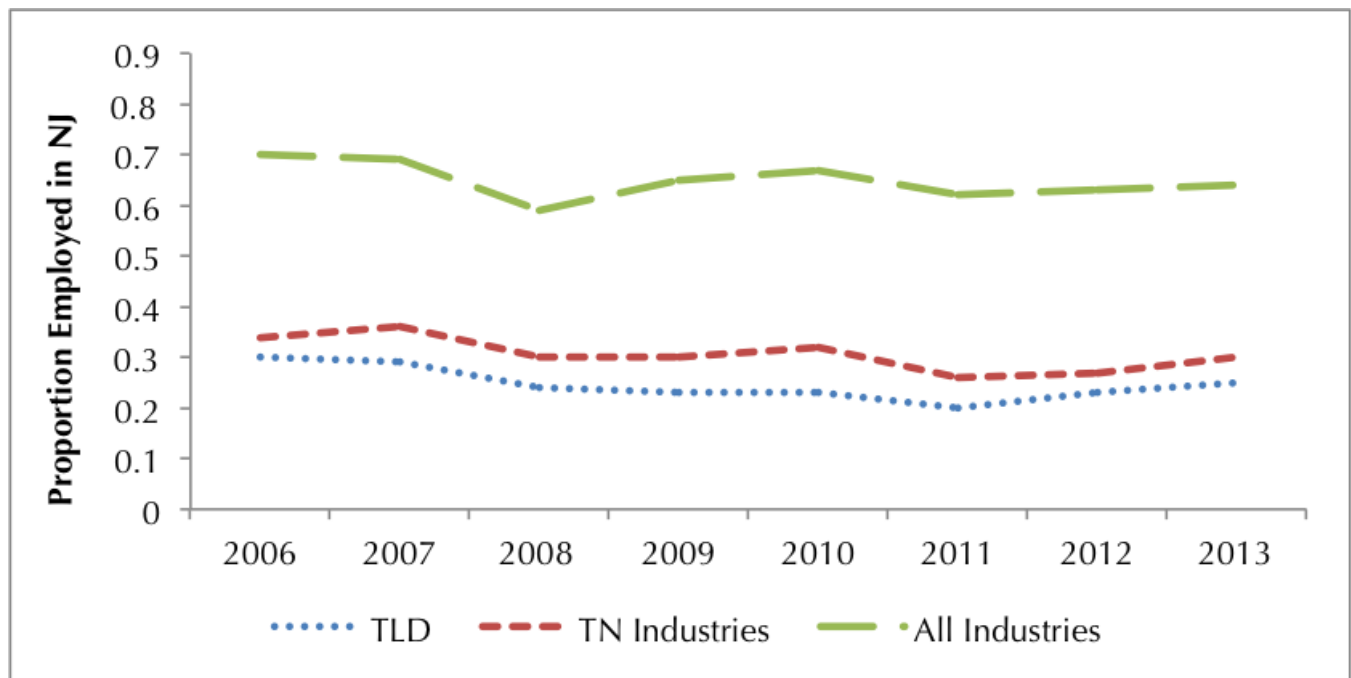
Heldrich Center researchers conducted the same analyses for the completers of TLD programs. In Figure 3.31, the employment rates in the fourth quarter after training are presented for individuals who exited in each program year from 2006 through 2013. The blue-dotted line shows the proportion of TLD trainees who find employment in a TLD industry. The graph shows a steady decline from the high point of 30% of 2006 exiters employed in a TLD industry in the fourth quarter after

exit to 20% of 2011 exiters employed in TLD in the fourth quarter after exit. This proportion rebounds somewhat between 2011 and 2013, to 25%. The trends for employment in any key industry sector (the red, short-dashed line) and in any industry at all (the longer-dashed, green line) are similar.

Examining Figures 3.29 and 3.31 together shows a number of similarities between the post-training employment experiences of healthcare trainees, on the one hand, and TLD trainees, on the other, namely that both sets of trainees have similar probabilities of finding employment in the industry related to training, finding employment in any key industry sector, and finding employment in any industry.

Heldrich Center researchers also examined the earnings of TLD trainees by industry in the fourth quarter after exit from training. Generally, individuals who received training in a TLD field had higher earnings throughout the sample period than indi-

**Figure 3.31. Proportion of Exiters from Transportation, Logistics, and Distribution Programs Employed in the Fourth Quarter after Exit, by Industry**



## Evaluation of One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey

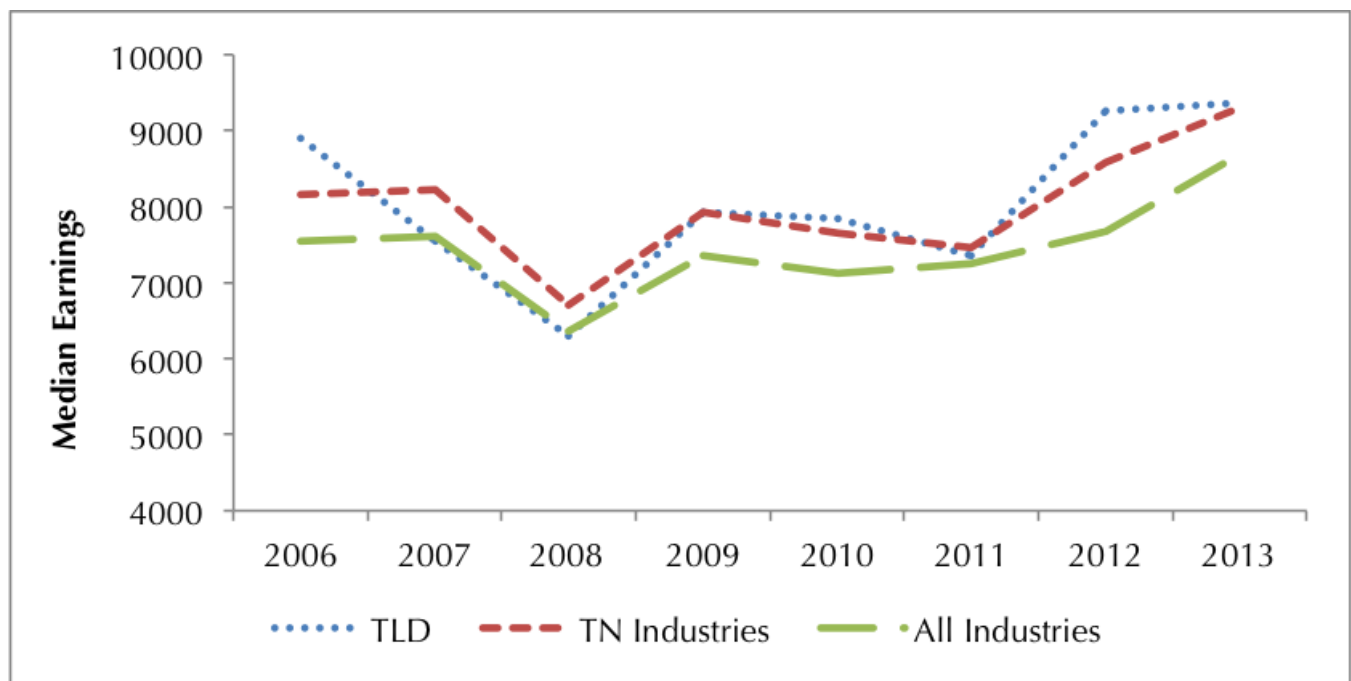
viduals who were not employed in a key industry sector. Throughout the period from 2006 through 2013, earnings exhibit sharp fluctuations, with significant declines during the recession, followed by some growth afterwards, stagnation and slight decline from 2009 through 2011, and noticeable wage growth in 2012 and 2013. (See Figure 3.32.)

Comparing Figures 3.30 and 3.32, the most pronounced differences between healthcare trainees and TLD trainees lies in their earnings. TLD trainees consistently earn more than healthcare trainees. Whether employed in the industry related to their training, in any key industry sector, or in any industry at all, TLD trainees earn anywhere from \$500 to \$2,000 more in the fourth quarter after training than healthcare trainees. Although it is possible that these wage differentials are a product of the male-female wage gap, as TLD trainees are far more likely to be male and healthcare trainees are far more likely to be female, or skills differences among those entering the different training programs, the available data do not allow for a

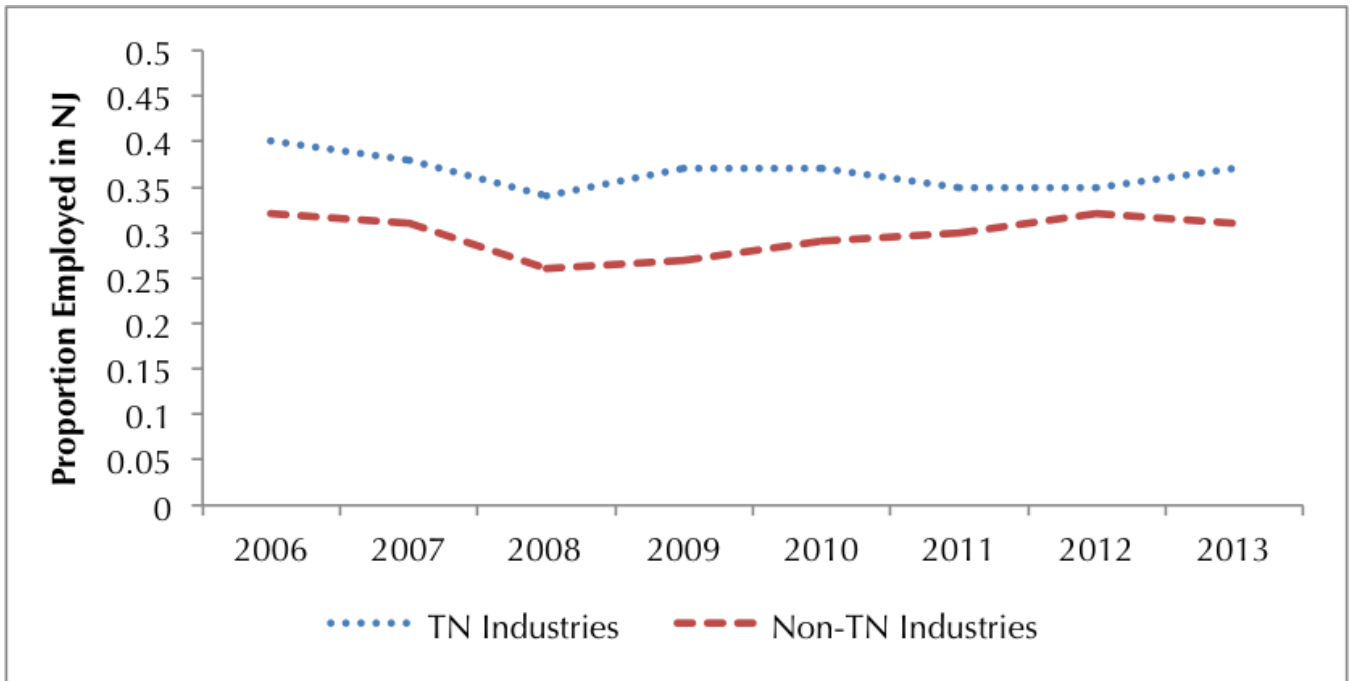
rigorous analysis to explain the differences. Heldrich Center researchers also examined the proportion of all trainees, regardless of occupational field, who were employed in New Jersey in the fourth quarter after training in a key industry sector and the proportion that were employed in any other industry. Figure 3.33 presents these data. A greater proportion of trainees were working in a key industry sector, though many found employment outside the key industry sectors.

In addition to being more likely to be working in key industry sector, trainees who work in key industry sectors also earn in the fourth quarter after exit more than trainees employed in other industries. Figure 3.34 shows that trainees working in a key industry sector earn about \$500 more in the fourth quarter after exit relative to trainees employed in other industries. This differential may be a product of simply being employed in a key industry sector. Alternatively, it may be that the strongest exiters of training programs are the ones most likely to find work in an industry closely

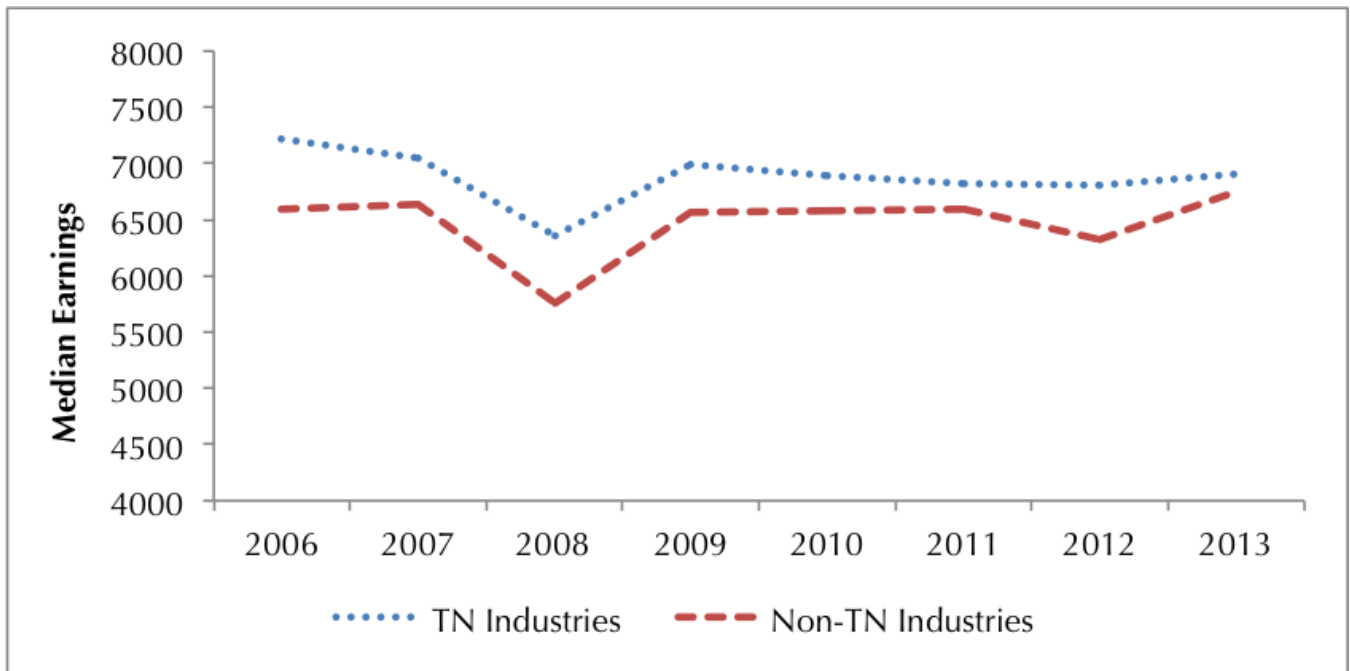
**Figure 3.32. Earnings of Exiters from Transportation, Logistics, and Distribution Programs Employed in the Fourth Quarter after Exit, by Industry**



**Figure 4.33. Proportion of Training Exiters Employed in Key and Other Industries in the Fourth Quarter after Exit**



**Figure 4.34. Earnings of Training Exiters Employed in Key and Other Industries in the Fourth Quarter after Exit**



related to their occupation, and it may therefore be the skill level of the exiter rather than the fact of employment in a key industry sector that explains this differential. The data do not permit Heldrich Center researchers to conduct a rigorous causal analysis.

## Conclusion

This chapter presented descriptive information on the trends from before the Great Recession to afterwards in the composition of those individuals who received training. The data showed that the demographic characteristics of the individuals receiving training changed over the time period of the study. Specifically, after the recession began, an increasing share of training recipients in all three programs studied (WIA Adult, WIA Dislocated Worker, and WDP) were male, white, older, and somewhat more highly educated. This set of characteristics has been found to be associated with more positive labor market outcomes, and the higher levels of pre-training earnings among the trainees after the start of the recession bear this out.

In this context, Heldrich Center researchers created two separate comparison groups to evaluate the effect of occupational skills training on the labor market outcomes of individuals who exited training after the recession began. The first comparison group included workforce system customers who had received one or more intensive services as their highest level of service. Heldrich Center researchers then used MDM to create a comparison group that was as similar as possible to the treatment group of trainees on a series of observable characteristics. The results showed that for the WIA Adult, WIA Dislocated Worker, and WDP programs, training had a very positive effect on employment and earnings. These findings must, however, be tempered, perhaps significantly, by the fact that the treatment group was created through non-random selection on unobservable (to Heldrich Center researchers) factors that may inflate the estimates of the effects of training.

In an attempt to mitigate the selection on unobservables problem, Heldrich Center researchers created a second comparison group consisting of

individuals who started training but never finished. This second comparison group should substantially mitigate the selection on unobservables problem, because not only have both groups been selected by counselors to participate in WIA, they have also been selected to participate in occupational skills training. The results obtained using this second comparison group are roughly similar to the results from the analysis that used customers who had received an intensive service as the comparison group: WIA Adult and WIA Dislocated Worker training both had positive and statistically significant effects on employment and earnings, while the WDP program showed positive but not statistically significant effects on employment and earnings.

Based on the site visits that Heldrich Center researchers conducted in which they conducted focus groups and interviews of job seekers and One-Stop staff, it is clear that there is a significant amount of selection that goes into who enrolls in a training program. Counselors, however, do not appear to be cherry picking individuals who are more or less likely to succeed in training to participate. This is borne out in part by the positive and nearly statistically significant result on the WDP program as well the very similar characteristics of the individuals that counselors are assigning to that program, which does not offer any performance-based incentive for cream skimming, and the Dislocated Worker program, which does present performance-based incentive for cream skimming. The fact that the individuals enrolling in the WDP and WIA Dislocated Worker programs are similar and that they realize similar outcomes after exit suggests that counselors are not cherry picking WIA Dislocated Worker clients. Without conducting an experiment, it is, of course, impossible to rule out this selection effect, but based on the available evidence, Heldrich Center researchers think it is unlikely to be operating.

There is, however, an important job seeker, self-selection effect. In order to participate in a training program, the job seeker must complete a number of steps, including meeting with a counselor (perhaps multiple times) conducting research on training providers, and filling out necessary paperwork. As result, individuals who enroll in training (that is, the individuals who end up in the treat-

ment group) are likely more motivated than comparison group members. That said, however, this self-selection largely affects the first comparison group methodology, differentiating trainees from individuals who received an intensive service but who never participated in training. It is less true of the non-completer comparison group, who had to go through all of the same processes as the treatment group in order to start their training programs. In all, the design employed in this study mitigates the possibility of selection bias as well as any non-experimental study can.

The final two sections of this chapter presented descriptive outcome data on the employment rates and earnings by provider type and key industry sector. These data show roughly similar post-training employment and earnings for community college exiters and private training provider exiters. The data did indicate smaller post-training earnings declines relative to pre-training earnings for private training provider exiters than for community college exiters. The key industry analysis shows that healthcare and TLD trainees found employment in their related industries, in key industry sectors in general, and in any industry at all, at about the same rates, but that TLD exiters generally earned more than the exiters of healthcare training programs.

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### Endnotes

1. Heldrich Center researchers were not able to answer the related question of which trainees benefited the most from training because the data did not contain enough observations to permit researchers to detect statistically meaningful effects for different subgroups.
2. The WIA Adult program serves all individuals 18 years and older seeking employment services. The WIA Dislocated Worker program serves a more targeted population of adults that have demonstrated previous attachment to the labor market.
3. Tables 3.1 and 3.2 do not present summary statistics for all dummy variables used in the matching model to control for race and education. However, none of the omitted variables display statistically significant differences in their means.
4. The range between the top of the T and the bottom of the upside down T is the 95% confidence interval.
5. The drawback of matching in this fashion is that the individuals selected for inclusion in the treatment group are only those people who are similar to the non-completers on their observable characteristics and are therefore not representative of all trainees. The implications of this matching strategy is discussed in Appendix 3.1 to this chapter.



### Appendix 3.1

This chapter analyzed the effect of occupational skills training on the earnings of trainees using a comparison group of individuals who started training but did not complete. Since there were very few individuals who started training but failed to complete it, Heldrich Center researchers were forced to conduct the matching in a different fashion than is typical.

Ordinarily, individuals who receive the treatment — in this study, occupational skills training — are matched against a comparison pool, which is a much larger set of individuals from which a comparison group is drawn. The matching algorithm selects all or nearly all of the individuals who receive the treatment (the treatment group) and a subset of individuals from the comparison pool who are as similar (the comparison group). The selected comparison group typically includes at least as many, and oftentimes more, observations than the treatment group.

In this case, because there were so few non-completers, the comparison pool was far smaller than the number of training completers. In order for the matching to work, researchers had to think of the **non-completers** as the treated group and the training completers as the comparison pool. Heldrich Center researchers then used the matching algorithm to identify the training completers who were as similar as possible to the individuals who did not complete training.

The implications of this matching strategy are as follows. First, what Heldrich Center researchers have measured in their comparison between training completers and non-completers is not the effect of completing training on the employment and earnings of the training completers, but rather the **effect of NOT completing training on the employment and earnings of non-trainees**. This is a perfectly valid analysis, but it is not the same as estimating the effect of training. This means that technically the results in the figures should be presented as the difference that not completing a training program has on an individual's earnings compared to individuals who completed training.

Presented this way, the results would be identical, except that the signs of the estimates and the confidence bands would be flipped.

Although this analysis is not the same as examining the effect of training completion on training completers, Heldrich Center researchers presented the data in this manner because the trainees included in the non-completer analysis are highly similar to the trainees included in the intensives analysis, as indicated in Table 3A1. It should, however, be noted that because researchers only selected into the analysis the subset of trainees who were the most similar to the non-completers, the results are not representative of the effect of training on all trainees and are only representative of the effect of training on trainees who are similar to those included in the treatment group for the non-completer analysis. Since the trainees included in the non-completer analysis are roughly similar to the larger group of trainees in the intensives analysis, the Heldrich Center thinks its presentation of the results is reasonable.

**Table 3A1. Comparison of Treatment Groups**

|                                     | Adult                          |                                    | Dislocated Worker              |                                    | WDP                            |                                    |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
|                                     | Trainees Matched w/ Intensives | Trainees Matched w/ Non-Completers | Trainees Matched w/ Intensives | Trainees Matched w/ Non-Completers | Trainees Matched w/ Intensives | Trainees Matched w/ Non-Completers |
| <b>Sample Size</b>                  | 6,185                          | 6,185                              | 12,120                         | 12,120                             | 3,573                          | 3,573                              |
| <b>Matched Sample Size</b>          | 6,185                          | 434                                | 12,120                         | 624                                | 3,573                          | 165                                |
| <b>Demographics</b>                 |                                |                                    |                                |                                    |                                |                                    |
| Female                              | 56%                            | 53%                                | 54%                            | 53%                                | 52%                            | 56%                                |
| Age (mean)                          | 38                             | 37                                 | 43                             | 42.5                               | 43.5                           | 41.3                               |
| Minority                            | 68%                            | 69%                                | 52%                            | 55%                                | 52%                            | 44%                                |
| Disability                          | 1%                             | 3%                                 | 1%                             | 1%                                 | 1%                             | NA                                 |
| Years of Education (mean)           | 12.6                           | 12.3                               | 13.2                           | 13                                 | 13.4                           | 13.1                               |
| <b>Program History</b>              |                                |                                    |                                |                                    |                                |                                    |
| TANF                                | 5%                             | 5%                                 | 1%                             | 1%                                 | 1%                             | 2%                                 |
| GA                                  | 3%                             | 4%                                 | 1%                             | 3%                                 | 1%                             | 5%                                 |
| SNAP                                | 6%                             | 9%                                 | 2%                             | 4%                                 | 3%                             | 5%                                 |
| Workforce Services                  | 58%                            | 60%                                | 60%                            | 63%                                | 78%                            | 81%                                |
| <b>Labor Market History</b>         |                                |                                    |                                |                                    |                                |                                    |
| Quarterly Earnings (mean)           | \$5,174                        | \$4,094                            | \$9,097                        | \$8,489                            | \$9,815                        | \$9,016                            |
| Quarters Employed                   | 65%                            | 61%                                | 76%                            | 76%                                | 76%                            | 76%                                |
| Job Tenure (quarters)               | 6.5                            | 5.4                                | 9                              | 8.4                                | 8.8                            | 8.1                                |
| Duration of Unemployment (quarters) | 2.5*                           | 2.6                                | 1.7*                           | 1.8                                | 1.9*                           | 1.9                                |

\* Difference in means is statistically significant (0.05 level)

## **Chapter 4**

# **An Evaluation of the Parolee Employment Placement Program**

by

**Paul L. Smith**

**Tracy Swan**

**Jeanette Holdbrook**

**Darleen Garcia**

**Taylor Kates**

**Spencer Clayton**

with

**Gwendolyn L. Harris**

**R**esearchers and practitioners have identified core areas of need that impede the ability of parolees to successfully reenter society and avoid recidivism. Central obstacles to reentry include employment, transitional and permanent housing, and transportation (Western, 2006; Western, 2008; Samuels & Mukamal, 2004). In July 2011, the New Jersey State Parole Board (SPB) and the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJLWD) signed a Memorandum of Understanding setting the terms for a partnership aimed at addressing one of the fundamental barriers to successful reentry — employment. The goal of the Parolee Employment Placement Program (PEPP), initiated as a pilot program in November 2011, is to reduce recidivism by improving the employment services that parolees throughout New Jersey receive.

As part of the pilot, NJLWD awarded contracts to three grantees representing the northern (Blessed Ministries Inc.), central (Shiloh Community Development Corporation), and southern (Mid-Atlantic States Career Education Center) regions of the state. The grantees were tasked with utilizing NJLWD's pay for success model (also defined as performance-based contracting [PBC]) to achieve PEPP's two primary goals: increase a parolee's opportunities for employment, and reduce the likelihood of a parolee to commit additional crimes against society. Each grantee developed and submitted a proposal to meet NJLWD's four objectives critical to achieving PEPP's primary goals. These objectives are:

- > Provide job coaching and employment preparation to parolees,
- > Help participants obtain sustainability employment,
- > Help participants retain employment for a minimum of 90 days, and
- > Help participants avoid reoffending for a six-month period upon entering the program.

This chapter presents the Walter Rand Institute's (WRI) findings from its comprehensive evaluation of the PEPP program. This chapter is organized as follows. The first section presents the research questions that guided this evaluation. The following section presents the methodologies that WRI researchers used to collect data and generate their findings. The next section presents an analysis of the PEPP model. Next, WRI researchers analyze the grantees' program delivery. The final sections of the chapter present the findings based on the analysis of quantitative data, a discussion of the findings, and recommendations.

## Research Questions

This chapter addresses the following research questions:

- > Are the programs achieving their funded objectives?
- > What are the strengths and weaknesses in the design and delivery in each region?
- > Are the participants achieving the desired outcomes?
- > What is program satisfaction for stakeholders in the program, including but not limited to PEPP participants, parole officers, employers, and grantee personnel?
- > Is the pay for success model to grantees an effective and sustainable mechanism for investment?
- > Are the state and federal incentives for hiring used and are they effective tools?
- > Is the program model for placement sustainable and replicable?
- > How do participant outcomes compare to an unmatched comparison group of parolees who are not receiving the same degree of supportive employment services?

## Research Methodologies

To meet the expectations of the evaluation as outlined in NJLWD’s Request for Proposals (RFP), the evaluation team used a number of different research tools and methods. The evaluation team collected qualitative data and analyzed quantitative program data to answer the research questions as thoroughly as possible. This section describes the methods that WRI researchers used, organized by key research topic.

### Methods of Qualitative Data Analysis

The analysis section of this chapter provides a description of the NJLWD model, as well as similarities and differences between the NJLWD model and other pay for success/performance models as outlined in the literature. In addition, this chapter provides a description of the grantees’ programs and implementation processes, highlighting areas in which the models deviate from both NJLWD’s model and the models outlined in the literature. The tools used to inform this section include:

- > A review of literature on pay for success models;
- > Documents provided by grantees and NJLWD, including model descriptions and program proposals;
- > Qualitative data collected from interviews with grantees, NJLWD, and SPB; and
- > Surveys of parole officers, grantees, NJLWD reentry specialists, and PEPP employers.

The analysis section addresses the following research questions posed by NJLWD:

- > What are the strengths and weaknesses in the design and delivery in each region?
- > Are the state and federal incentives for hiring being used and are they an effective tool?

## Quantitative Data Analysis Methods and Data Used

The findings section of this chapter includes a quantitative analysis of the 528 PEPP participants, as well as an (unmatched) comparison group consisting of 150 parolees with representation from all three regions of the state. The evaluation team obtained demographic and incarceration data for both the PEPP participants and an (unmatched) comparison group from SPB. The demographic information collected for both groups includes home address, race, and gender. Table 4.1 reports the variables collected related to incarceration.

**Table 4.1. Variables Related to Incarceration**

|  |
|--|
| Date of Incarceration for Last Offense           |
| Incarceration in Years (for most recent offense) |
| Parole Date                                      |
| County of Commitment                             |
| Parole Status                                    |
| Current Commitment Offense                       |
| County and Parole District Released to           |

Data pertaining to parolees’ participation in PEPP and employment were obtained from NJLWD and grantees. See Table 4.2 for those variables.

**Table 4.2. Variables Related to PEPP and Employment**

|                               |
|-------------------------------|
| PEPP Agency                   |
| PEPP Start Date               |
| Date Registered with One-Stop |
| Date of Hire                  |
| Hire Date                     |
| Employer Name                 |
| Job Title                     |
| Hourly Wage                   |

PEPP grantees provided data on parolees’ job retention as pertaining to the benchmarks set by NJLWD. The benchmarks are 30, 60 and 90 days. The findings section relies upon four key types of

statistical analysis: frequencies, means, cross-tabs, and logistic regressions. Frequency tables were used to better facilitate the data cleaning process and to ascertain trends for further testing. The frequency tables were also used to compare the participant and (unmatched) comparison groups, especially in variables related to benchmark completion and geographic spread. Means were calculated for key demographic variables in order to determine differences between the participant and control subjects. Cross-tabs were then used to examine trends between categorical and ordinal variables. The cross-tabs generally placed benchmark variables that were indicative of the success of PEPP against demographic variables. Pearson's chi square and the gamma statistic were used to determine the statistical significance of the cross-tabs. Logistic regressions were then used to determine the relationships between individual binary benchmarks used as dependent variables and a series of demographic and wage variables as independent variables. Specifically, the findings section addresses the grantees' ability to meet two of the objectives:

- > To help participants retain employment for a minimum of 90 days, and
- > To help participants avoid reoffending for a six-month period upon entering the program.

Also, the findings section addresses the following research questions posed by NJLWD:

- > Are the programs achieving their funded objectives?
- > How do participant outcomes compare to matching groups of parolees that are not receiving the same degree of supportive employment services?

The evaluation team used the data provided by grantees and SPB to measure the success of the program in achieving the benchmarks set by NJLWD.

## Limitations

Despite the wide range of research tools used in this evaluation, and the amount of data collected, there are important limitations to this evaluation. One limitation was the lack of access to particular stakeholders and personnel from the first round of PEPP. While some staff from NJLWD who played a critical role in planning and implementing the first round of PEPP were available for the evaluation, others were not. In terms of the planning and implementation of PEPP, available staff could not speak to specific components of the process because responsibility for the completion of certain tasks had been delegated to former staff.

Other limitations related to data and information. First, data that would have further informed the findings were not obtainable. For example, evaluators requested hourly pay and dates of employment for the (unmatched) comparison group, but did not receive this data in time to include in this chapter. Second, the source and structure of some of the data collected were problematic. Data originally submitted in Microsoft Excel had been converted to PDFs and consequently were not machine-readable and could not be input into statistical software for analysis. Listed below are other limitations of the evaluation:

- > While job coaching and employment preparation were critical parts of NJLWD's model and requirements to meet the first benchmark, no data were available concerning either the amount or the types of services and training parolees received.
- > There is no way to differentiate whether a PEPP participant obtained a job as a direct result of participating in PEPP or through some other means. As long as a parolee got a job and was considered a PEPP participant, the grantee could take credit for the job obtained.
- > Data quality was not high. In the first year, grantees self-reported with few objective measures to corroborate the information received (e.g., salary, start date, new arrest).



- > Response rates to some surveys were low. Response levels to surveys were low in all cases except parole officers and grantees (NJLWD reentry specialists and PEPP employers had low response rates).

## Analysis of PEPP Model and Delivery

In FY 2012, NJLWD issued a Notice of Grant Opportunity for PEPP. The stated mission of the first pilot phase of PEPP was “to increase the opportunities for parolees to obtain and retain employment and, therefore, reduce the likelihood of recidivism.” NJLWD and SPB collaborated to fund the pilot as a PBC model, wherein contracted agencies received payment based on services provided to each parolee, as well as parolee outcomes: whether they retained employment and avoided new arrests.

To implement the program, grants were awarded to one agency in each designated region: northern (Hudson, Union, and Essex Counties), central (Mercer, Middlesex, and Monmouth Counties), and southern (Camden, Atlantic, and Cumberland Counties) New Jersey. The contracts awarded to the grantees were for 18 consecutive months and provided a maximum of \$250,000 in funding. Each grantee was required to retain a minimum of 60 parolee participants (10% were to be veterans) in the program. Parolees could be referred to the program by their parole officer if the parole district office was located in one of the above-named counties and if the parolee possessed a high school diploma or General Education Diploma.

Once the parolee was referred to the PEPP grantee in his/her region, the agency was responsible for ensuring that the parolee received a variety of case management services for finding and retaining employment. After referral, the grantee was also required to register the parolee with the local One-Stop Career Center. The PEPP grantee and the One-Stop’s reentry specialist were required to conduct an orientation with participants to review program expectations and requirements, complete an assessment and employability plan review, and

provide a realistic introduction to the current job market and potential barriers to employment. Parolees could receive job-related services from the PEPP grantee, including building interview skills, résumé writing, career exploration, life skills, and substance abuse counseling, among others. The grantee was required to coordinate case management for the parolee, and was responsible for job placement and providing ongoing job retention services.

PEPP established five benchmarks for parolees in the program (see Table 4.3).

**Table 4.3. PEPP Benchmarks**

| Benchmark   | Payment Per Parolee Achieving this Benchmark |
|---|--|
| Assessment/Job Coaching/<br>Case Management       | \$600  |
| Job placement with<br>30-day retention            | \$1,200                                      |
| 60-day job retention                              | \$800  |
| 90-day job retention                              | \$800  |
| No new arrests within six<br>months of enrollment | \$600  |
| <i>Maximum per participant \$4,000</i>            |  |

Each benchmark had an associated reimbursement fee to be paid to the grantee when a parolee reached that benchmark. The maximum payment per participant was \$4,000, for a total of \$240,000 in possible reimbursement fees. Each grantee was also awarded a fixed amount of \$10,000 to provide workforce readiness services to assist selected parolees in attaining the benchmarks. Monthly reimbursement was provided on the basis of how many participants reached benchmarks and the reimbursement fee associated with attained benchmarks.

## NJLWD Model Compared and Contrasted with Other Models and Practices

PBC has been gradually replacing more traditional fee-for-service contracting models, which reward contractor inputs (Lu, 2015). PBC instead “focuses on the outputs, quality and outcomes of service provision and may tie at least a portion of a contractor’s payment as well as any contract extension or renewal to their achievement” (Martin, 2007). It gives contractors greater flexibility and discretion in how to achieve the desired outcomes (Lu, 2015).

One key area in which PEPP’s PBC model deviates from the other models researched for this evaluation, including Oklahoma Milestone and Florida’s Department of Children and Families models, is the process in which benchmarks were developed. Both aforementioned models include contracted providers in the establishment of performance standards to ensure that they were attainable (Martin, 2005).

*Quality standards were articulated based on the simplest application of best practices in payment percentages reached a compromise between difficulty of implementation for the provider and the state agency’s requirement that payments be weighted toward the ultimate outcome...The resulting Milestone payment structure was distributed to all current providers for comment. The revised structure was used to fund a pilot to test the design. The committee was called together to review the results of the pilot and redesign at the end of the first pilot. (O’Brien & Cook, 1998)*

In contrast, PEPP’s benchmarks were set by NJLWD and were based on “...anticipated number of hours necessary for the participants to be successful in each of the benchmarks. If the benchmark would take longer or was more difficult to reach it would pay out at a higher rate upon completion. The payment structure was also cognizant of the fact that the services are not free and therefore for the programs to be sustainable a nominal fee must be attainable even if the parolee was not successful in obtaining employment” (staff interview excerpt). During interviews, PEPP grantees expressed res-

ervations with the benchmarks, some of which NJLWD could have addressed at the program development stage if the grantees had been included in the process. In fact, two of the three grantees had concerns with one or more of the benchmarks. They expressed issues with both the payment per individual (too low), as well as the percentage of participants expected to meet the benchmarks (percentage too high). The grantee that had no issues with the benchmarks was the only one with prior experience with PBC models.

Comparable to PEPP, the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services model established a fixed fee for each client served and the fee was broken down into smaller payments. In the case of the Oklahoma Milestone system, the smaller payments would be paid to contractors when clients reached certain milestones, like vocational preparation and job retention. While PEPP has five milestones, Oklahoma’s program has seven. Each milestone represents a combination of outputs, outcomes, and processes, which allow providers to receive partial payment even if certain outputs and outcomes are not achieved for individual clients (Martin, 2005). There is some variation in the payout models between Oklahoma, PEPP, and another model, the Pennsylvania Department of Welfare (job placement). Tables 4.4 and 4.5 display the benchmarks and payouts under the Oklahoma system and the Pennsylvania system.

**Table 4.4. Oklahoma Benchmarks**

| Benchmark              | Payment Per Individual Achieving this Benchmark |
|------------------------|---|
| Determination of Need  | 10%   |
| Vocational Preparation | 10%   |
| Job Placement          | 10%   |
| Job Training           | 10%   |
| Job Retention          | 15%   |
| Job Stabilization      | 20%   |
| Case Closed            | 25%   |

**Table 4.5. Pennsylvania Benchmarks**

| Benchmark  | Payment Per Individual Achieving this Benchmark |
|--|---|
| Participation (client assesses completed)        | \$1,000   |
| Placement (unsubsidized employment)              | \$1,000   |
| Medical Benefits (job includes medical benefits) | \$400   |
| Job Retention (employed for 12 months)           | \$1,600   |

*Maximum per participant \$4,000*

PEPP and Pennsylvania’s program have similar benchmarks that were set during the development period of the program and their maximum payout per individual was \$4,000. Oklahoma’s Milestone program has set percentages for each benchmark, but no maximum limit per individual. A major difference between PEPP’s model and Oklahoma and Pennsylvania’s models is that the highest payout for PEPP is a job placement with 30-day retention, which is its second benchmark, chronologically speaking, while the other two agencies’ largest payment is for completion of the final benchmark.

### Threats to Effectiveness of PBC Models

For many organizations with no experience with PBC models, the adjustment period to adapt to a new fiscal model can be frustrating and costly. An organization could be spending resources on staffing and administration without guaranteed reimbursement. The additional pressures of a pay-for-performance model can lead to cream skimming and “parking” (delaying or not providing services to the most difficult clients in favor of the clients with better-predicted outcomes). Parking is more likely to occur when providers cannot choose their clients, and when it costs more money to serve a difficult client than a provider would be reimbursed from a funder (Konig & Heinrich, 2013). This selection “incentive bias” exists because the provider is rewarded for good performance, and

although more difficult clients cost more time and money to help, their outcomes are rewarded the same as easier clients (Shen, 2003). In Shen’s (2003) analysis of an addiction treatment program in Maine, he showed that nonprofit providers had likely engaged in selecting easier-to-treat clients more under PBC models, and suggests that it may be necessary to establish different benchmarks for clients with severe needs. Regarding PEPP, the incentive for cream skimming is increased because grantees are dealing with a difficult demographic to place in employment.

## Analysis of Grantee Models and Delivery

This section provides an overview of the grantees’ programs, an analysis of their adherence to NJLWD’s model, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of each program.

### North Region: Blessed Ministries, Inc. (BMI)

BMI proposed to conduct an employability assessment during the orientation phase, which would help determine job readiness and potential barriers to job placement and retention, the results of which would inform the participant’s individualized job readiness service plan. Watkins Industries, LLC planned to collaborate with BMI to provide job readiness services, case management, and further assessments. Together, the two organizations would monitor participants’ progress through weekly screenings by the case management team at Watkins and the job development team at BMI.

BMI had already established relationships with employers in various industries, and planned to tap those networks for job placements. BMI planned to encourage the use of employer incentives, including employer credits, bonding, and on-the-job training as needed. Participants’ employment was to be verified by BMI using official paystubs. Working with employers, BMI aimed to develop an intervention plan for each participant to help ensure job retention and help the participant become

## Evaluation of One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey

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self-sufficient. BMI also planned to make regular site visits to employers, where the employer could provide feedback about participants' job performance and attitude.

BMI planned to use the \$10,000 in other services funding to contract a transportation company to provide door-to-door transportation for participants from their residences to their places of employment. BMI's organizational structure was designed to operate with a performance-based model, so it was prepared to receive payment only if and after services were provided and outcomes attained.

**Adherence to NJLWD Model.** BMI's proposal for implementation of PEPP deviated from NJLWD's model in a few ways. First, BMI was the only grantee to specify that it and the One-Stop reentry specialist would actively recruit participants, instead of relying only on referrals from Parole. Second, in BMI's proposal, the reentry specialist was charged with ensuring no duplication of services (NJLWD requested that the grantee do this). Third, Watkins Industries was placed in charge of case management services (NJLWD requested that the grantee do this). BMI was the only grantee agency to allot all \$10,000 in supplemental funding to providing transportation to PEPP participants.

During the implementation of PEPP, a conflict developed between Watkins Industries and BMI: the time that Watkins Industries spent on case management, in-depth assessments, and participant trainings limited BMI's ability to place participants in jobs as they became available. With BMI's focus on job placements and maintaining good relationships with employers, BMI did not want to sacrifice job placement opportunities for Watkins' assessments and trainings. As a result of this tension, BMI and Watkins dissolved their partnership. BMI then ensured that job coaching would be tailored to available jobs, and BMI used the van drivers of the hired transportation company as de facto case managers. According to BMI, the van drivers could easily monitor participants' work attendance and serve as their first point of contact for any issues.

**Strengths.** BMI had the organizational capacity to manage the payment structure of PBC. BMI worked to recruit participants instead of waiting for referrals from Parole, which helped to minimize the risk

in not meeting the benchmarks. BMI had established relationships with a variety of employers, a factor that helped it find jobs for participants. Using the supplemental funding to provide transportation for parolees was likely an important factor in helping participants retain employment, even after their parole ended, since they could continue to use the transportation (and pay a small fee).

**Weaknesses.** BMI focused almost exclusively on job placement and retention, a logical decision given PEPP's payment structure. One important consideration, however, is that the job placements in the north region came at the expense of more in-depth assessments, case management services, and broader job coaching. With the dissolution of the partnership with Watkins Industries, participants no longer received the kind of training that may have helped them develop transferrable skills that would serve them beyond the scope of PEPP. With a strong emphasis on placing participants into employment as soon as possible, it is not clear that consideration was given to the quality or nature of employment — whether the participant was a good fit for the type of position, what the participants' interests were, or whether the position was temporary or had the opportunity for growth. Although BMI had success with job placement, its model was more shortsighted than the other grantees.

### Central Region: Shiloh Community Development Corporation (Shiloh)

Shiloh planned to establish a PEPP location in each county in its contracted region and aimed to increase parolees' commitment to community service through its implementation of PEPP. After referral, the Shiloh case manager would complete an independent assessment, review the employability assessment, and draft a Customized Employment Sustainability Plan (CESP) in collaboration with NJLWD's reentry specialists.

Shiloh's program included six-week cycles of job training, job searches, and work activities, ideally resulting in job placement by the end of the cycle. The beginning of the cycle featured orientation, support groups for participants, and a work experience activity that determined participants'



skill levels. The parolee would then begin his/her CESP and be assigned to a case manager. Case management services included a staff visit to the participant's residence, financial management services, individual or group counseling, and housing services. Through a partnership with A Better Way (ABW), participants received job coaching, interview preparation, job application help, and training to improve soft and transferrable skills from an assigned job coach or employment specialist.

It was expected that most job placements would occur at the end of the program cycle and be full-time positions. Job placements were expected through job searches with case managers, job fairs, local partnerships, and other sources. ABW also provided a forklift training course for participants. Until employment was obtained, participants would be required to participate in a work experience activity, including community service, paid internships, or job shadowing. Once hired, case managers and/or job coaches would make frequent calls and visits to participants' work sites to support retention.

Shiloh planned to advertise Work Opportunity Tax Credits and Federal Bonding as incentives to potential employers, as well as ensuring participants' attendance and providing transportation services to some participants. Shiloh intended to use its other services funding of \$10,000 to provide uniforms and backpacks for participants during "Boot Camp" and for supplemental transportation to job sites and community service sites.

Shiloh's proposed program included a number of aspects that went beyond what was requested in NJLWD's RFP. Shiloh's orientation was an intensive six-day Boot Camp, which was significantly more than what other grantees proposed or NJLWD requested. Shiloh emphasized the role of peer support groups and designated support people/mentors for parolees as part of its job coaching and case management services. Additionally, Shiloh specified that it would place parolees in full-time jobs, provide forklift training, and require participants to complete a "work experience activity" (e.g., community service, paid internship, or job shadowing) until employment was attained. These services were significantly more extensive than what NJLWD outlined.

**Adherence to NJLWD Model.** Shiloh's implementation of PEPP differed slightly from what it proposed. Although the proposal suggested that participant services would be shared between Shiloh and ABW, it appears that ABW provided job training, coaching, assessments, and case management services; led the majority of activities during the six-week cycle; and took the lead on employer recruitment. Shiloh hosted job fairs, and focused primarily on administrative tasks associated with PEPP and helping participants secure interviews and create résumés. At a certain point during the implementation, Shiloh took over providing the workshops for participants during the six-week cycle. During evaluation interviews, no reference was made to Shiloh's proposed work experience activities, participants' community service activities, or whether participants obtained full-time employment.

**Strengths.** Shiloh's proposed model focused heavily on developing transferrable skills for participants, helping them obtain some work experience through "work experience activities," and developing participants' social and emotional skills, as well as support networks, to help them retain employment after PEPP. ABW was able to provide forklift certification courses for participants.

**Weaknesses.** The division of responsibilities between Shiloh and ABW was not clearly defined and changed during implementation. Having both Shiloh and ABW work on employer recruitment was likely redundant and an inefficient use of time. As well, the communication between Shiloh and ABW seemed lacking, as evidenced by the fact that ABW did not know (until the contract was virtually over) about the \$10,000 of other services funding for participants. Even though ABW provided forklift certification for participants, few, if any, of the parolees secured forklift employment, which seems to be a lost opportunity. Although Shiloh's vision for its version of PEPP had admirable goals, ultimately, it appears that those goals were not focused enough on PEPP's payment structure based on job placement and retention. Additionally, it seems that Shiloh was ill prepared for the administrative burden of PBC requirements. Ultimately, Shiloh's model was too complicated to be sustainable.

### South Region: Mid-Atlantic States Career & Education Center, Inc. (Mid-Atlantic)<sup>1</sup>

Mid-Atlantic planned to provide referred participants with an orientation to its services, and ensure they were connected to a One-Stop. Each parolee would receive individual case management services, during which they would develop a job plan, a résumé, and interviewing skills. Individual employment plans would be developed within the first two weeks after orientation at the One-Stop Career Center. Mid-Atlantic's case management planned to include individual meetings and assessments, mentorship for life skills, presentations on job attainment skills, introductions to additional available training programs, and identification of potential employers and available positions.

Mid-Atlantic planned to use its extensive network of employers and excellent relationships with local One-Stop Centers to provide employment opportunities for parolees. Mid-Atlantic planned to match parolees with appropriate employment opportunities and inform employers of financial incentive programs for hiring parolees. Employers would become members of case management teams. By providing parolees with various forms of counseling and training, such as anger management and conflict resolution, Mid-Atlantic hoped to help participants develop skills necessary to retain employment. Mid-Atlantic staff would be available via email and telephone for both parolees and employers on a daily basis. Attendance and work performance would be monitored regularly to identify any potential problems early on.

**Adherence to NJLWD Model.** Like Shiloh's proposed program, certain aspects of Mid-Atlantic's proposal added onto the model outlined in NJLWD's RFP. Mid-Atlantic made a few adjustments during its implementation of PEPP. As part of the case management services, participants could receive training on anger management, conflict resolution, lifestyle management, financial management, and accessing transportation and mental health services. These services represent program elements that supplemented what was outlined in the RFP. Mid-Atlantic researched the local job market, and targeted small employers with whom

it could build relationships that could result in job placements. Job placements and retention were Mid-Atlantic's focus, though it helped many participants enroll in educational and vocational programs. It is not clear to what extent life skills development and other social skills development activities occurred.

**Strengths.** Mid-Atlantic was solely responsible for the delivery of services to PEPP participants, which allowed it to know how participants were spending their time and make adjustments in a more streamlined fashion. This also facilitated a simpler model of service delivery, which likely allowed Mid-Atlantic to focus more on the needs of participants. Mid-Atlantic's offices are located within the local Parole office, which greatly facilitated referrals and ongoing contact with participants. Understanding that the majority of businesses that would be open to hiring PEPP participants would be small businesses, Mid-Atlantic targeted those businesses for job development. Mid-Atlantic created the most sustainable model of PEPP, given its simplicity (no subcontractors), ease of communication with Parole, and its focus on job development for participants.

**Weaknesses.** Some of the jobs that participants obtained were seasonal or temporary. Although this allowed Mid-Atlantic to reach its benchmarks for payment, it may not contribute to the broader goals of sustainable employment or reduced recidivism.

## Findings: Data Analysis

Initially, PEPP served a minimum of 180 parolees over the 18-month pilot period. This was increased to 270 after Mid-Atlantic and BMI exceeded their original target numbers. PEPP guaranteed reimbursement to grantees for up to each of their agreed-upon service levels (Mid-Atlantic = 120; BMI = 90; and Shiloh = 60). Grantees could, and were encouraged to, serve more parolees than their contracted levels.

Evaluators requested PEPP data from NJLWD as each grantee was required to complete quarterly Microsoft Excel spreadsheets on their participants, as well as an annual summary Excel report, to create a demographic portrait of a typical PEPP par-



participant, in addition to determining whether PEPP benchmarks had been met. NJLWD had limited spreadsheets on file, and many of the spreadsheets were in PDF format, which evaluators could not convert. This forced evaluators to reach out to PEPP grantees directly for the data. Surprisingly, grantees also had limited data on file. It took evaluators several months to collect the necessary data on PEPP participants to conduct a robust evaluation.

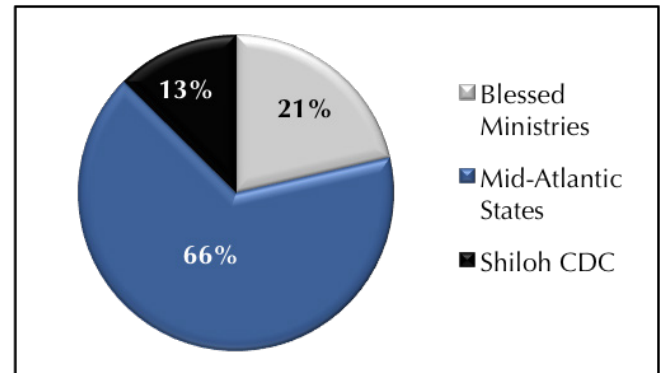
During this time, it became clear to evaluators that the information collected from the grantees on PEPP participants was going to differ from the benchmark figures reported to NJLWD by the grantees. It is unclear, however, if NJLWD verified the numbers reported on benchmarks with the Excel spreadsheets that accompanied these numbers. Since evaluators used the participant Excel spreadsheets, this evaluation is based on the actual data collected and recorded for each participant vs. aggregate numbers.

To start, the total number of PEPP participants from the grantees' data differs from the number reported to NJLWD. There are a number of distinct reasons for this difference:

1. BMI and Shiloh did not count a parolee as a PEPP participant until s/he hit the 30-day employment benchmark, while Mid-Atlantic provided evaluators with data on all parolees included in PEPP, regardless of whether they hit the 30-day employment benchmark.
2. NJLWD only reimbursed for its contracted level of service; therefore, grantees only reported this number to NJLWD, even though they very likely served more than their contracted level.

Overall, the three grantees' total level of contracted service was 270 parolees. Grantees, however, reported to evaluators that 528 parolees were served under this pilot program. Evaluators agree that this number is most likely low since Mid-Atlantic was the only grantee that shared its total database of parolees served. As seen in Figure 4.1, Mid-Atlantic (66%) serviced the majority of PEPP participants and Shiloh serviced the least.

**Figure 4.1. Participants by Grantee**

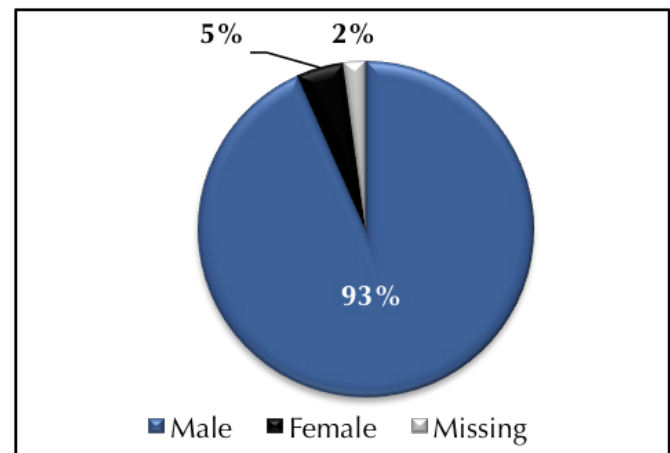


## PEPP Participant Demographics

### Gender

At 93%, the majority of PEPP participants were male, while 5% were female (see Figure 4.2).

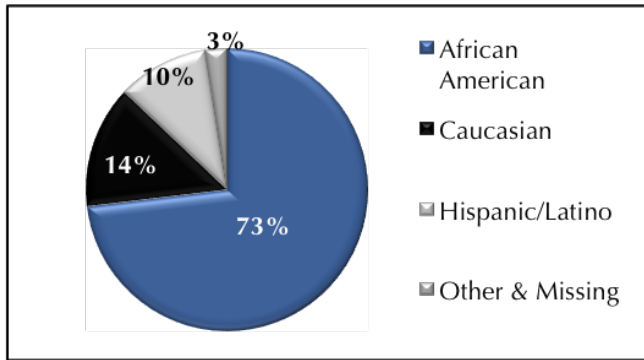
**Figure 4.2. Participants by Gender**



### Race

Close to three quarters (73%) of PEPP participants were African American. Caucasians made up 14% and Hispanics/Latinos made up 10%. (See Figure 4.3.)

**Figure 4.3. Participants by Race**



**Average Age**

Only two PEPP participants were under the age of 20 while enrolled in PEPP. The majority of participants (34.5%, 182) were in their twenties, while another 28% (148) were in their thirties. Seventeen percent (89) were in their forties, and 5.9% (31) were 50 years old or older. Table 4.6 shows the average age of participants by grantee.

**Table 4.6. Average Age of Participant by Grantee**

| Grantee             | Average Age |
|---------------------|-------------|
| Blessed Ministries  | Nearly 32   |
| Mid-Atlantic States | 34          |
| Shiloh CDC          | 34          |

**Residence**

Almost three quarters of PEPP participants resided in 12 municipalities. Camden was the most represented municipality, with 99 PEPP participants. The next highest was Newark (77), followed by Trenton with 59. (See Table 4.7.)

**Table 4.7. Participants' Home Municipality**

| Municipality  | # of Participants |
|---------------|-------------------|
| Atlantic City | 30                |
| Bridgeton     | 26                |
| Camden        | 99                |
| East Orange   | 14                |
| Irvington     | 8                 |
| Jersey City   | 6                 |
| Millville     | 31                |
| Newark        | 77                |
| Pennsauken    | 23                |
| Pleasantville | 23                |
| Trenton       | 59                |
| Vineland      | 14                |

**Incarceration Data**

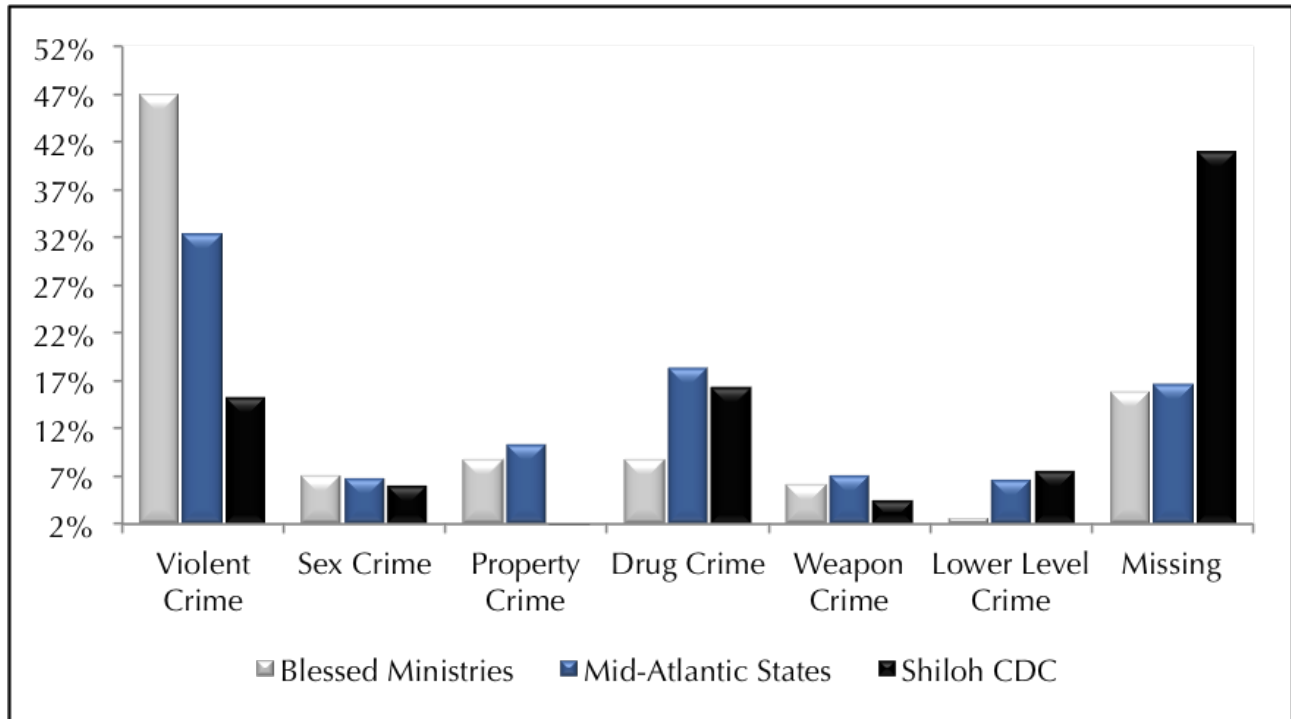
At 33%, violent crime represents the highest percentage of latest commitment offense by parolees who participated in the first round of PEPP. This was followed by drug crimes (16.3%). Figure 4.4 disaggregates the latest commitment offense by grantee.

A majority of PEPP participants spent less than 10 years being incarcerated, with 21.2% incarcerated less than 1 year, 10.4% between 1 and just under 2 years, 24.2% between 2 and just under 5 years, and 17% between 5 and just under 10 years. Table 4.8 shows the average time incarcerated by grantee.

**Table 4.8. Average Time Incarcerated by Grantee Benchmarks**

| Grantee             | Average Time Incarcerated (Years) |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Blessed Ministries  | 4.3                               |
| Mid-Atlantic States | 4                                 |
| Shiloh CDC          | 4.5                               |

**Figure 4.4. Latest Commitment Offense by Grantee**



## Benchmarks

Table 4.9 displays the PEPP benchmarks, along with the percentage of PEPP participants who had to meet the criteria.

**Table 4.9. PEPP Benchmarks**

| Benchmark                                      | Percentage of Participants    |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Assessment/Job Coaching/Case Management        | 100% of participants          |
| Job placement with 30-day retention            | 60% of the total participants |
| 60-day job retention                           | 80% of the previous benchmark |
| 90-day job retention                           | 70% of the previous benchmark |
| No new arrests within six months of enrollment | 90% of the total participants |

Table 4.10 shows the PEPP grantees’ specific goals based on their contracted level of service.

Table 4.11 displays the various benchmarks and the accompanying participant-level data that were received from PEPP grantees.

Overall, PEPP grantees helped roughly 50.8% of the PEPP participants secure employment, as measured by the hire date variable. The reader should keep in mind that the benchmark percentages reported in Table 4.11 were determined by using each grantee’s **actual PEPP participant number** instead of their allowable number, which can explain why Mid-Atlantic’s percentages were far below the target.

As shown in Table 4.12, it took grantees/participants 3 1/2 months to secure employment. BMI had the shortest time from the participant’s start date and the date of securing employment (under two months). Both Mid-Atlantic and Shiloh averaged around four-and-a-half months, with Shiloh a bit longer. Compared to the average length of a job search in the United States, which is at an all-time high of well over seven months,<sup>2</sup> PEPP grantees did significantly better.

## Evaluation of One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey

**Table 4.10. PEPP Grantee's Benchmark Goals**

| Benchmark  | Blessed Ministries | Mid-Atlantic States | Shiloh CDC | Total PEPP Grantees |
|--|--------------------|---------------------|------------|---------------------|
| <b>Contracted Level of Service</b>                   | <b>90</b>          | <b>120</b>          | <b>60</b>  | <b>270</b>          |
| Assessment/Job Coaching/Case Management (100%)       | 90                 | 120                 | 60         | 270                 |
| Job placement with 30-day retention (60%)            | 54                 | 72                  | 36         | 162                 |
| 60-day job retention (80% of the previous benchmark) | 43                 | 58                  | 29         | 130                 |
| 90-day job retention (70% of the previous benchmark) | 38                 | 50                  | 20         | 108                 |
| No new arrests within six months of enrollment (90%) | 81                 | 108                 | 54         | 243                 |

**Table 4.11 Benchmarks**

| Agency Benchmark                                     | Blessed Ministries                            | Mid-Atlantic States                           | Shiloh CDC                                    | Total PEPP Grantees                           |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| Actual PEPP participants                             | 113   | 349   | 66  | 528   |
| Maximum allowable for PEPP payment                   | 90  | 120   | 60  | 270   |
| Assessment/Job Coaching/Case Management (100%)       | Could not be verified from Excel spreadsheets | Could not be verified from Excel spreadsheets | Could not be verified from Excel spreadsheets | Could not be verified from Excel spreadsheets |
| Job placement with 30-day retention (60%)            | 89.4% (101)                                   | 33.8% (118)                                   | 59.1% (39)                                    | 48.9% (258)                                   |
| 60-day job retention (80% of the previous benchmark) | 89.4% (101)                                   | 30.7% (107)                                   | 54.5% (36)                                    | 46.2% (244)                                   |
| 90-day job retention (70% of the previous benchmark) | 89.4% (101)                                   | 26.9% (94)                                    | 50% (33)                                      | 43.2% (228)                                   |
| No new arrests within six months of enrollment (90%) | 83.2% (94)                                    | 70.2% (245)                                   | 84.8% (56)                                    | 74.8% (395)                                   |

**Table 4.12. PEPP Program Timeline**

|  | Blessed Ministries | Mid-Atlantic States | Shiloh CDC  | Total PEPP Grantees |
|--|--------------------|---------------------|-------------|---------------------|
| Average Time From PEPP Start Date to Hire Date | 1.75 months        | 4.5 months          | 4.65 months | 3.5 months          |

Just over 43% of PEPP participants were able to retain their employment for 90 days. Nearly 75% of PEPP participants stayed crime free for the six-month period from enrollment.

According to NJLWD’s PEPP *Close Out Report* dated March 20, 2014, both BMI and Mid-Atlantic reported their maximum allowable contracted level of service number for every benchmark category. In other words, BMI reported 90 participants for every benchmark, even though the employment and arrest benchmarks were a percentage of this total number. Mid-Atlantic did the same thing by reporting 120 for every benchmark. Therefore, Mid-Atlantic and BMI reported **exceeding** the benchmark percentages, whereas, the evaluators found that only BMI actually exceeded the benchmarks, but at a lower percentage than what was reported to NJLWD. Again, it is unclear if NJLWD verified these numbers with the Excel spreadsheets that accompanied the grantees’ reports. Shiloh, on the other hand, reported the same numbers that as appear on the evaluation team’s chart.

This appears to indicate to the evaluators that some verification of whether PEPP participants actually did secure employment and retained it for the time periods measured is needed. The fact that the numbers reported by grantees were the same (90 and 120) for **all** benchmarks should have raised some level of alarm on NJLWD’s part. NJLWD could have verified the employment data and length of employment through its own database to ensure accurate reporting from the PEPP grantees.

The benchmark, **Assessment/Job Coaching/Case Management** (100%), is nearly impossible to verify since NJLWD did not require additional reporting/tracking on this, such as number of hours spent on activity, list of activities completed (résumé writing, job interviewing practice), or participant attendance records. This is an easy benchmark for grantees to claim that 100% of their participants met and, according to the results, each grantee did.

Evaluators were not able to clarify how the benchmark, **No new arrest within six months of enrollment** (90%), was determined. SPB indicated that grantees searched the New Jersey Department of Corrections (DOC) website to determine if a participant was incarcerated. Grantees indicated, for the most part, they would learn this information from participants themselves. Parole officers indicated that they rarely shared this type of information with grantees. NJLWD was not completely sure how this information was determined.

All of these methods of determining if a new arrest occurred are incomplete at best. The DOC website will only indicate if an individual is incarcerated. A parolee can be reincarcerated for a new conviction (which is different from a new arrest) or for a technical violation of parole. The DOC website does not provide the reason for incarceration. Receiving this information from the parolees themselves could be reliable. However, a parolee may not provide this information out of fear of being discharged from PEPP, so the number could be less than in reality.

With such a benchmark as this one, an agreed-upon definition and process must be determined as to how to collect and verify this information before the program is implemented.

### Cross-tabs and Logistic Regressions<sup>3</sup>

Evaluators ran cross-tabs to determine the relationships between a set of dependent variables that included the benchmarks set by NJLWD and a set of independent variables. Evaluators then ran regressions to determine the type of relationships between the dependent and independent variables. Tables 4.13 and 4.14 list the dependent and independent variables. The tables are then followed by an analysis of the results (significant results) grouped by the dependent variable.

**Table 4.13. Dependent Variables**

|  |
|--|
| 30-Day Employment Benchmark                        |
| 60-Day Employment Benchmark                        |
| 90-Day Employment Benchmark                        |
| Six-Month No Arrest Benchmark                      |
| Secured Employment                                 |
| Average Hourly Wage                                |
| Time from PEPP Start Date to Hire Date             |
| Time from PEPP Start Date to Parole Violation Date |

**Table 4.14. Independent Variables**

|                          |
|--------------------------|
| City                     |
| Gender                   |
| Age (at January 1, 2012) |
| Years Incarcerated       |
| County                   |
| Race                     |
| Commitment Offense       |

### Secured Employment

Residence (city and county) and race were shown to have a statistically significant relationship with securing employment. Statistically significant means that the result did not happen by chance. In the two logistic regression models that included residence, a participant's commitment offense, specifically a weapons crime, is statistically significant. Based on this, committing a weapons crime is statistically associated with the odds of participants securing employment.

### Retained Employment

The cross-tab results point out that a participant's residence (city and county), gender, and race affect their ability to maintain employment for 30 days. For the 60-day benchmark, only the residence (city and county) and race are shown to have a statistically significant relationship. This result is surprising because it suggests that the effect of gender is no longer as strong after the initial 30-day employ-

ment benchmark has been reached. Lastly, for the 90-day benchmark, again, only the residence and race are shown to have a statistically significant relationship. The effect of gender does not regain its strength by the 90 days of employment benchmark. Specifically, living in Newark is associated with increased odds of participants reaching all employment benchmarks.

The regression model that included the county variables showed no statistically significant relationships, even though Essex County was closest to the <.05 value for significance. No other variables in the regression models showed a statistically significant relationship to the employment dependent variables.

### Six-Month No Arrest

Residence and race were the only variables to have a statistically significant relationship with this benchmark. This result is surprising because it signifies that the effect of living in a particular city on being arrested diminishes the longer a parolee is out of jail. Still, it is important to note that the number of participants reaching each benchmark decreases with time. The regression analysis indicates that race, particularly African American, had a statistically significant relationship with this benchmark. African Americans were less likely to reach the six-month no arrest benchmark than other races. Further, whether participants resided within Essex County was also shown to be statistically significant with this benchmark. Therefore, residing in Essex County is correlated with higher odds of reaching the six-month no arrest benchmark.

### Average Hourly Wage

Although the relationship between the average hourly wage and gender of PEPP participants was statistically significant, the sample included only seven women, so this result is likely a product of chance.



## PEPP Participants vs. (Unmatched) Comparison Group

Evaluators requested that SPB provide an (unmatched) comparison group of 150 parolees to whom the PEPP participants could be compared, and provided basic PEPP participant demographics (gender, race, and resident city) in order to compile as similar a group of parolees as possible. This section compares PEPP participants to the (unmatched) comparison group

### Differences Between (Unmatched) Comparison Group and PEPP Participant Group

A comparison group consists of individuals who do not receive the experimental treatment, in this case PEPP, and should closely resemble the participants who receive the treatment. Overall, the (unmatched) comparison group of parolees for this evaluation differs substantially from PEPP participants. (See Table 4.15.)

**Table 4.15. Race: Participants versus Unmatched Comparison Group**

| PEPP Participants               | (Unmatched) Comparison Group   | Comment  |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Caucasian<br>14% (74)           | Caucasian<br>23.3% (35)        | The (unmatched) comparison group has a higher percentage of Caucasians and     |
| African American<br>73.1% (386) | African American<br>62.7% (94) |  |
| Hispanic/Latino<br>10.4% (55)   | Hispanic/Latino<br>14% (21)    | Hispanics/Latinos, while the PEPP participant group has a higher percentage of |
| Other and Missing<br>2.5% (13)  | NA                             | African Americans  |

It is important to note that the fact that there is a higher percentage of African Americans in the PEPP participant group compared to the (unmatched) comparison group can affect the groups' employment outcomes. A U.S. Department of Labor (2012) report concluded that "aggregate numbers show that the African-American community as a whole has exhibited poorer labor market outcomes than other races even prior to the recession and during the recovery, demonstrating that they often face different and greater challenges." Because African Americans experience worse labor market outcomes than other racial and ethnic groups and because the PEPP group contains a disproportionate number of African Americans, the use of an unmatched comparison group may understate the positive effects of the PEPP program. (See Table 4.16.)

Generally speaking, the parolees' counties of commitment are also the counties to which they are released (see Table 4.17). The differences noted here are important because, although New Jersey as a whole is lagging behind the rest of the nation in its recovery from the recession, each county in the state is also in a different place in terms of the health of its economy, which can affect individuals' ability to secure employment. A greater percentage of individuals from a particular county, with either a robust or a sluggish economy, can affect the employment results of the group and should be taken into consideration when comparing the results between the PEPP participants and the (unmatched) comparison group.

It is reasonable to theorize that parolees' latest commitment offense can affect their ability to secure employment; therefore, the PEPP participants with a higher percentage of violent crimes or the (unmatched) comparison group with a much greater percentage of parolees with drug crimes could influence these groups' employment numbers.

Again, it is reasonable to theorize that the amount of time incarcerated can influence a parolee's ability to secure employment; therefore, the PEPP participants with an average longer time behind bars could affect this group's employment numbers. (See Table 4.18.)

**Table 4.16. Parolees' Counties of Commitment**

| County     | PEPP Participants | (Unmatched) Comparison Group | Comment   |
|------------|-------------------|------------------------------|---|
| Atlantic   | 15.7%             | 8.7%                         | Greater percentage in the PEPP participant group than (unmatched) comparison group          |
| Burlington | 0%                | 6%                           | None in PEPP participant group  |
| Camden     | 30.9%             | 16%                          | Greater percentage in the PEPP participant group than (unmatched) comparison group          |
| Cumberland | 14%               | 0%                           | None in (unmatched) comparison group.   |
| Essex      | 20.1%             | 28%                          | Slightly greater percentage in the (unmatched) comparison group than PEPP participant group |
| Mercer     | 12.1%             | 30.7%                        | Greater percentage in the (unmatched) comparison group than PEPP participant group          |

**Table 4.17. Commitment Offense: Participants vs. Unmatched Comparison Group**

| PEPP Participants             | (Unmatched) Comparison Group | Comment  |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| Violent Crime - 33.3% (176)   | Violent Crime - 22.7% (34)   | The PEPP participant group has a higher percentage of violent crimes offenders than the (unmatched) comparison group, while the unmatched comparison group has a significantly higher percentage of drug crime offenders |
| Sex Crime - 6.8% (36)         | Sex Crime - 4% (6)           |  |
| Property Crime - 9.1% (48)    | Property Crime - 6% (9)      |  |
| Drug Crime - 16.3% (86)       | Drug Crime - 39.3% (59)      |  |
| Weapons Crime - 6.6% (35)     | Weapons Crime - 6.7% (10)    |  |
| Lower-Level Crime - 5.9% (31) | Lower-Level Crime - 16% (24) |  |
| Missing - 19.5% (103)         | NA                           |  |

**Table 4.18. Average Time of Incarceration: Participants vs. Unmatched Comparison Group**

| PEPP Participants | (Unmatched) Comparison Group | Comment  |
|-------------------|------------------------------|--|
| Just over 4 years | 2.9 years                    | Overall, the PEPP participants spent an average of one additional year incarcerated compared to the (unmatched) comparison group |

**Benchmarks and Results: PEPP Participants vs. (Unmatched) Comparison Group**

The percentage difference of those who secured employment between the (unmatched) comparison group and the PEPP participants group could be considered negligible. In other words, being a participant in PEPP did not significantly improve a parolee’s chance of securing employment. (See Table 4.19.)

Further, PEPP did not seem to make a difference in keeping its participants out of trouble. It appears that participants in PEPP received parole violations two months earlier than the (unmatched) comparison group of parolees. (See Table 4.20.)

**Discussion**

**Threats to Sustainability of the PEPP Model**

There is no widely used definition of sustainability or a definitive metric for measuring sustainability, but there are accepted characteristics of sustainable models and programs. Broadly, the concept of sustainability is based largely on whether an entity has the resources to continue the implementation

of processes or programming to meet their objections or to achieve organizational goals (Trutko, 2007; Altarum Institute, 2009; Office of Adolescent Health, 2014). In addition to this broad description of sustainability, there are a number of discipline-specific characteristics of sustainable processes and programming. In considering the sustainability of the PEPP model, evaluators examined some broad characteristics of sustainable models (in the planning and implementation phase), as well as discipline-specific issues with the model that could adversely affect long-term sustainability. A critical resource to sustaining a program is funding. Nevertheless, the evaluation team did not spend time directly analyzing the sustainability of the funding source, but it is important to acknowledge that government-funded programs are subject to political realities.

**Planning Process**

The development of the PEPP model excluded key factors that could affect long-term sustainability. First, the development of the model did not include a wide range of stakeholders whose buy-in is critical to the success of the program. Specifically, input from potential grantees with experience providing community-based reentry services to parolees, as well as feedback from the business community

**Table 4.19. Secured Employment: Participants vs. Unmatched Comparison Group**

| PEPP Participants | (Unmatched) Comparison Group | Comment   |
|-------------------|------------------------------|---|
| 50.8%             | 48.7%                        | The (unmatched) comparison group has a slightly lower percentage of parolees who secured employment during the same time period as PEPP compared to PEPP participants |

**Table 4.20. Recidivism**

| Timeline  | Blessed Ministries | Mid-Atlantic States | Shiloh CDC                              | Total PEPP Grantees | (Unmatched) Comparison Group |
|---|--------------------|---------------------|---|---------------------|------------------------------|
| Average months from PEPP start date to violation date | 15 months          | 12 months           | Nearly 29 months (only one participant) | 13.8 months         | 15.7 months                  |

concerning their needs, would have helped inform the development of the model. Martinson and Holcomb (2007) stressed the importance of “bringing the right partnerships together” and “having multiple partners from industry and the public sector” to effectively address workforce challenges. While the PEPP model did include partners directly involved with implementation of the model (NJLWD and SPB), other stakeholders were excluded from the planning process.

Another key component of sustainable PBC models is contractor capacity. It is important to consider whether providers can handle the payment structure of PBC models (Martin, 2008). Contractors who must rely on others for client referrals are at greater financial risk because they may not be able to reach the needed number of outputs and outcomes to break even. They are at additional risk if they are unable to adequately document the services they provided or outcomes they achieved (Martin, 2007). NJLWD stated that it did not consider whether an organization had experience with PBC models during the RFP period, and in the first year of funding, grantees expressed frustration with the process, with one grantee stating that NJLWD needs to “expedite payment processing.”

### Data

Since performance data are often sourced directly from the providers, they have an incentive to misrepresent or misreport their outcomes (Shen, 2003), especially if they do not have sufficient data collection capacity. The data collection process plays a critical role in sustainability because clean and relevant data are needed to properly assess whether a particular program is meeting its goals. This leads to another area that threatens the sustainability of PEPP’s model — the alignment of goals and benchmarks.

## Alignment of Goals and Benchmarks

There seems to be some disconnect between the goals and objectives of PEPP and its benchmarks. The goals of PEPP are to increase a parolee’s opportunities for employment, and reduce the likelihood of a parolee to commit additional crimes against society. The objectives to achieve the goals are for grantees to:

- > Provide job coaching and employment preparation to parolees,
- > Help participants obtain sustainability employment,
- > Help participants retain employment for a minimum of 90 days, and
- > Help participants avoid reoffending for a six-month period upon entering the program.

With benchmarks set at 30-day, 60-day, and 90-day job retention and six months without a new arrest, it appears that PEPP has focused more on short-term results than long-term results. Short-term outcomes, therefore, tend to be used as proxies (Lu, 2015). In PEPP’s case, three-month job retention is a proxy for longer-term employment retention and six months without arrest is a proxy for avoiding recidivism. It is admittedly difficult to reward both short- and long-term outcomes in performance-based contracts (Konig & Heinrich, 2013). For example, Konig and Heinrich’s analysis of a Dutch welfare to work program showed that although PBC resulted in increased job placements, the additional job placements were in primarily short-term or temporary settings (Konig & Heinrich, 2013). Lu’s (2015) analysis of an Indiana vocational rehabilitation program showed that contractors focused exclusively on measured performance goals, which meant that job placements increased and time to placement decreased, but there was little attention paid to the quality of employment (wage, benefits, working hours, etc.).

Recommendations for both the PEPP design and implementation are provided later in this chapter.

### Other Sustainability Concerns

One objective the grantees were tasked with reaching — “help participants obtain sustainable employment” — was and is fundamental to reaching the goals to “increase a parolee’s opportunities for employment, and reduce the likelihood of a parolee to commit additional crimes against society.” Feedback from PEPP stakeholders, including parole officers, SPB, and parolees (interviews, focus group, and a memo), as well as PEPP participant employment data, suggest that grantees are struggling to place parolees in sustainable jobs. Below are some quotes on employment as expressed by stakeholders in interviews and focus groups:

- > “No large companies hiring parolees in bulk, just referrals for mom and pop shops.”
- > “Many of the jobs are menial, dead-end, with limited room for growth.”
- > “It would be great to get skills and experience in labor trades, maybe an apprenticeship.”
- > “Certain providers don’t have success with long-term employment. We’re looking for a real job for long-term employment.”

Although stakeholders’ dissatisfaction with the available employment and job placement opportunities can be extrapolated from the above quotes, they did not place all the blame on grantees. Stakeholders pointed to other issues such as a weak job market, obstacles placing a difficult demographic in long-term employment, and cost-benefit considerations when accepting a low-paying job with little or no reasonable transportation options (wages too low to take a job with high transportation costs). In the parolee focus group, participants directly spoke to the last point stating, “I had to turn down a job because I didn’t have transportation,” and “...having to drive 45 minutes to a low-paying job does not make financial sense.” The concerns expressed in the stakeholders’ surveys and parolee focus group correlated with the PEPP participant employment data.

PEPP grantees reported the hourly wage for PEPP participants who secured employment. However, more than one amount was given for some participants, potentially indicating that more than one job had been secured by the participant. In order to examine the pay of the PEPP participants, evaluators took the multiple wages given for a participant and created a wage average. The recalculated pay ranges from \$2.25 per hour to \$38 per hour. The grantees’ wage information is as follows:

- > BMI’s hourly pay for its participants ranged from \$7.50 to \$15.00, with a majority of its participants (54.9%) earning \$8.01 to \$10.00 per hour during the first round of funding.
- > Mid-Atlantic’s hourly pay for its participants ranged from \$2.25 to \$38.00, with the highest percentage of its participants (22.9%) earning \$7.01 to \$10.00 per hour.
- > Shiloh’s hourly pay for its participants ranged from \$7.50 to \$23.00, with a majority of its participants (51.5%) earning \$7.01 to \$10.00 per hour.

The minimum wage in New Jersey during the time of the pilot PEPP was \$7.25. On average, PEPP participants who attained employment earned \$9.72 per hour, or \$2.47 more than New Jersey’s minimum wage, but \$1.41 below New Jersey’s living wage of \$11.13. A living wage, according to MIT, is “a market-based approach that draws upon geographically specific expenditure data related to a family’s likely minimum food, child care, health insurance, housing, transportation, and other basic necessities (e.g. clothing, personal care items, etc.) costs” (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, n.d.).

In addition to the adverse effect of low wages on employment sustainability, the industries and type of employment participants are being placed into influence whether a job is sustainable. Table 4.21 lists the employers that hired the most PEPP participants during the first round of funding.



**Table 4.21. Employers**

| Employer                | # of PEPP Participants Employed | Type of Employment                         |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Action Staffing         | 23                              | Temporary Agency                           |
| Diamond Staffing        | 18                              | Temporary Agency                           |
| East Coast Power Sports | 10                              | Dealership (motorcycles, etc.)             |
| Impact Staffing         | 20                              | Temporary Agency                           |
| Team Works              | 27                              | Temporary Agency                           |
| Thesing Companies       | 12                              | Power Sweeping, Property Maintenance, etc. |
| White Rose/ Grocery     | 5                               | Wholesale Grocery Supply                   |

Four of the top seven employers are temporary agencies and one of the other employers hires for seasonal work. In the short term, parolees can gain work experience from working at a temporary agency as opposed to not having a job, but in most cases, it is hard to qualify temporary and seasonal jobs as sustainable employment. In addition to wage and employment type, evaluators collected information on job titles held by PEPP participants. Table 4.22 lists the job titles most represented in the sample from the first year of PEPP funding.

**Table 4.22. Job Titles**

| Title                  | # of PEPP Participants | Title                        | # of PEPP Participants |
|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Driver/Driver’s Helper | 12                     | Selector                     | 54                     |
| Food Prep/Kitchen      | 6                      | Stocker                      | 6                      |
| Forklift Operator      | 7                      | Sweeper                      | 6                      |
| Laborer                | 19                     | Truck Driver/Driver’s Helper | 16                     |
| Landscaper             | 5                      | Utility Helper               | 15                     |
| Loader/Unloader        | 16                     | Warehouse Worker             | 15                     |

As Table 4.22 illustrates, PEPP grantees reported a myriad of titles held by PEPP participants who secured employment, with an overwhelming majority of jobs that fall into the manual labor/blue-collar category. Table 4.23 outlines industry growth in the counties in which PEPP was implemented.

Many of the job titles held by PEPP participants during the first round of funding do not correlate with the top three areas of growth in the counties participants are returning to after incarceration.

## Survey/Interview/Focus Group Results

Evaluators surveyed and interviewed four groups of stakeholders — parole officers, One-Stop reentry specialists, employers, and grantees — to measure their general satisfaction with the PEPP model.

### Parole Officers

Sixty-two respondents completed the satisfaction survey. Most responding parole officers work out of the Sex Offender Management Unit (30.6%).

### Job Placement and Recidivism

Parole officers were asked to report their satisfaction level with respect to the percentage of parolees who secured employment through the PEPP program. The majority (48.3%) of parole officers



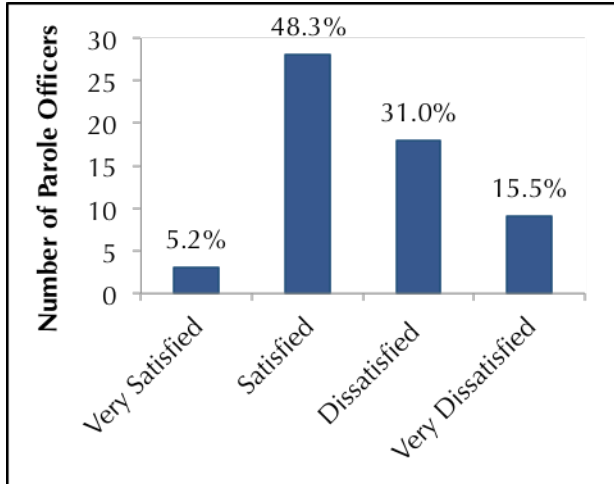
## Evaluation of One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey

**Table 4.23. Industry Growth in PEPP Counties, 2010-2020<sup>4</sup>**

| County     | Occupations                                    | Total % | Annual % |
|------------|--|---------|----------|
| Atlantic   | Construction                                   | 40.4%   | 3.5%     |
|            | Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services | 25.9%   | 2.3%     |
|            | Healthcare & Social Services                   | 16.7%   | 1.6%     |
| Camden     | Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services | 22.1%   | 2.0%     |
|            | Construction                                   | 34.4%   | 3.0%     |
|            | Administrative & Waste Services                | 18.9%   | 1.7%     |
| Cumberland | Administrative & Waste Services                | 18.8%   | 1.5%     |
|            | Healthcare & Social Services                   | 14.0%   | 1.3%     |
|            | Construction                                   | 10.3%   | 0.9%     |
| Essex      | Construction                                   | 40.4%   | 3.5%     |
|            | Transportation/Warehousing                     | 18.7%   | 1.7%     |
|            | Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services | 15.2%   | 1.4%     |
| Hudson     | Administrative & Waste Services                | 18.8%   | 1.5%     |
|            | Healthcare & Social Services                   | 14.0%   | 1.3%     |
|            | Construction                                   | 10.3%   | 0.9%     |
| Mercer     | Construction                                   | 40.4%   | 3.5%     |
|            | Finance & Insurance                            | 18.6%   | 1.7%     |
|            | Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services | 17.2%   | 1.6%     |
| Middlesex  | Administrative & Waste Services                | 20.4%   | 1.9%     |
|            | Professional, Scientific & Tech Services       | 19.4%   | 1.8%     |
|            | Construction                                   | 17.8%   | 1.6%     |
| Monmouth   | Construction                                   | 24.5%   | 2.2%     |
|            | Administrative & Waste Services                | 21.3%   | 2.0%     |
|            | Transportation & Warehousing                   | 20.8%   | 1.9%     |
| Union      | Construction                                   | 24.6%   | 2.2%     |
|            | Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services | 9.6%    | 0.9%     |
|            | Administrative & Waste Services                | 6.4%    | 0.6%     |

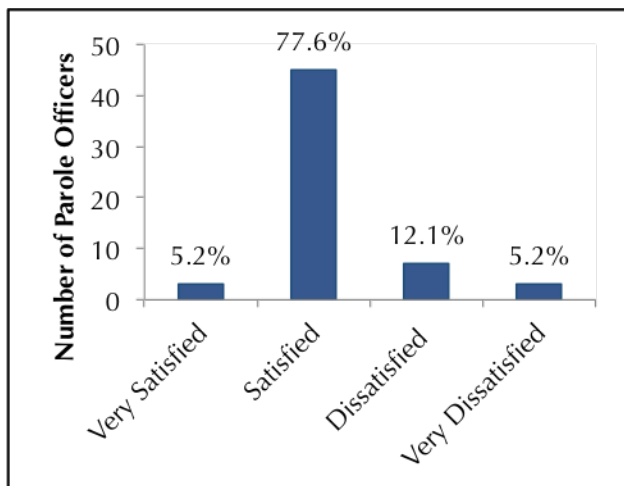
indicated being satisfied with the percentage of parolees who secured employment through the PEPP program; however, 31% reported being dissatisfied. (See Figure 4.5.)

**Figure 4.5. Job Placement**



Parole officers were also asked to report their level of satisfaction with the percentage of their PEPP participants who did/have not reoffended. The overwhelming majority of parole officers indicated that they were satisfied with the percentage of their PEPP participants who did/have not reoffended. (See Figure 4.6.)

**Figure 4.6. Recidivism**



**Satisfaction with One-Stop and Overall Satisfaction**

Additionally, parole officers were asked to report on their level of satisfaction with the support they received from the One-Stop during the first round of PEPP funding. Most parole officers indicated being satisfied with the support received from the One-Stop as can be seen in Figure 4.7. The majority of parole officers were satisfied with the way the PEPP program was implemented during the first round of funding.

**Figure 4.7. Satisfaction with One-Stop**

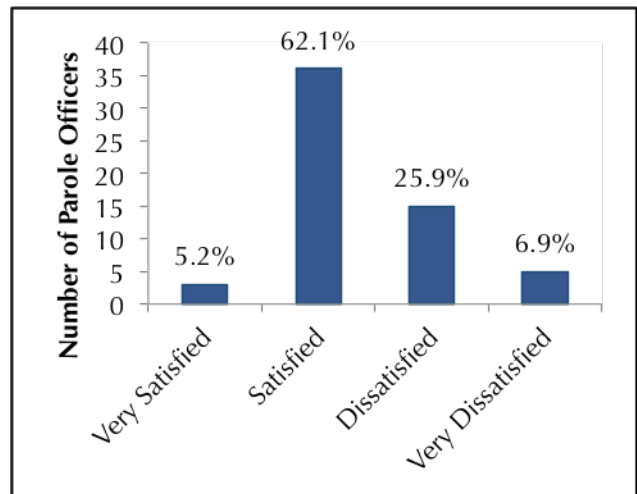
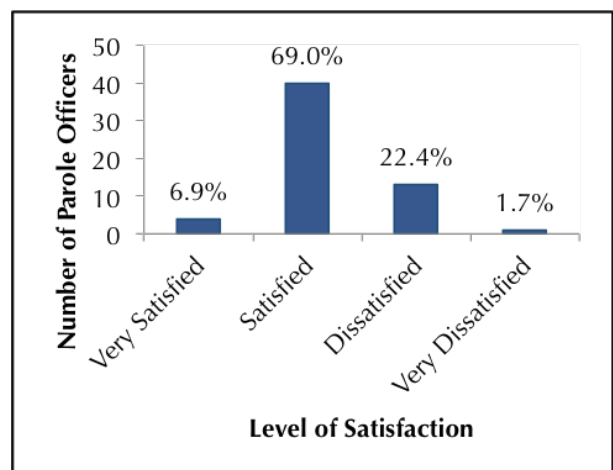


Figure 4.8 addresses parole officers' level of satisfaction with the way the PEPP program was implemented during the first round of funding. The findings indicate that the majority of parole officers were satisfied with the way the PEPP program was implemented during the first round of funding.

**Figure 4.8. Overall Satisfaction**



### One-Stop Reentry Specialists

Evaluators emailed surveys to 27 reentry specialists and followed up those emails with phone calls. However, only 7 reentry specialists responded. Below is a summary of their responses:

- > Approximately 86%, or six reentry specialists, reported being satisfied with the way the PEPP program was implemented during the first year of funding. One reentry specialist indicated being very dissatisfied with the way the PEPP program was implemented during this time.
- > The majority of reentry specialists (approximately 71%) reported being satisfied with the support they received from NJLWD during the first round of PEPP funding. An equal percentage, about 14% each, reported being very dissatisfied and very satisfied.
- > When asked to report on the reasonability of their workload during the first round of PEPP, approximately 71%, or five reentry specialists, indicated a reasonable workload.
- > Reentry specialists were asked to rate their overall level of satisfaction with the PEPP program. The majority (about 70%) indicated being satisfied with the PEPP program overall.

It is important to point out that during the follow-up with reentry specialists to complete the survey, evaluators heard from many of them that they were completely unaware and unfamiliar with PEPP. This casts doubt in evaluators' minds about the frequency and thoroughness of the One-Stop orientations that were to be implemented for PEPP participants.

### Employers

While only one employer responded to the satisfaction survey, evaluators interviewed five employers and obtained feedback on their level of satisfaction with PEPP. Below are their aggregated responses to questions relevant to satisfaction.

- > **Would you hire PEPP parolees in the future? What are the factors influencing your decision?**

Every employer would hire PEPP participants in the future. Three employers stated that they believe in giving parolees a "second chance." Two employers cited Mid-Atlantic's involvement as an important factor. Mid-Atlantic essentially screens and vets parolees for its companies and provides support to the employer or parolee when necessary. One employer mentioned that most of the PEPP participants "are better workers than guys off the street."

- > **What are your overall views on the effectiveness of the PEPP program?**

Overall, employers believe that PEPP is effective or very effective. Two employers stated that a large majority of the parolees they have worked with are still employed with them. They believe that PEPP gives parolees a better chance at success than if they were on their own, and one employer especially appreciates that the program gets parolees working instead of relying on "handouts."

- > **What are PEPP parolees' strengths?**

Many are hard working, responsible, and show willingness to learn and work. For labor-intensive positions such as those at White Rose, it was an advantage that most parolees are already physically fit.

- > **What are some of the strengths of the PEPP program?**

Both employers and parolees are well supported by grantees. One employer stated that without PEPP, he would not hire ex-offenders, and that he appreciates that the program gives parolees a second chance. Another employer appreciates that the grantee tries to match parolees with his company. Three of the five employers stated that they used on-the-job training and that the incentive was being "pitched" by

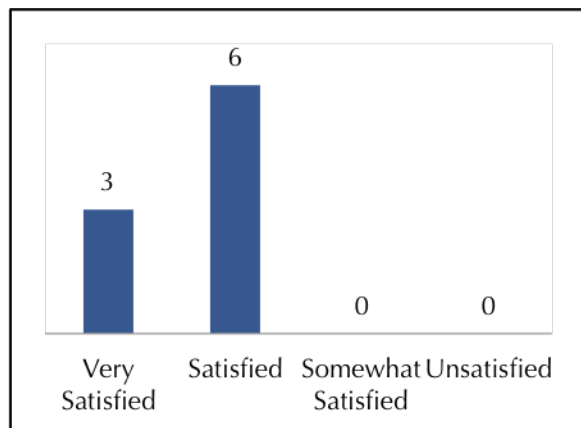
the grantees. None of the employers felt, however, that the incentives were the main reason for hiring PEPP participants; they expressed the relationship they have with the grantee and altruistic motives as the main reasons for hiring parolees.

### PEPP Participants

Evaluators were only able to conduct one focus group with 10 participants for this evaluation. One major issue in scheduling the focus group was the amount of time that lapsed between the time participants participated in PEPP and the start of this evaluation. Logistically, it was challenging to identify the participants and schedule a focus group, and given their levels of computer access and literacy, electronic surveys would have been problematic. Overall, parolees were satisfied with all aspects of PEPP. Figures 4.9 to 4.14 summarize the results of the focus group.

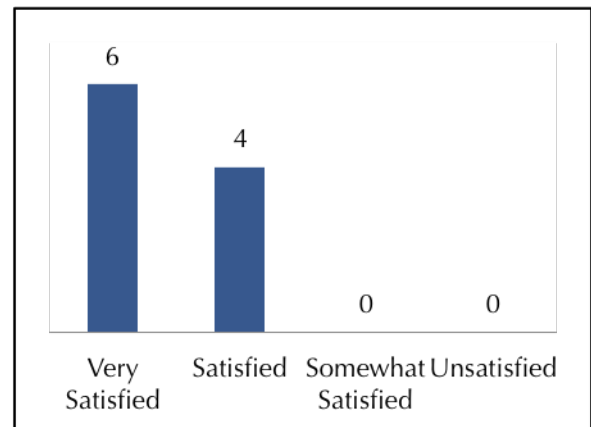
Nearly all parolees were satisfied with their grantee's help in retaining their jobs. (See Figure 4.9.)

**Figure 4.9. PEPP Grantee Organization Helping Keep a Job**



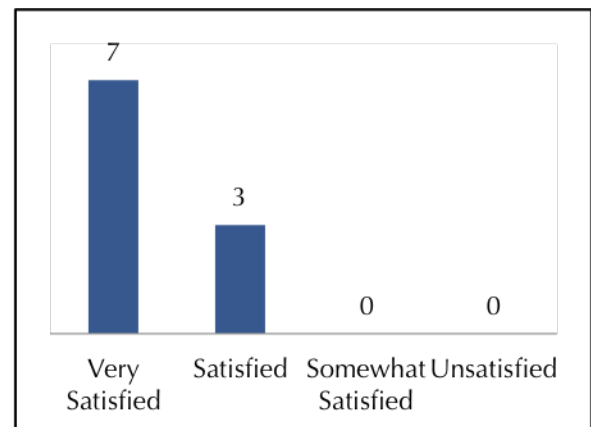
All parolees were satisfied with the job training they received from their grantee. (See Figure 4.10.)

**Figure 4.10. Job Training Received as a PEPP Participant**



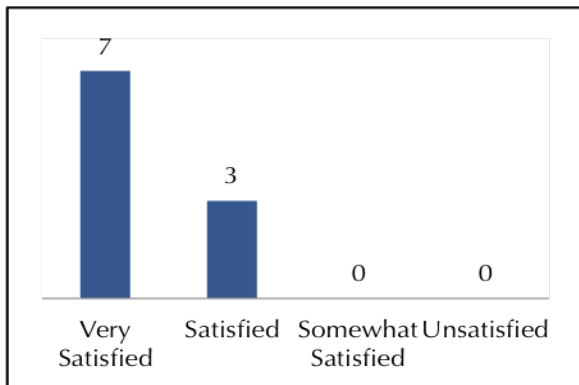
Again, all parolees were satisfied with the job coaching they received from their grantee. (See Figure 4.11.)

**Figure 4.11. Job Coaching Received as a PEPP Participant**



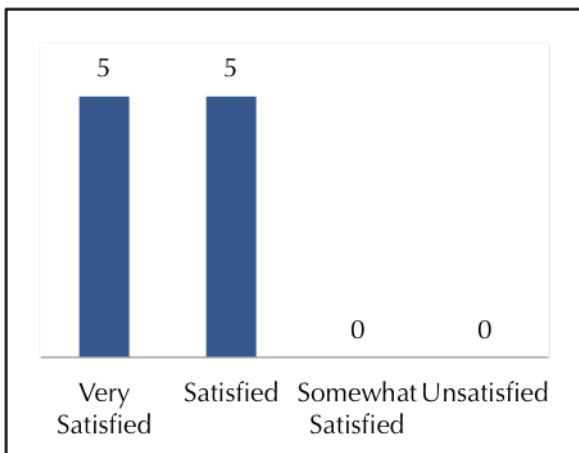
All parolees were also satisfied with the overall implementation of PEPP. (See Figure 4.12.)

**Figure 4.12. PEPP Implementation**



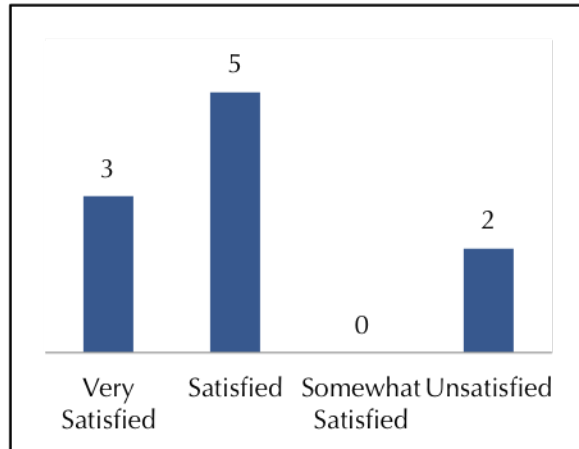
All parolees were also satisfied with their grantee’s help in finding them a job. (See Figure 4.13.)

**Figure 4.13. PEPP Grantee Organization Helping Find a Job**



Eighty percent of parolees were satisfied with the One-Stop’s help in finding a job. (See Figure 4.14.)

**Figure 4.14. One-Stop Helping Find a Job**



## Recommendations

The central purpose of the recommendations is to provide a set of approaches to bridge the model and its implementation to the stated goals of the project. The recommendations are based on the data collected and reviewed for this evaluation, including literature, interviews, surveys, focus group, and data.

## Model Changes

1. Benchmarks should be revised.
  - > **Further define what the expectations are for the Assessment/Job Coaching/Case Management benchmark and attach measurable results.** This benchmark can be used to ensure that participants are developing transferrable skills that will help them obtain and retain employment, even beyond PEPP. The three geographic regions in New Jersey are unique, but the variance in what each grantee considered job coaching is too wide to effectively evaluate.
  - > **Payment amounts for benchmarks should reflect the social value of the benchmark and the amount of work necessary to achieve that benchmark.** Despite the fact that employment retention and reduced recidivism were the stated goals of PEPP, the benchmarks associ-

ated with those goals (90-day job retention and no new arrest within six months) had lower payment amounts. Also, monetarily, the 90-day job retention benchmark was rewarded the same as the 60-day job retention benchmark, and was rewarded less than job placement with 30-day retention. Given that sustainable employment is the most difficult benchmark to achieve, and has the greatest social value in terms of reducing the likelihood for a parolee to be reincarcerated, it should have the highest payment amount.

- > **Consider eliminating the 60-day job retention benchmark by coupling it with the provision of ongoing job retention services to the participant.** Alone, this benchmark does not effectively measure successful job placement or retention; other benchmarks do that. If the benchmark exists to help ensure a steady cash flow to contracted agencies, then it should be tied to the agency continuing to provide support services to the participant. While the total amount an agency can get for one parolee is similar to other programs, the benchmarks are not varied enough.
- > **Reward quality job placements.** Contracted agencies are paid irrespective of the quality of employment obtained by participants. The payment model should incentivize agencies to find higher-quality employment options for participants. Better quality employment is considered to be a factor in job sustainability, so it is worthwhile to consider adding small “bonus” payments when jobs meet certain job quality measures, like benefits provided or higher than median wages. On the other hand, when the job is known to be temporary or seasonal, job placement payments should be lower. The reporting process could become more cumbersome, but the benchmarks would influence grantees to implement mechanisms that closely align program outputs with the goals of PEPP.
- > **Reward the amount of work.** To help ensure that agencies are being paid fairly for the services they provide, consider that although reduced recidivism is a goal of the program, it is expected to be a result of other services the

agency provides. If employment retention is expected to result in no new arrests, and agencies’ services can directly affect employment retention, then employment retention should be rewarded much more than no new arrests. With the importance of job coaching and case management to job placement and retention, all agencies devoted many more hours to these services. Longer-term job retention and the provision of job coaching and case management services require much more work from an agency than a participant avoiding rearrest. The payment amount for the final benchmark, which is expected to be a result from meeting the other benchmarks, can be lowered.

- > **Reward serving the most challenging participants.** Agencies are currently rewarded the same for each participant, regardless of whether one participant’s length of incarceration makes it significantly more difficult to find employment than a parolee incarcerated for a shorter time. Provide a bonus to agencies when they help participants with the most significant barriers to employment to help ensure that the most difficult-to-serve participants are not being ignored.

## Implementation Changes

1. Consider using NJLWD and SPB data to validate whether grantees have achieved their benchmarks. NJLWD and SPB contain in their systems the data needed to determine whether an individual has achieved the employment and recidivism benchmarks. The downside of using this approach is that the lag in the Unemployment Insurance wage record data may prevent measuring these in real time and, as a result, may significantly delay payments to grantees. To avoid this problem, NJLWD data should be used to verify participant employment and earnings after the fact.
2. Provide training, support, firm guidelines, and oversight to agencies for data collection and tracking. Given agencies’ financial incentives to misreport their data, and that “high levels of monitoring are key to successful govern-



ment contracting” (Heinrich & Choi, 2006), it is necessary to build a strong partnership with contracting agencies. Develop specific standards for what data should be collected and help agencies develop strategies for collecting and managing that data. Since the data are necessary for agencies to receive payment, if firm data collection and tracking standards are required, then agencies should be incentivized to meet those standards.

3. Set up a process to verify grantees’ data, like length of a participant’s employment, hourly wage, and arrest information.
4. Define how participants are tracked in PEPP. It is likely that the contracted agencies defined PEPP participants differently than either NJLWD or Parole. The latter considered anyone who was referred to PEPP grantees as a participant, but the contracted agencies likely only considered their successful clients as participants. These helped agencies’ success rates appear extremely high. It is important for this detail to be clarified and enforced to enable accurate indicators of performance.
5. Consider adding a “clawback” provision to the grantee contracts. If NJLWD pays a grantee on the indication that the participant has obtained short-term employment and it is later revealed that either the person did not obtain employment or that individual did not retain employment over a certain period of time, NJLWD could claw back some portion of the payment that went to the grantee.

### Additional Comments and Recommendations from Stakeholders

- > More long-term employment opportunities.
- > Greater communication between grantees and parole officers (“not pestering but positive collaboration”). All interaction with parolees by grantees needs to be on a flexible schedule to accommodate parolees’ work schedules.

- > Have grantees visit district parole offices to make “widespread” presentations.
- > More “ongoing counseling in terms of maintaining employment, gaining careers, working toward promotions.”
- > Address the most difficult subgroup of parolees: sex offenders. There are a rapidly increasing number of them and they are extremely difficult to place in jobs because of the stigma they carry. Perhaps they need their own program.
- > There needs to be more leniency with the 30/60/90 day benchmarks. Before a person is paroled, they should have job readiness/social skills programs in prison. Someone from Corrections should work with the grantee handling the case load to improve communication.
- > Communication; more engagement between Parole, NJLWD, and other agencies.
- > Transportation is a major barrier to employment for participants. Having a transportation service or a car share service would be an enormous help.

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## Endnotes

1. The evaluation team was unable to obtain a copy of the first-round PEPP proposal from Mid-Atlantic States. Information is based on interviews and other paperwork received from Mid-Atlantic States.

2. Retrieved from: <http://jobs.aol.com/articles/2012/04/24/5-reasons-its-taking-you-so-long-to-find-a-job/>.

3. The Pearson's chi square statistic was used to determine the statistical significance between two variables. The Kruskal and Goodman's gamma statistic was used to determine the statistical significance of crosstabs between two ordinal variables or between one ordinal variable and one binary nominal variable. For the purposes of this analysis, the significance value is  $p < 0.05$ .

4. Data are from the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

**Data Appendix:  
Characteristics of New Jersey  
One-Stop Customers**

by

William F. Mabe Jr., Ph.D.

### Introduction

Heldrich Center researchers used data from New Jersey's America's One-Stop Operating System database to generate a profile of the customers served by the state's One-Stop system. The charts presented in this appendix present customer characteristics breakdowns at the statewide (all customers in the state) and workforce area levels.

Heldrich Center researchers generated the customer profiles based on the demographic variables that New Jersey collects on its One-Stop customers, including race, ethnicity, sex, disability status, age group, and educational level. To allow for the observation of changes in customer profiles over time, Center researchers calculated profiles for each program year from 2006 through 2013.

Center researchers also used data from the American Community Survey (ACS) from the U.S. Bureau of the Census to generate a profile of One-Stop customers and compare the individuals served in each workforce area to the general population in that area.

The customer profile presented in this appendix is only a part of the entire customer profile that Heldrich Center researchers have created. In addition to the charts presented in this report, Heldrich Center researchers also created charts that present customer characteristics broken down at the program level and at the level of individual One-Stop Career Centers.<sup>1</sup> Additional charts display the pre-enrollment income of One-Stop customers and the post-enrollment employment rates and earnings of One-Stop customers, broken down by workforce area, One-Stop, and program. In order to keep the overall report to a manageable length, the Heldrich Center chose to include in this document only the charts showing the customer profiles by workforce area. The other charts have been provided separately to NJLWD as interactive Javascript data visualizations that can be more easily and intuitively accessed.

### Use of these Charts

These charts offer reemployment staff the opportunity to examine the characteristics of the individuals the workforce areas they are serving, to see how those characteristics have evolved over time, and to see the extent to which the customers served by each workforce area reflect the local population. The charts that appear in the "Customer Profile by Workforce Area" section allow the reader to compare the percent of individuals served by specific demographic categories served in each workforce area. The "Number of Customers Served Relative to the Population" charts allow policy and program staff to see a rough estimate of the percent of each demographic group that each workforce area is serving. This information can be used to identify populations to whom each One-Stop might consider targeting its outreach efforts.

Because of the high level of missingness/non-disclosure, the value of these charts is limited for the ethnicity and disability status variables. There is no way of knowing whether the distribution of ethnicity and disability status, respectively, are the same among the "Not Reported" and "Not Disclosed" populations as they are among those individuals who reported their ethnicity and disability status.

### Customer Profile by Workforce Area

This section presents One-Stop customer profiles both for the state as a whole (labeled "Statewide" and appearing to the right of all of the charts) on the local workforce areas, based on the demographic variables that New Jersey collects on its One-Stop customers, including race, ethnicity, sex, disability status, age group, and educational level. To allow for the observation of changes in customer profiles over time, Center researchers calculated profiles for each program year from 2006 through 2013.

## Evaluation of One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey

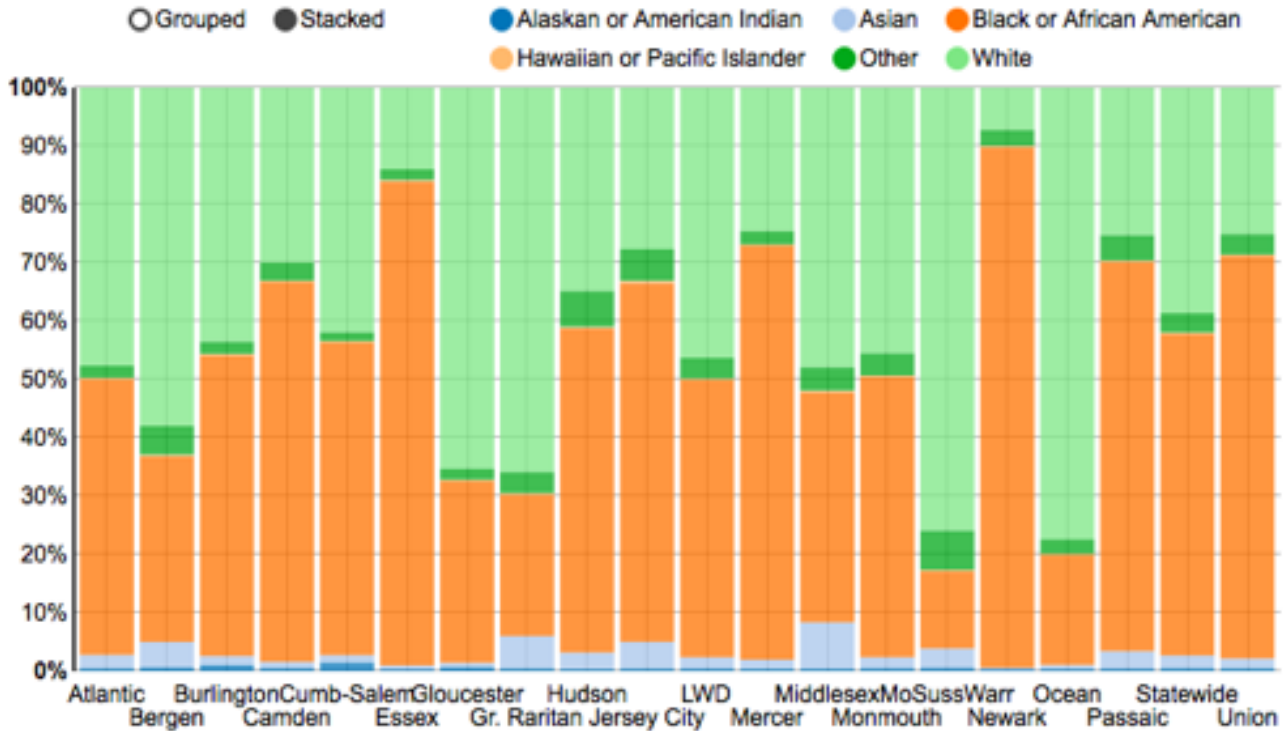
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The charts in this and the following section display the percent of individuals “served” by the six aforementioned demographic categories. An individual is classified as having been served by a One-Stop in New Jersey if he/she either received one of 136 different federally reportable reemployment activities, such as résumé writing assistance, job leads, or workshop participation, or participated in a funded service, such as basic-skills development or job training.

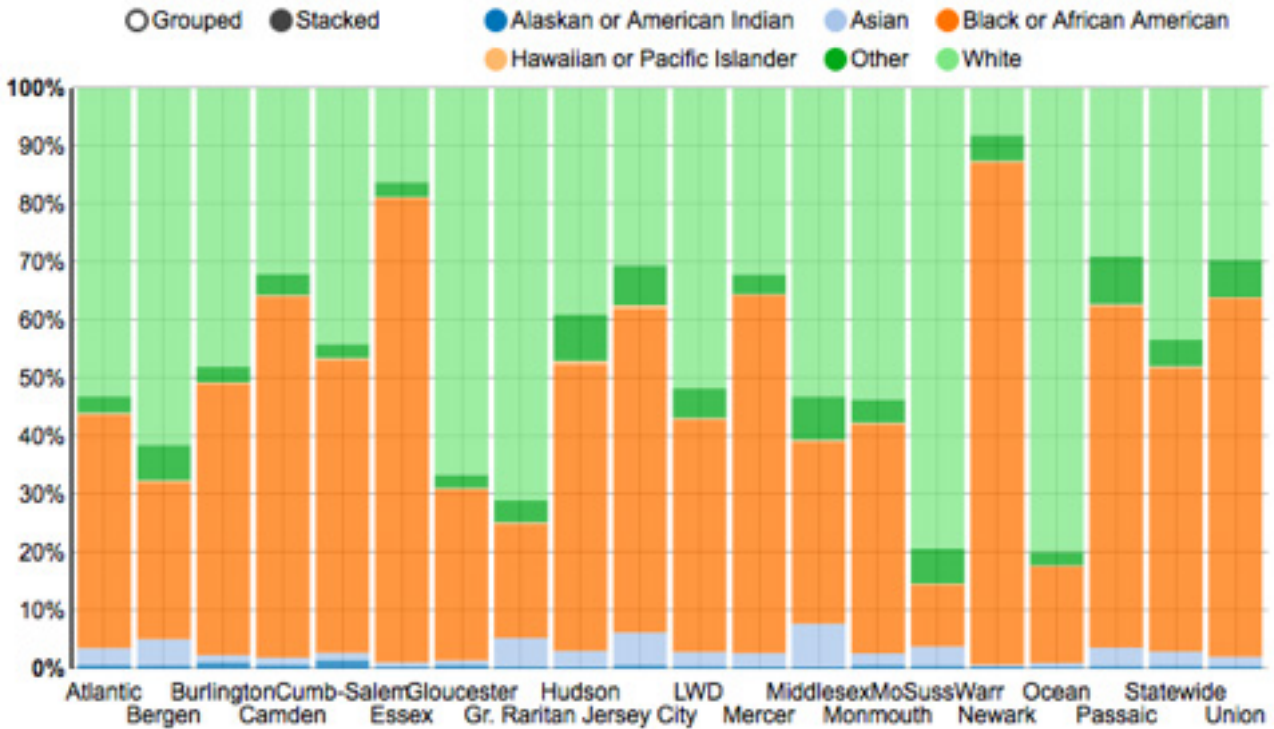
Each of the demographic variables is recorded when an individual goes through intake into the One-Stop system. For some variables, including disability status and sex, customers may choose not to disclose their status and when “Not Disclosed” is a category in the data, it appears as a category in these charts. In other instances, when Heldrich Center researchers encountered a high level of missingness in the data, as was the case with ethnicity, they created the category “Not Reported” to indicate the percentage of individuals who did not report a specific characteristic.

The charts display outcomes by workforce area. One of the workforce areas is NJLWD. Individuals who received services in the NJLWD workforce area either participated in WIA Self Services or in a program, such as Trade Adjustment Assistance, where participants are classified as having been served by the central office.

Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Race, 2006

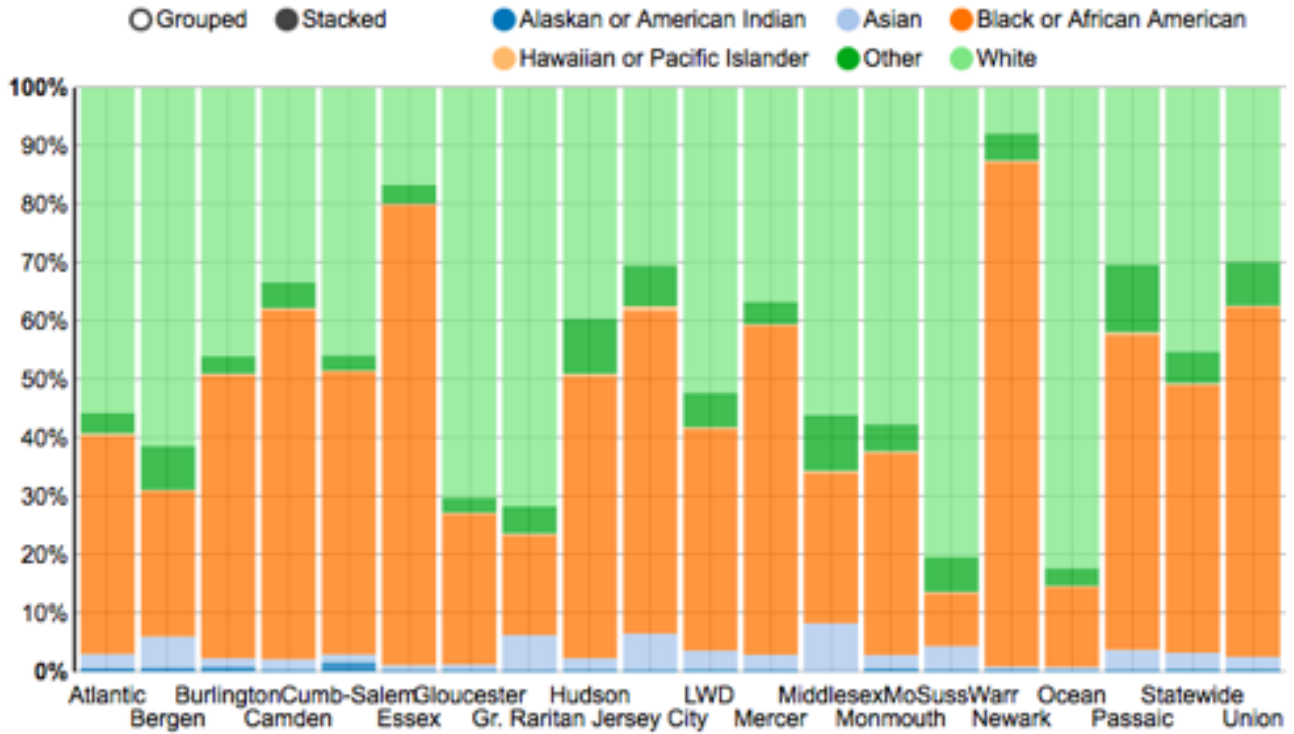


Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Race, 2007

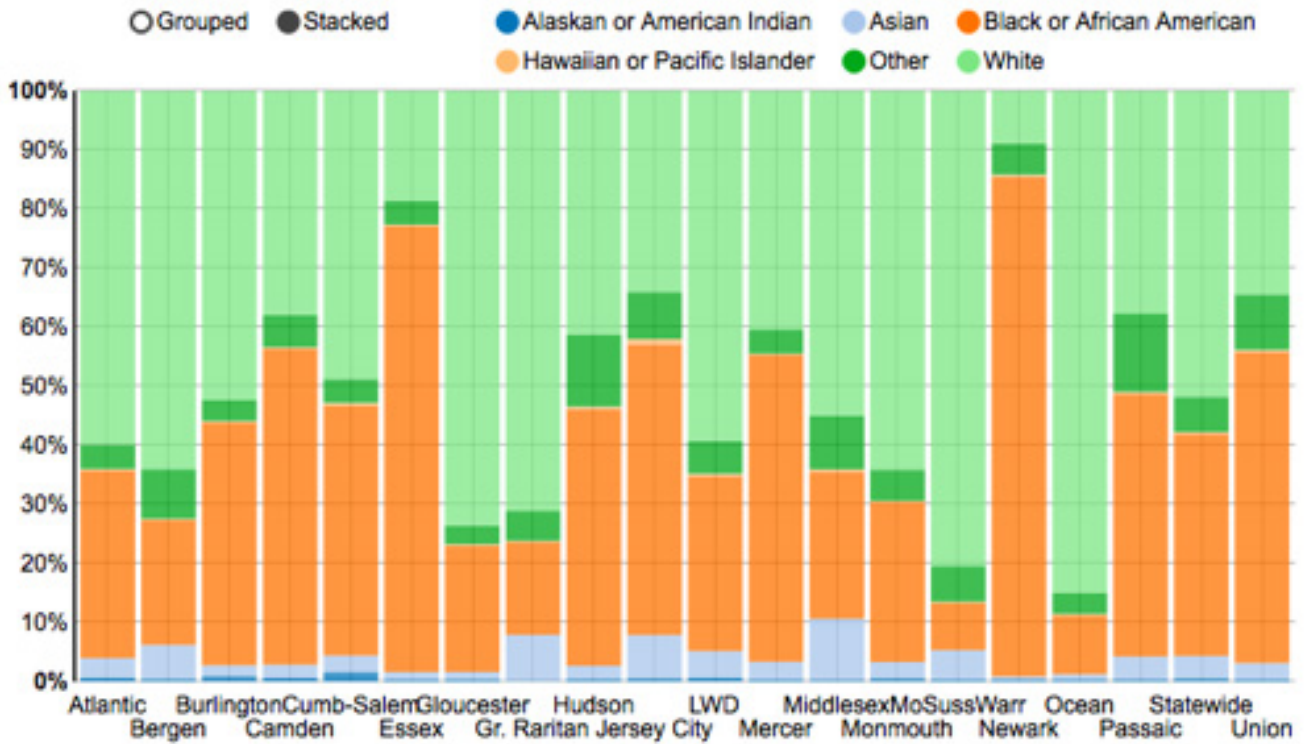




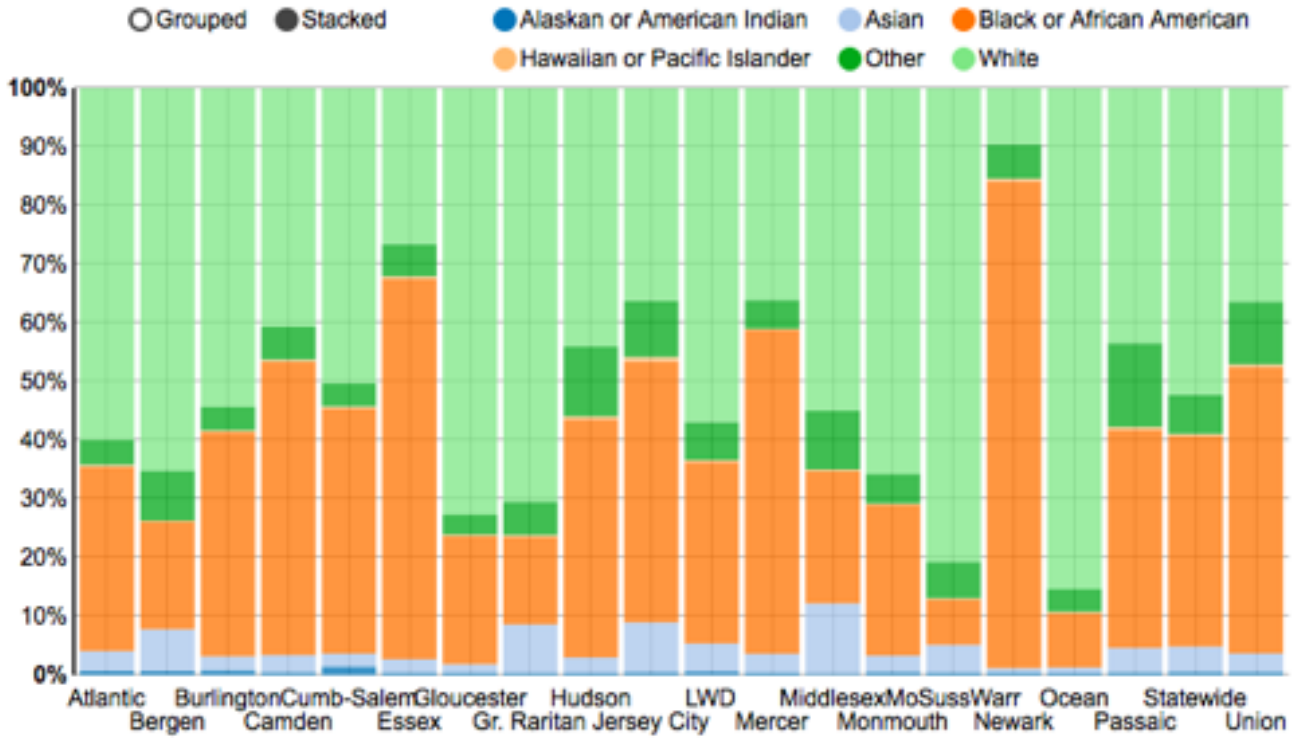
Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Race, 2008



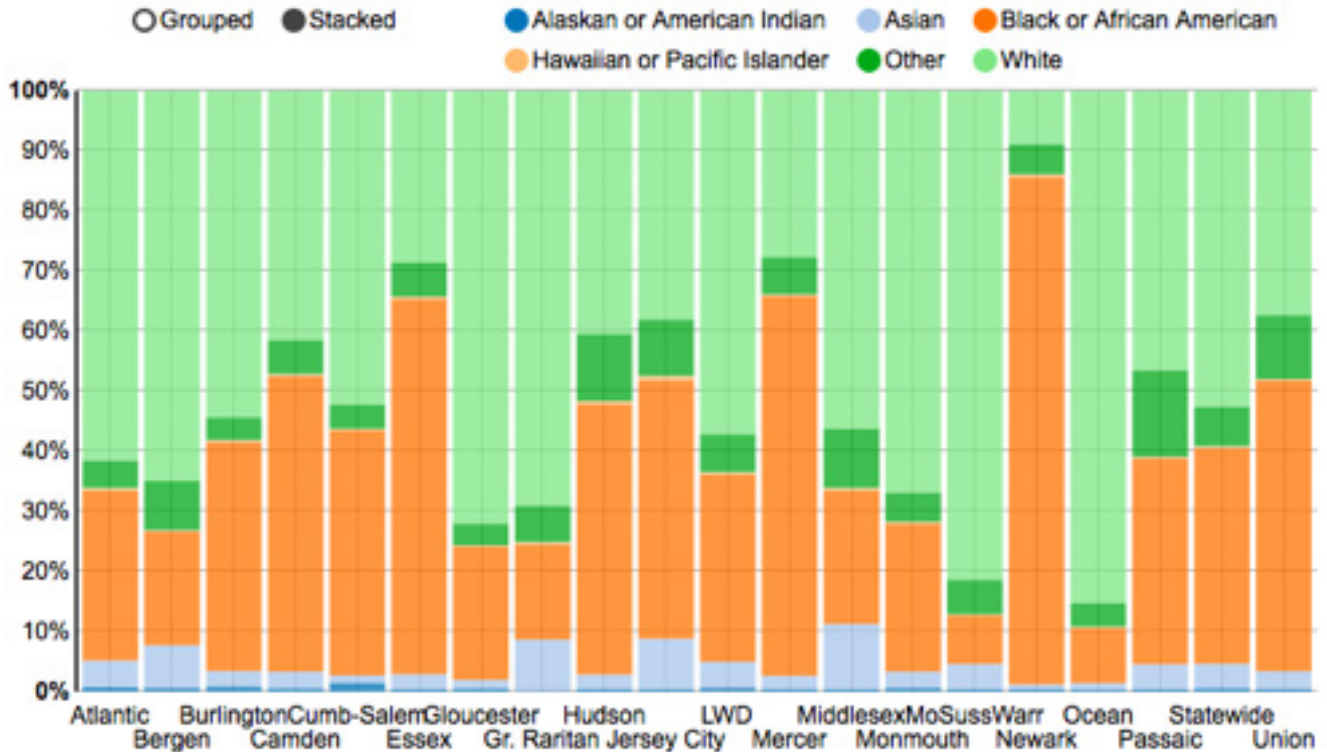
Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Race, 2009



Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Race, 2010

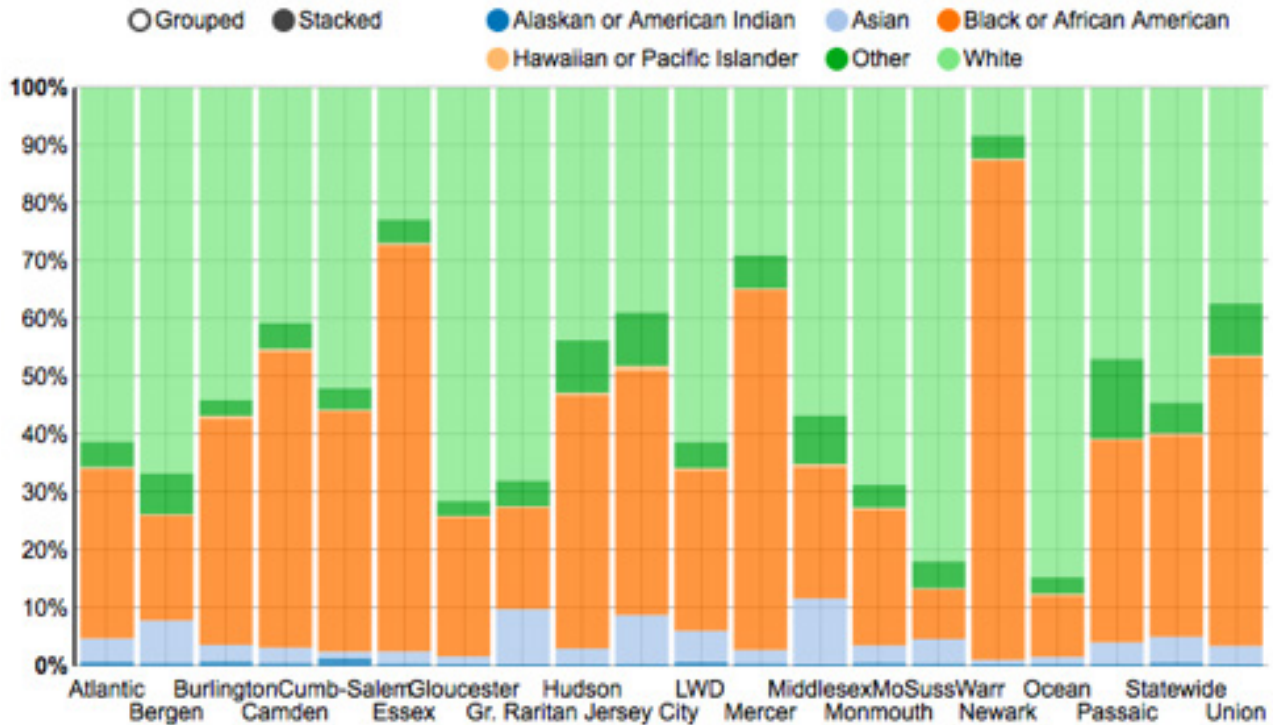


Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Race, 2011

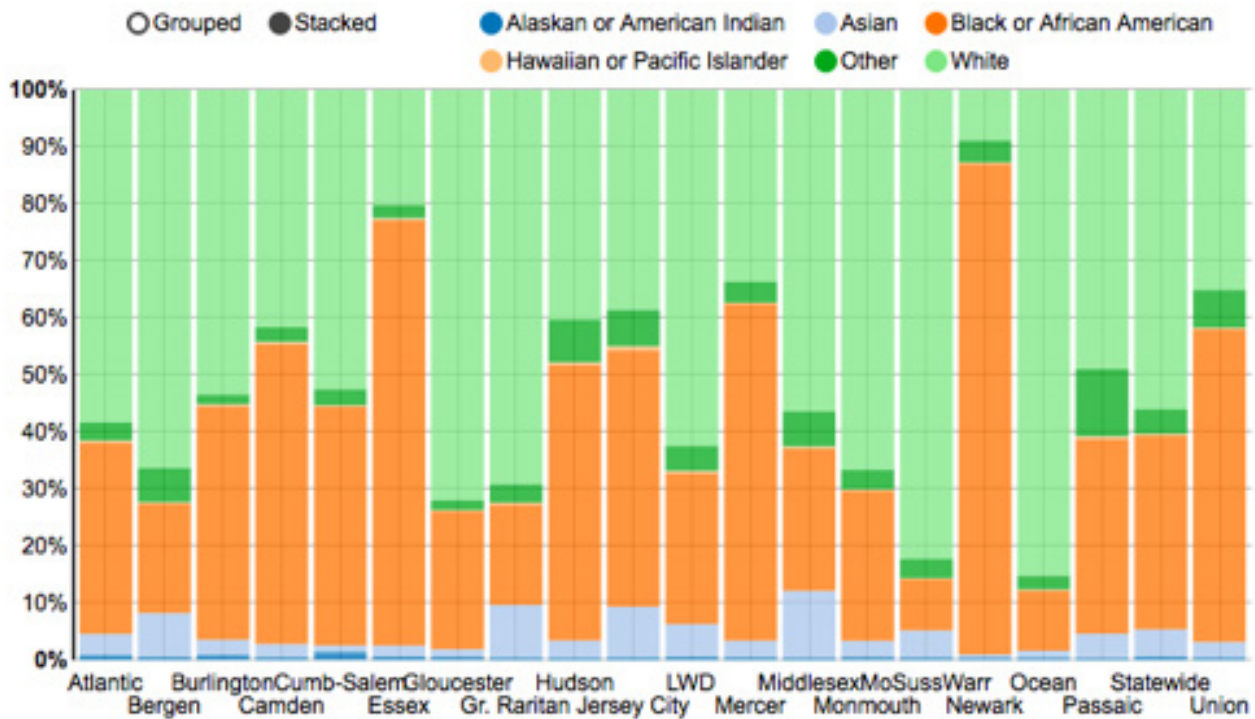


# Evaluation of One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey

## Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Race, 2012

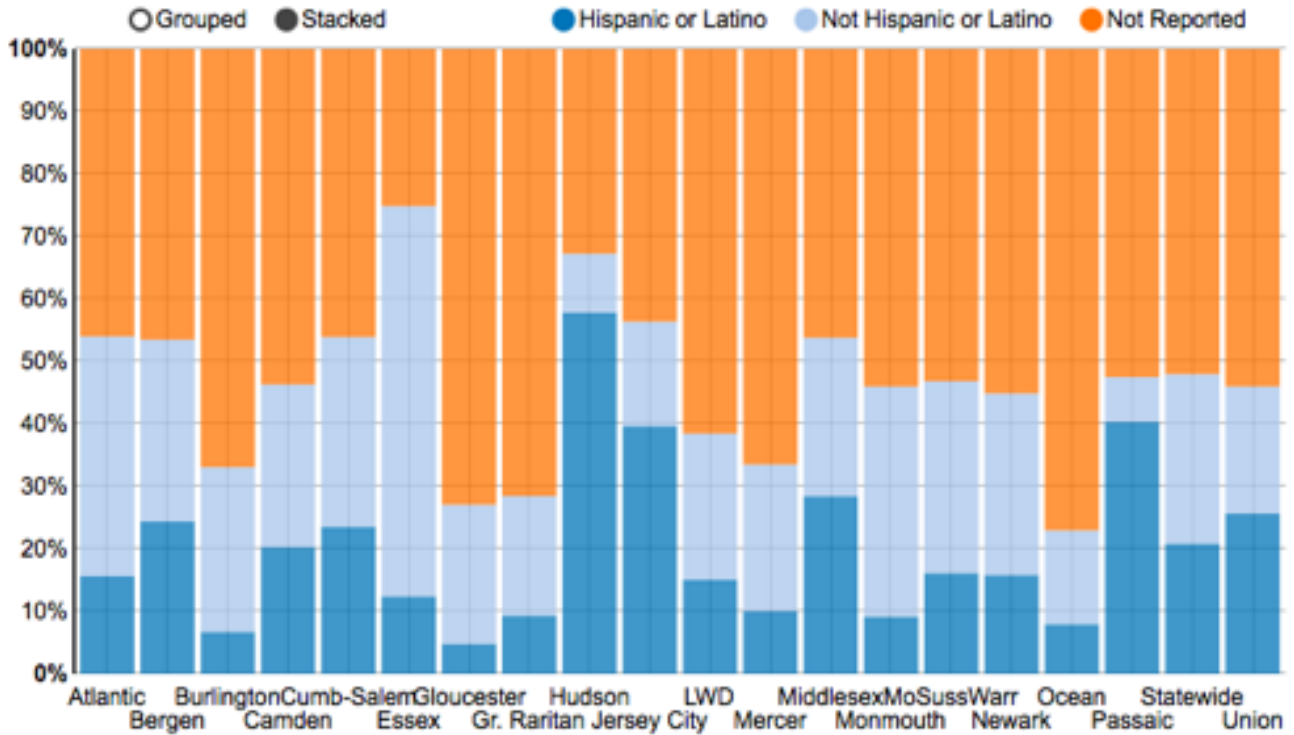


## Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Race, 2013

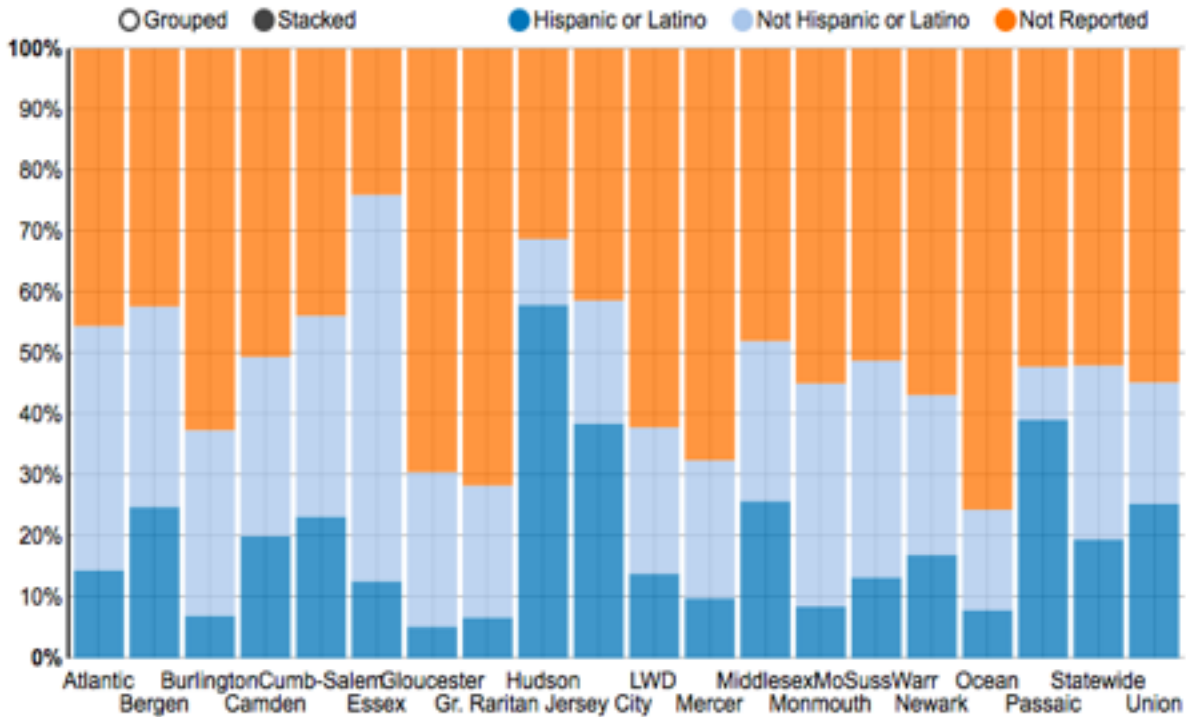


Evaluation of One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey

Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Ethnicity, 2006

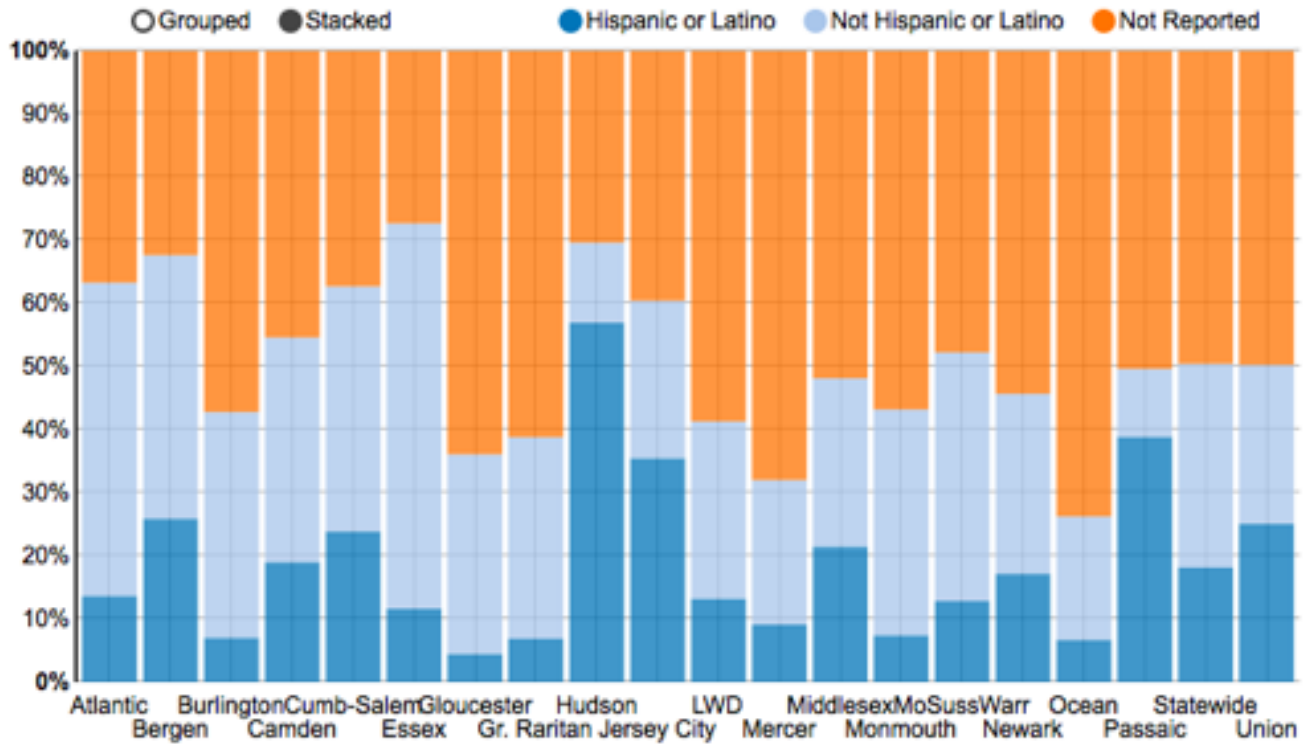


Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Ethnicity, 2007

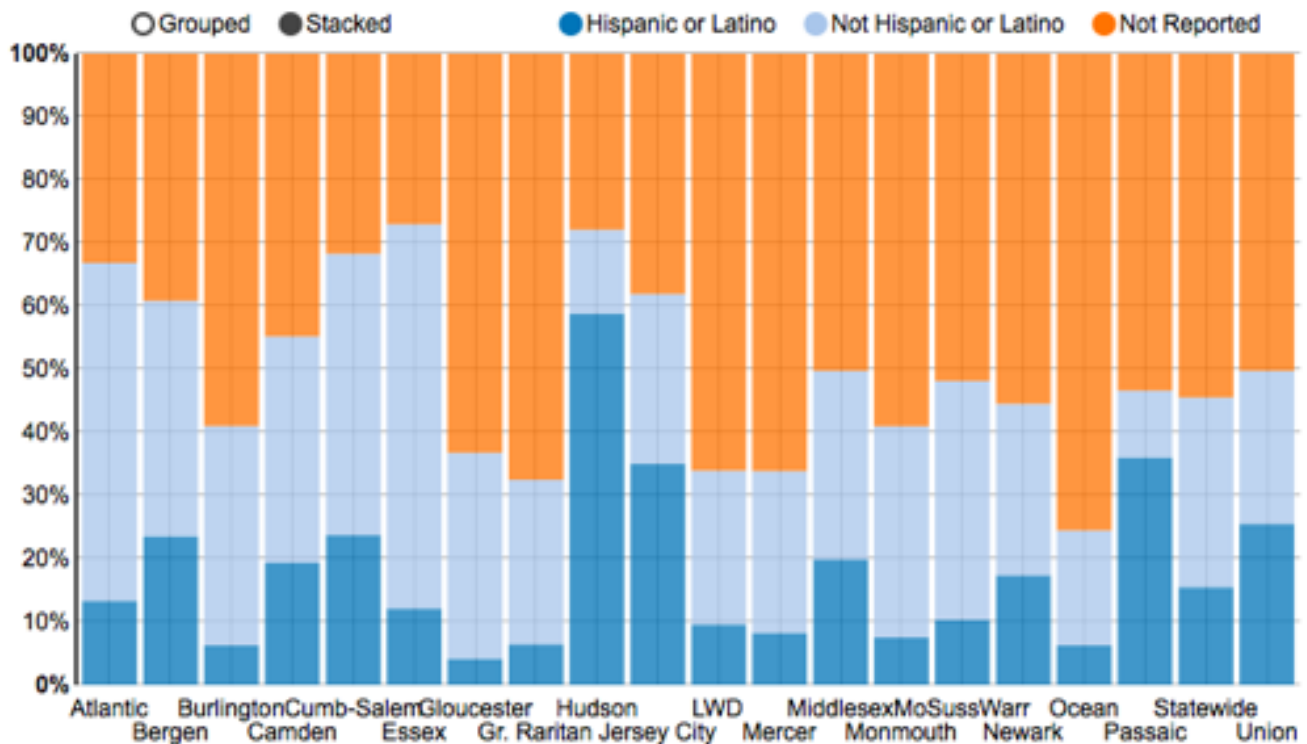


# Evaluation of One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey

## Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Ethnicity, 2008



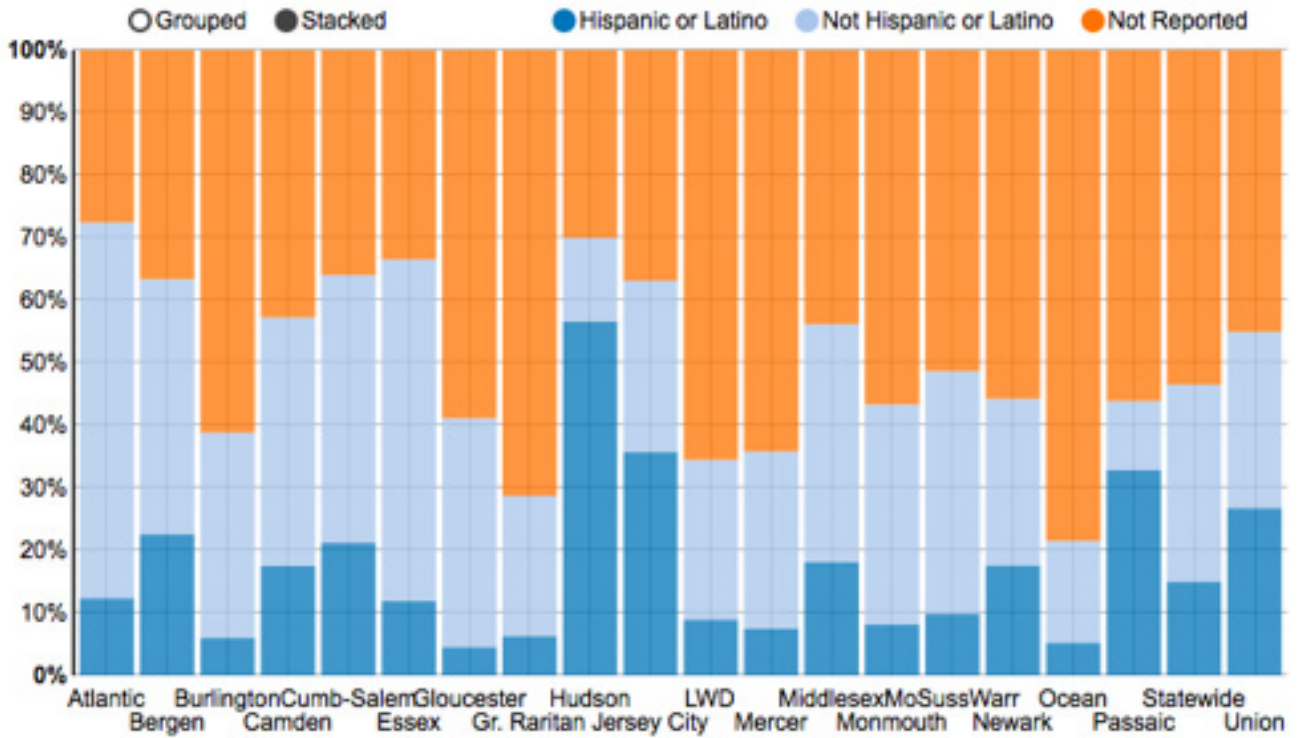
## Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Ethnicity, 2009



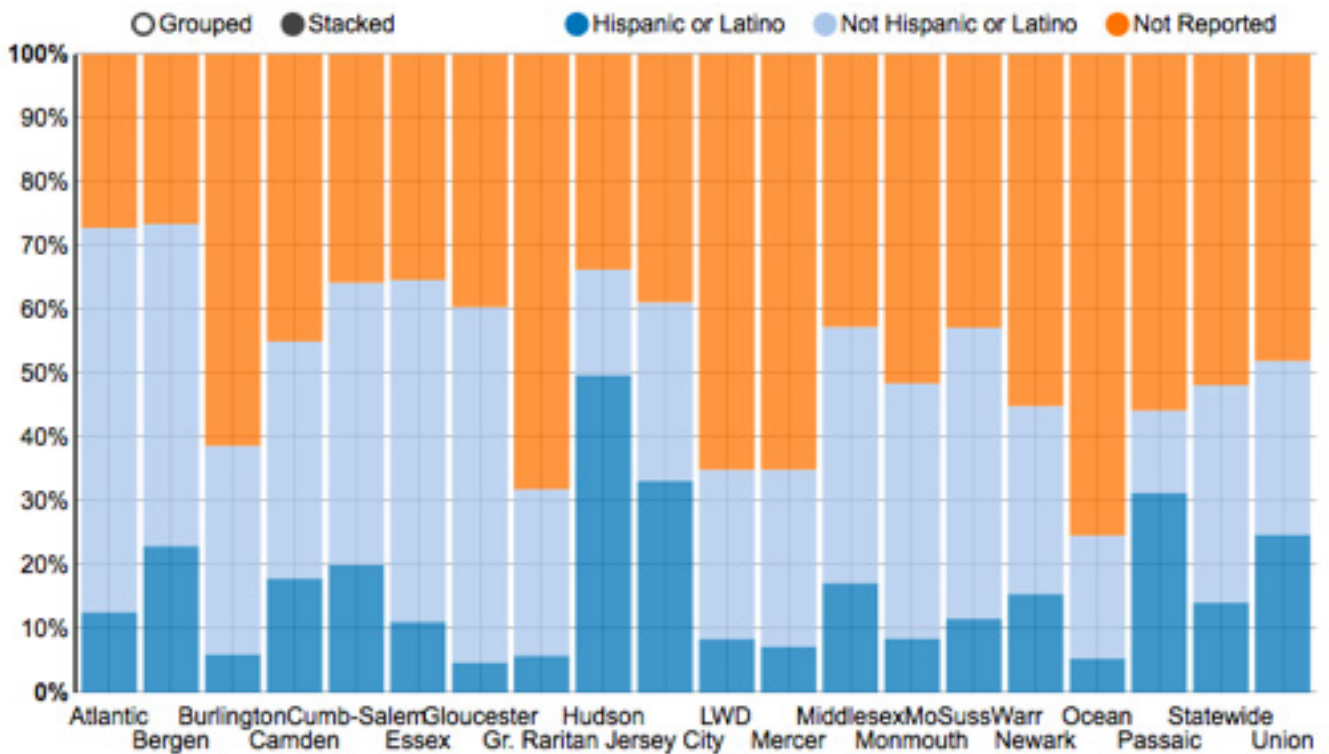


# Evaluation of One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey

## Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Ethnicity, 2010



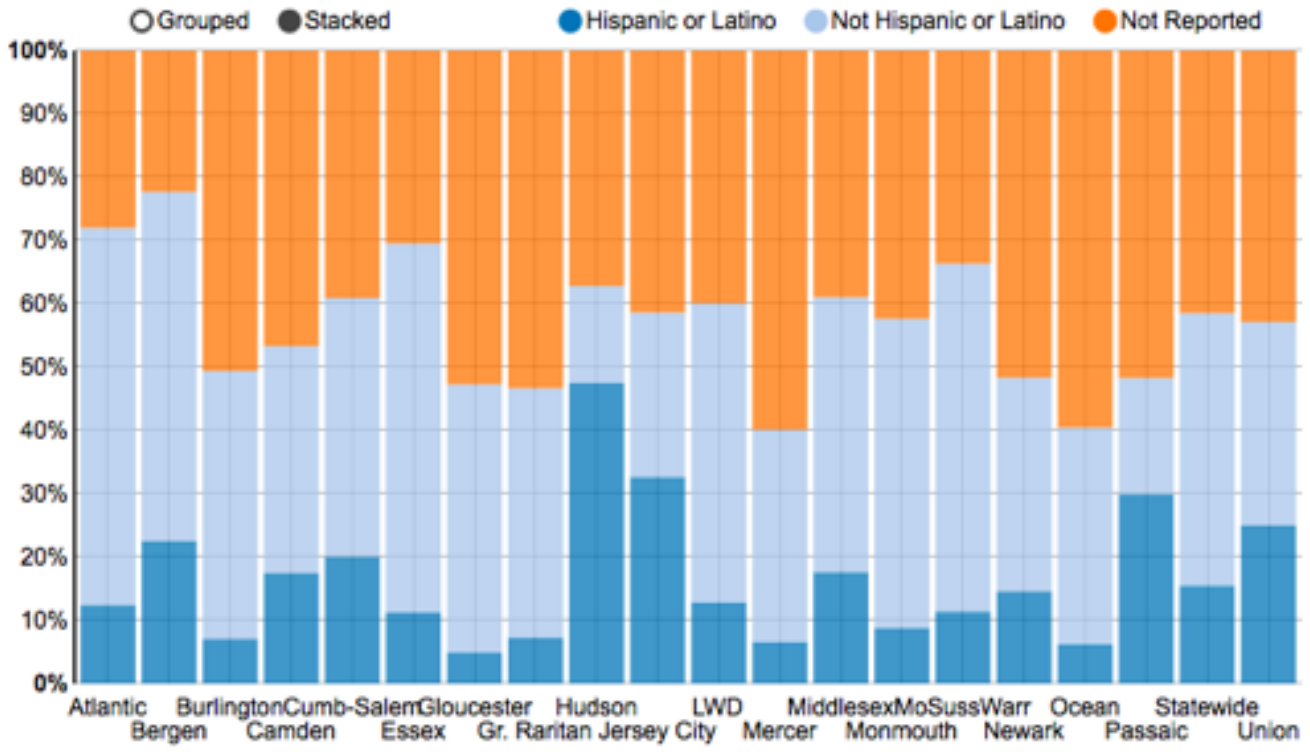
## Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Ethnicity, 2011



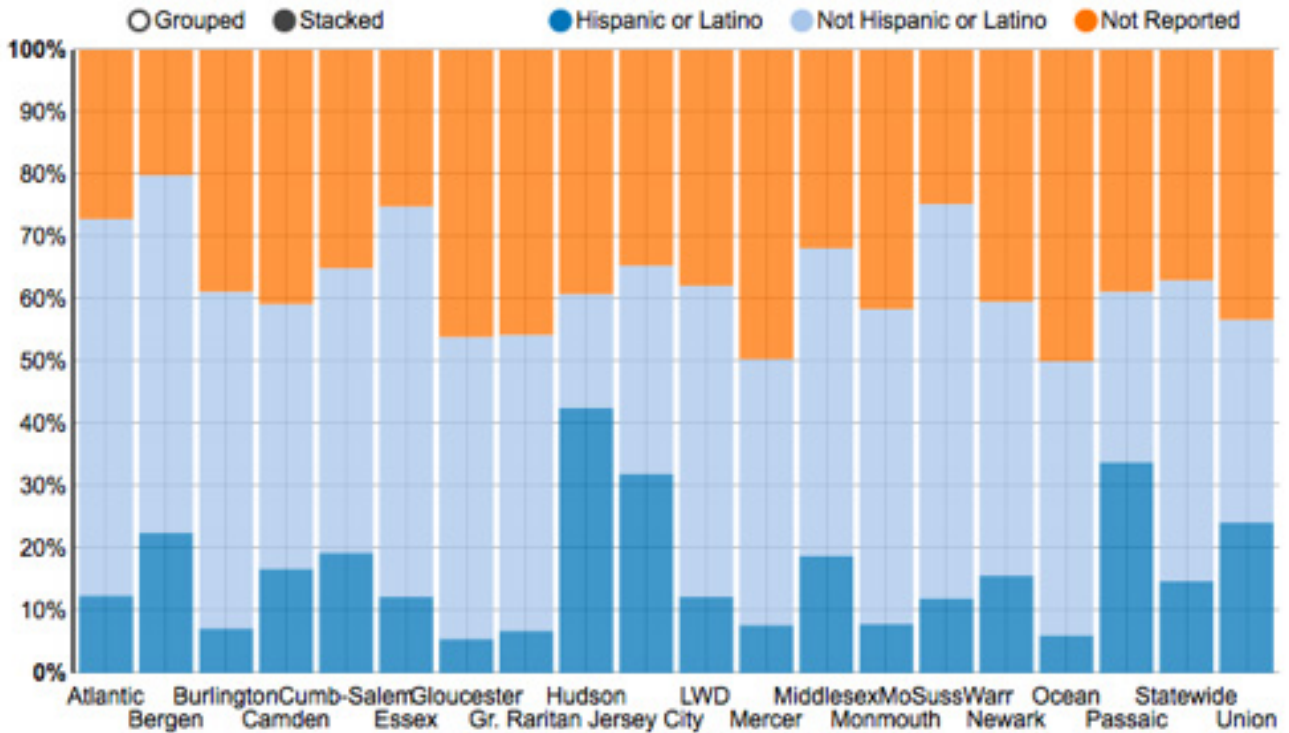


# Evaluation of One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey

## Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Ethnicity, 2012

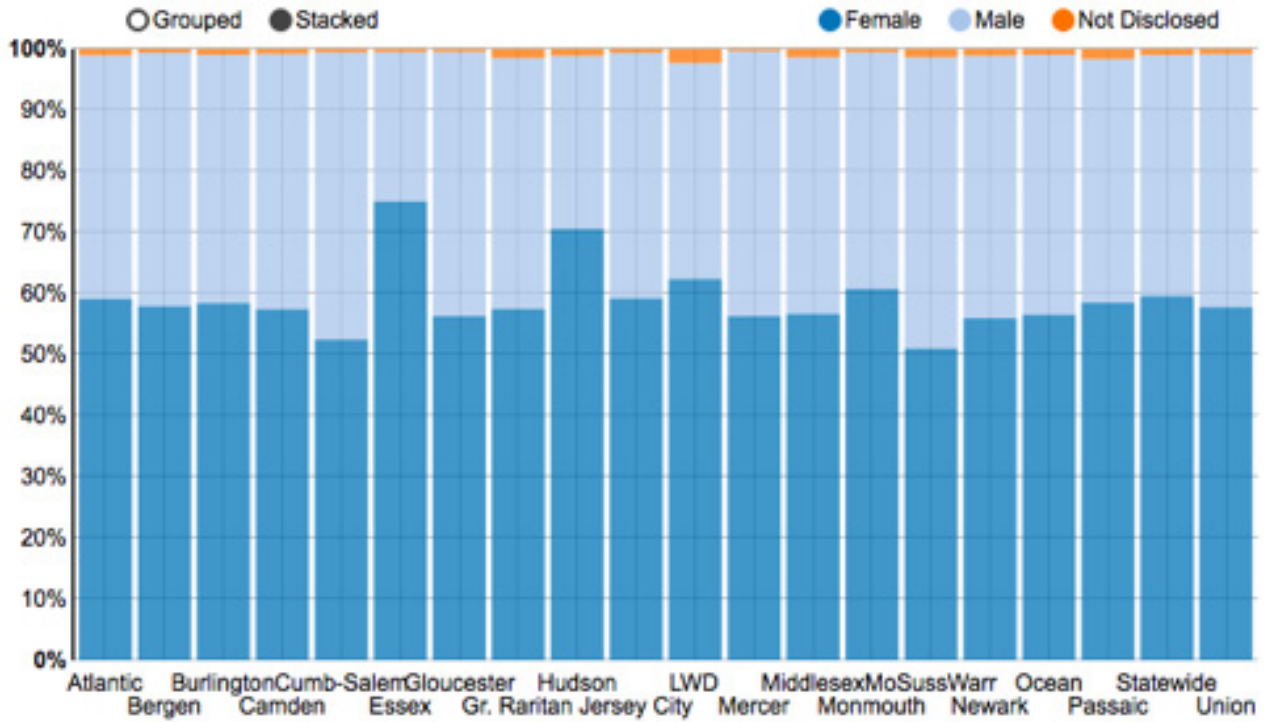


## Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Ethnicity, 2013

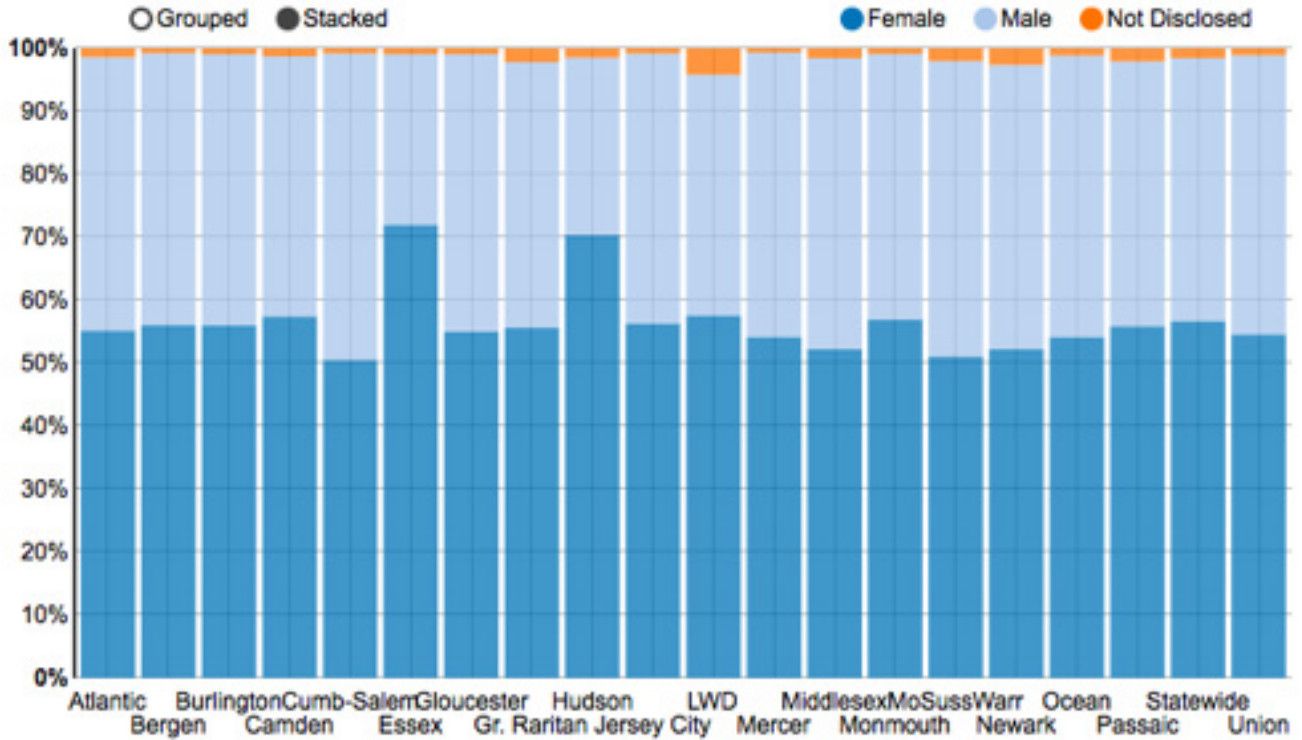


Evaluation of One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey

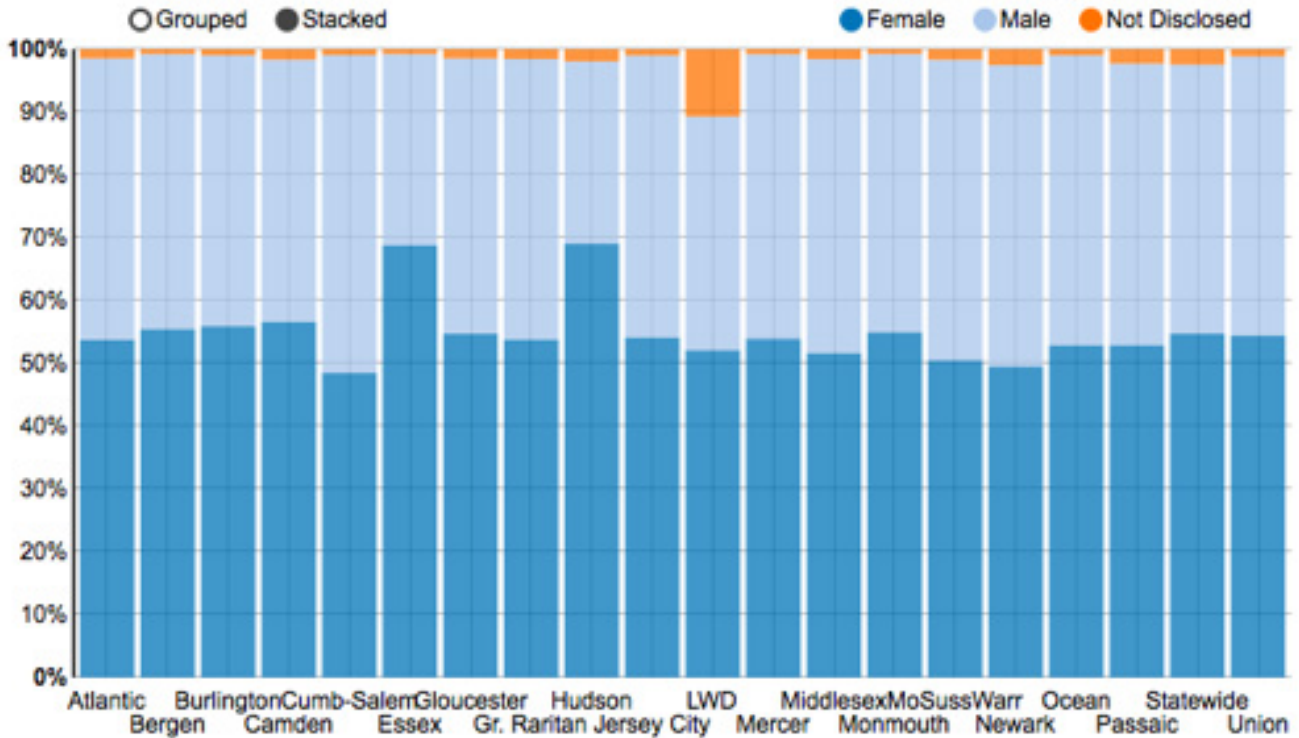
Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Sex, 2006



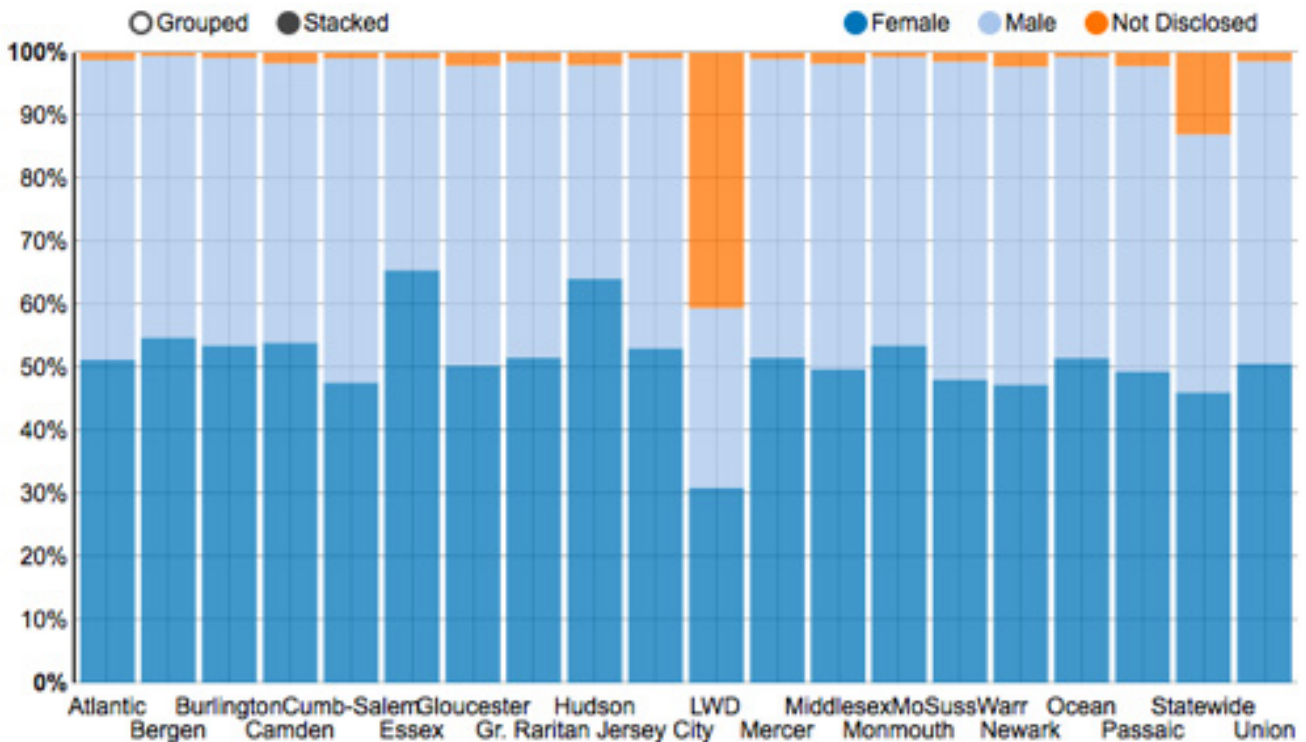
Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Sex, 2007



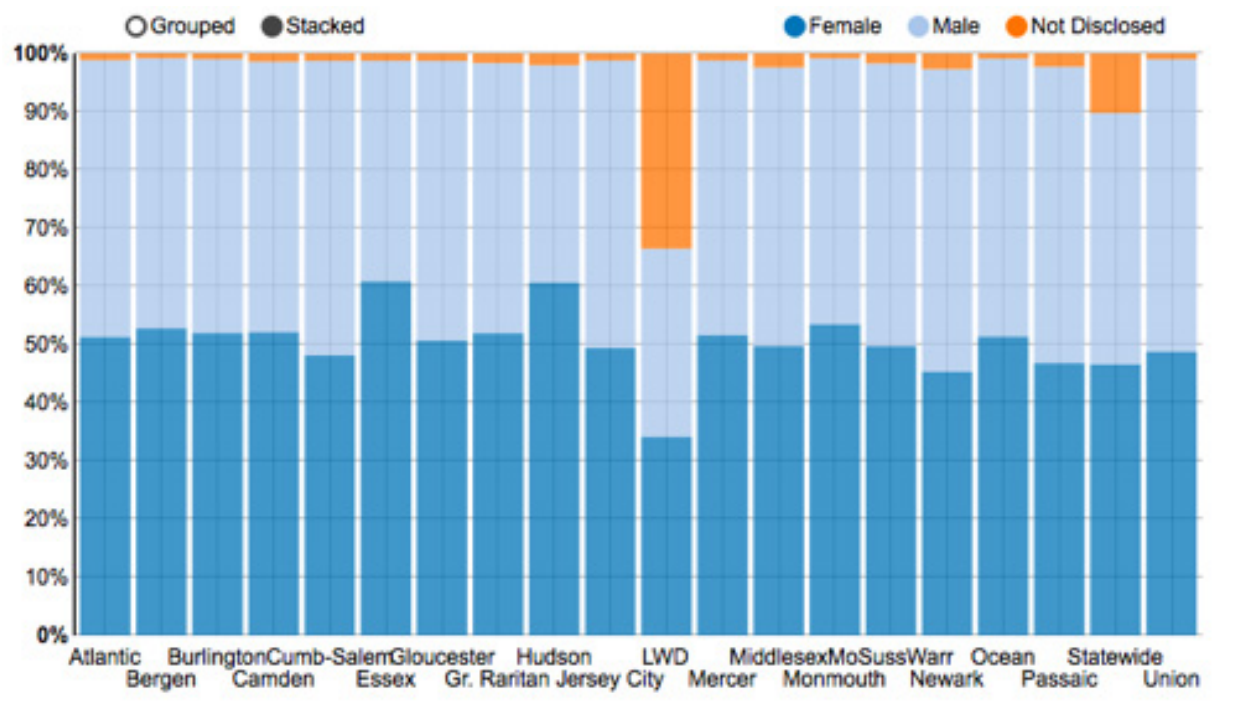
Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Sex, 2008



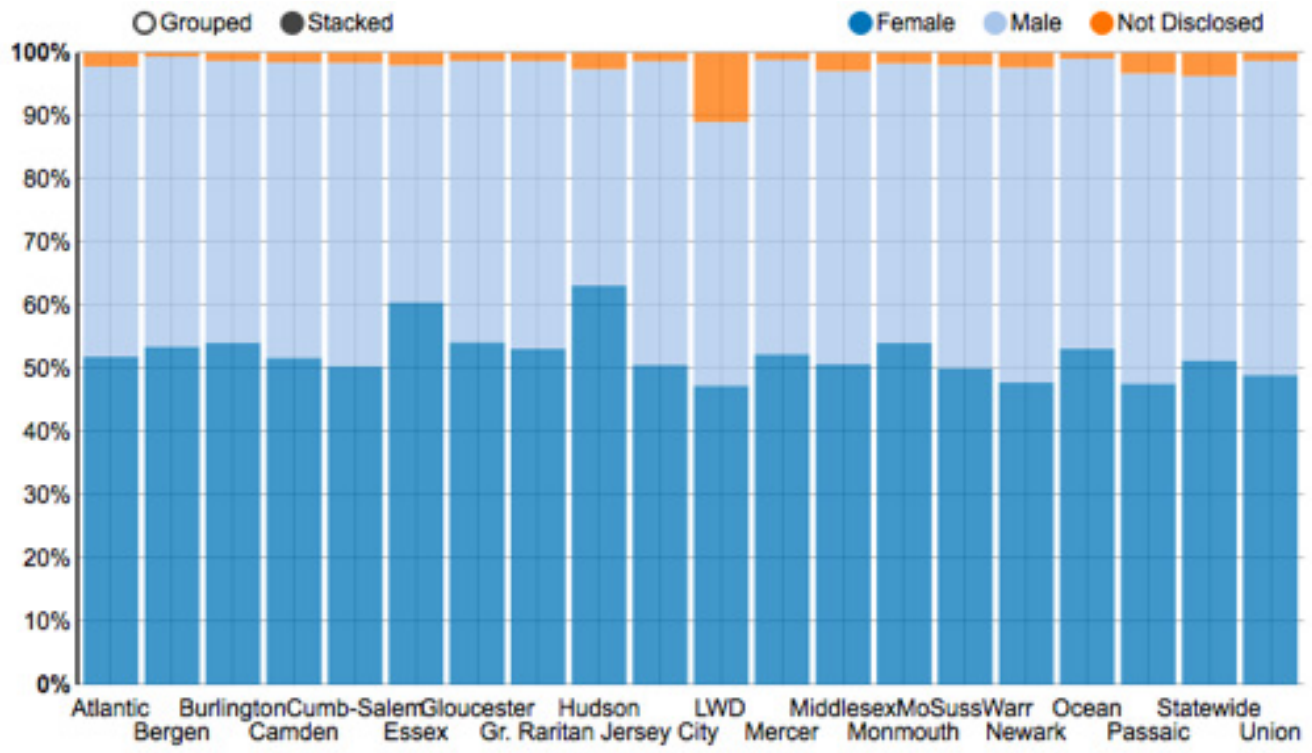
Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Sex, 2009



Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Sex, 2010

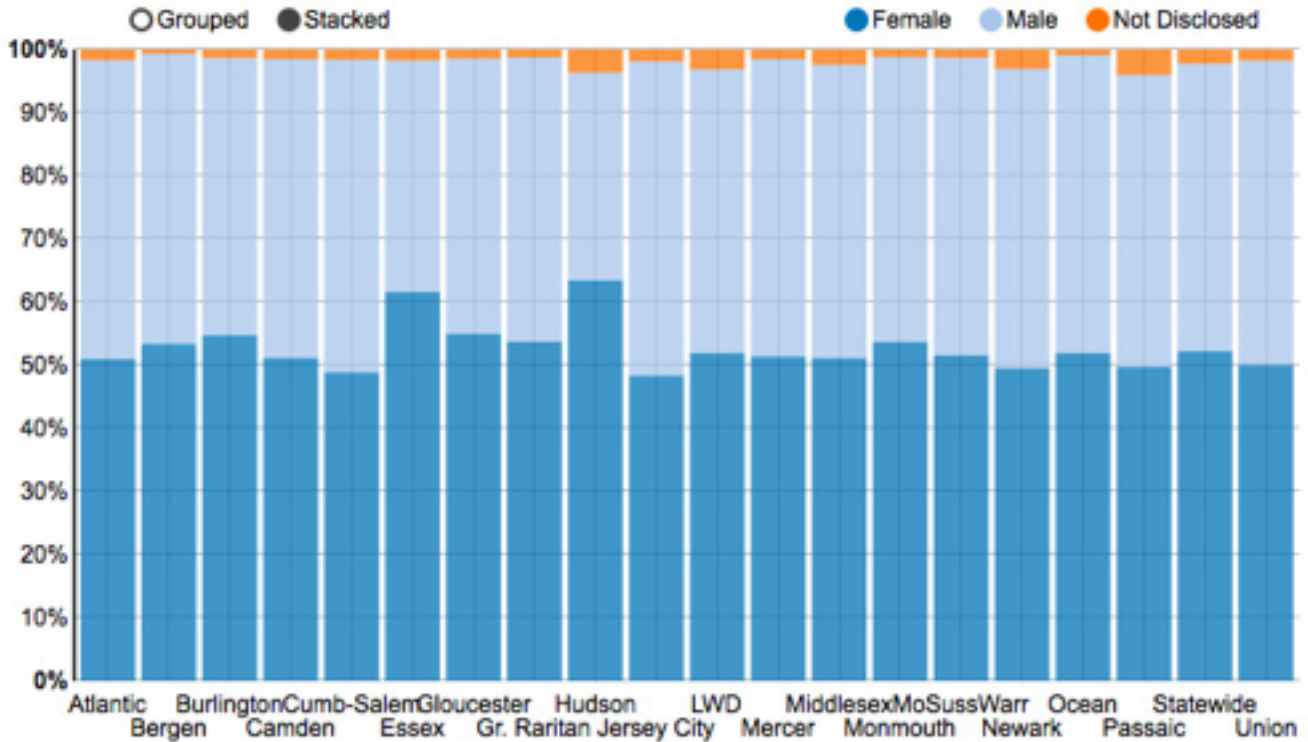


Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Sex, 2011

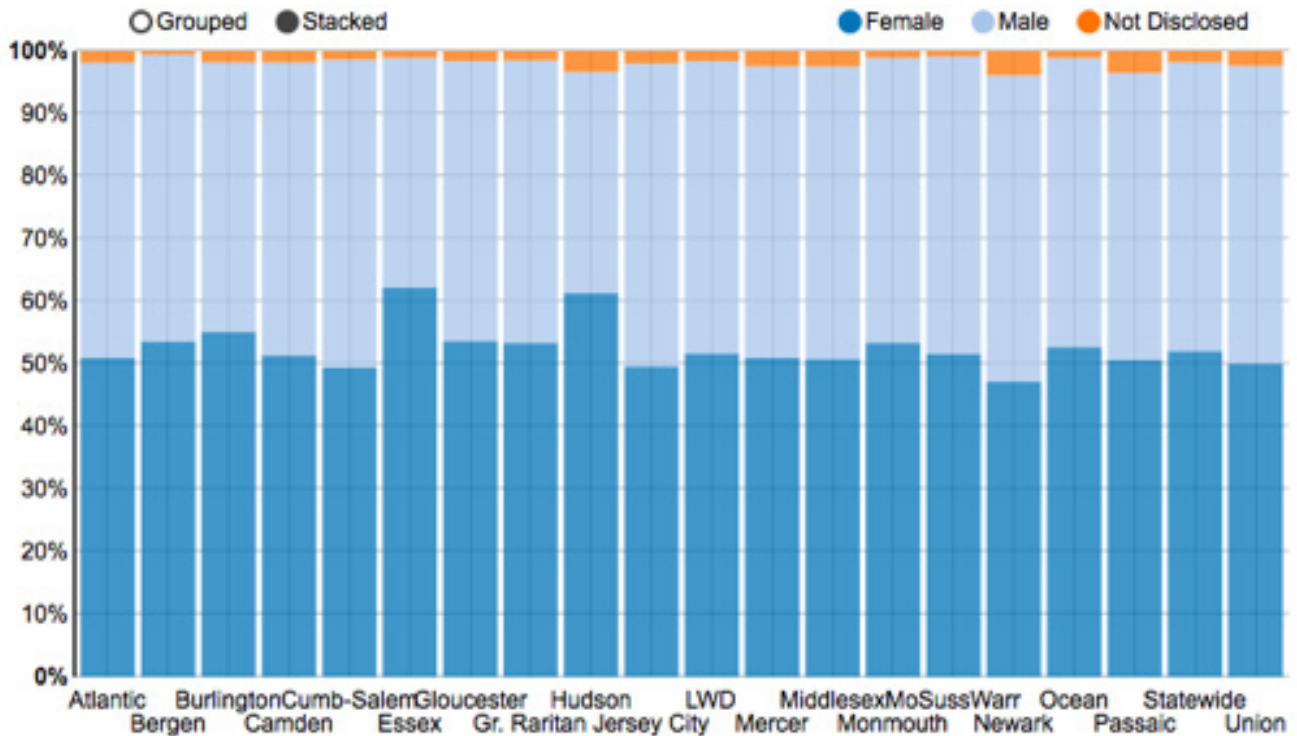


# Evaluation of One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey

## Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Sex, 2012

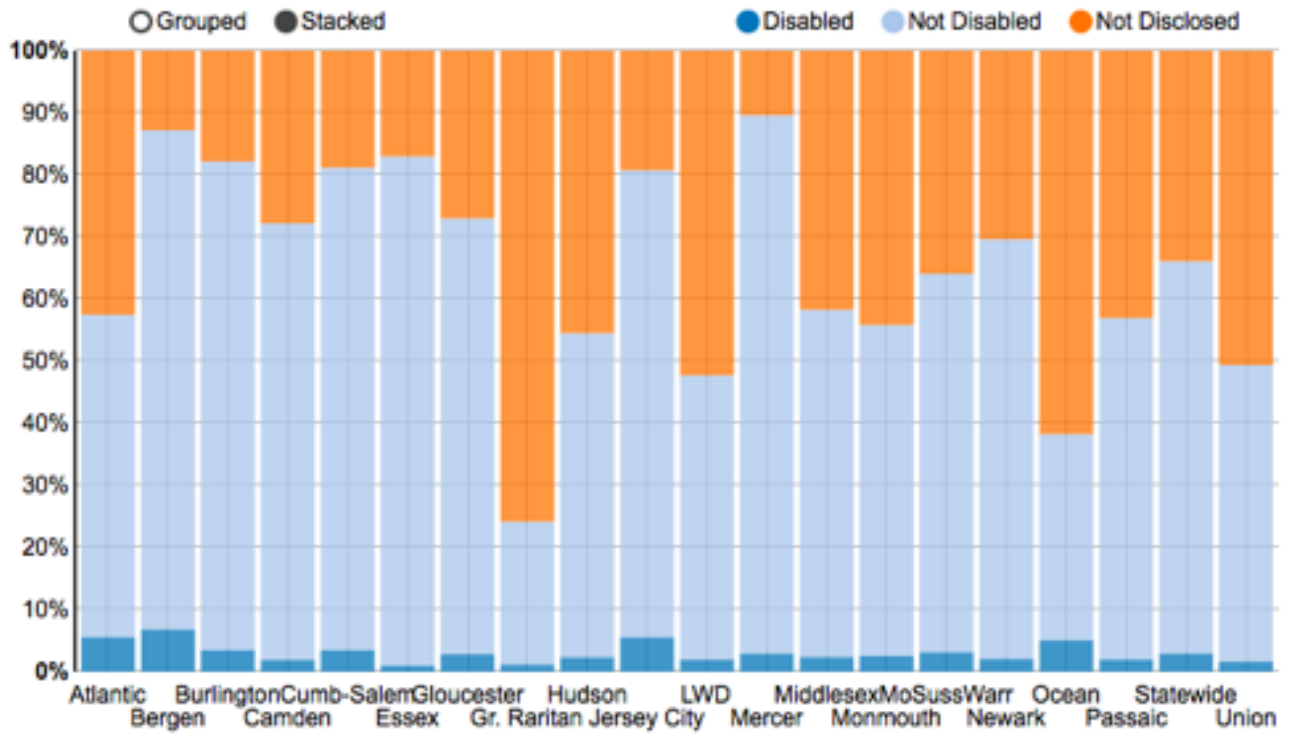


## Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Sex, 2013

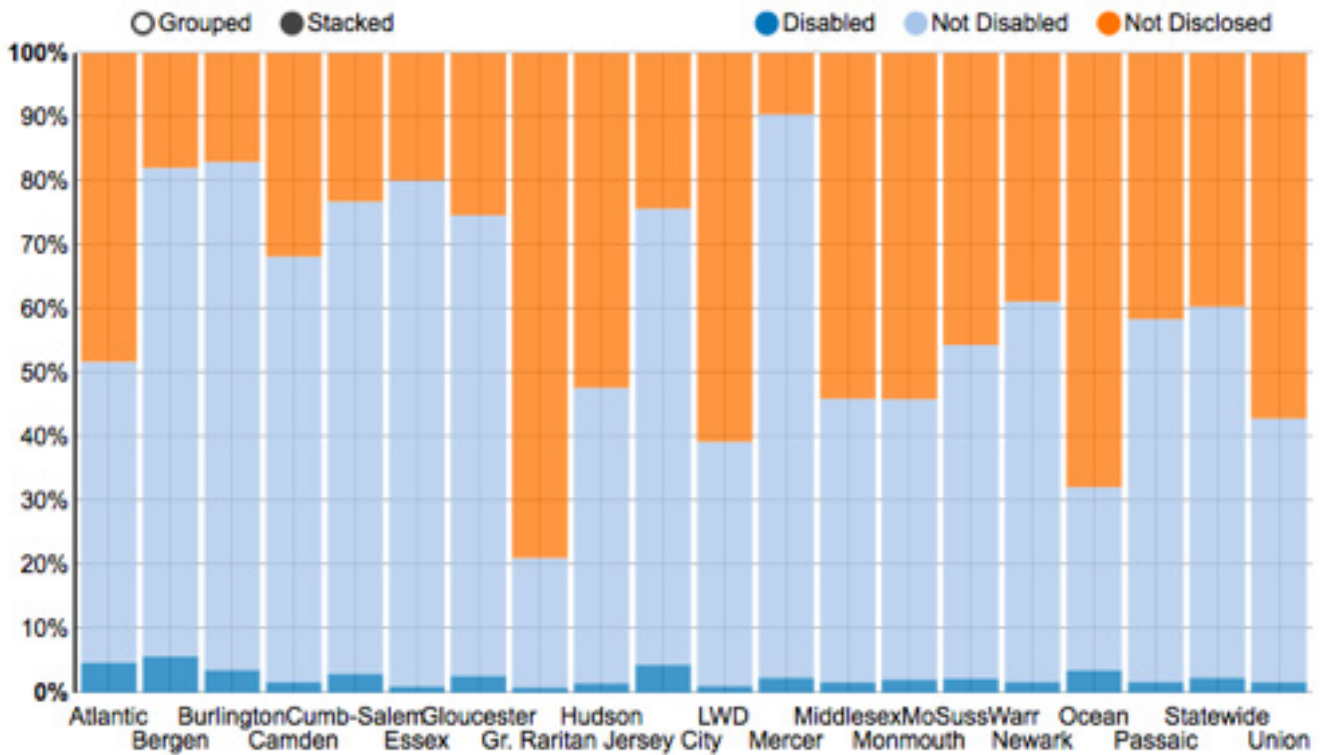




Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Disability Status, 2006

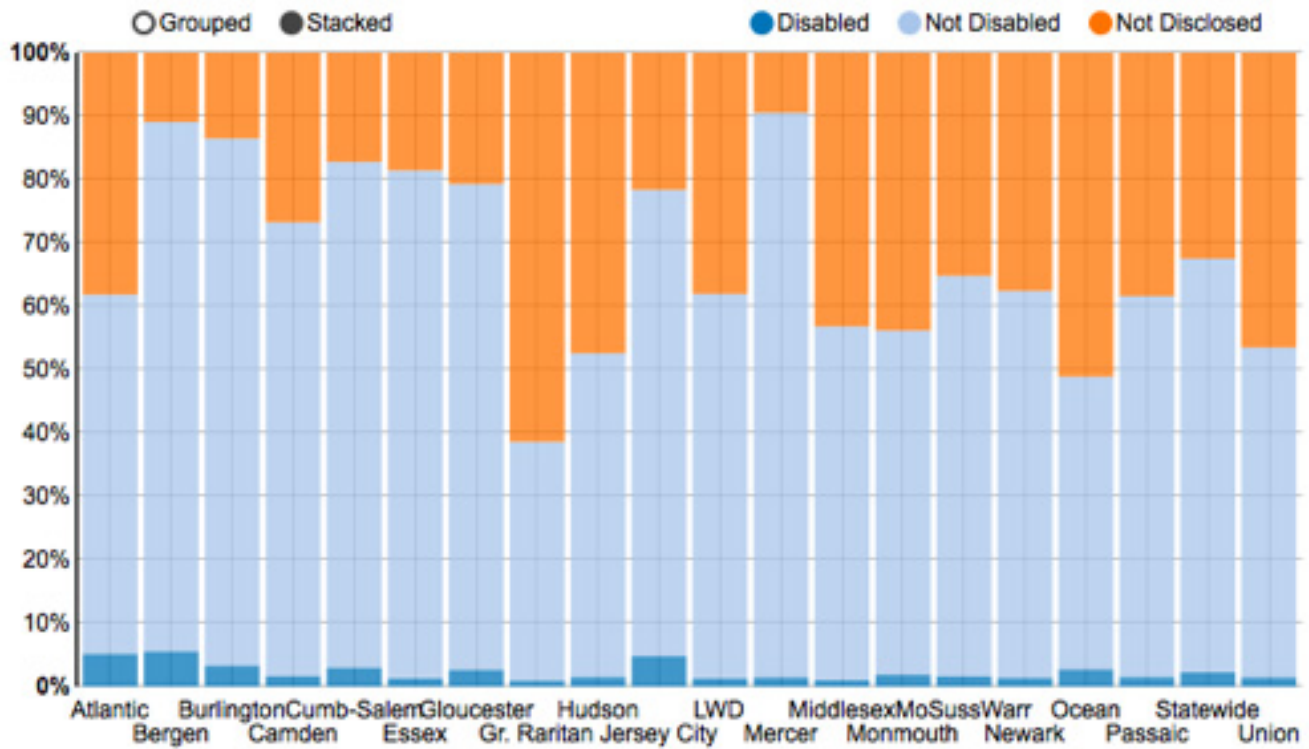


Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Disability Status, 2007

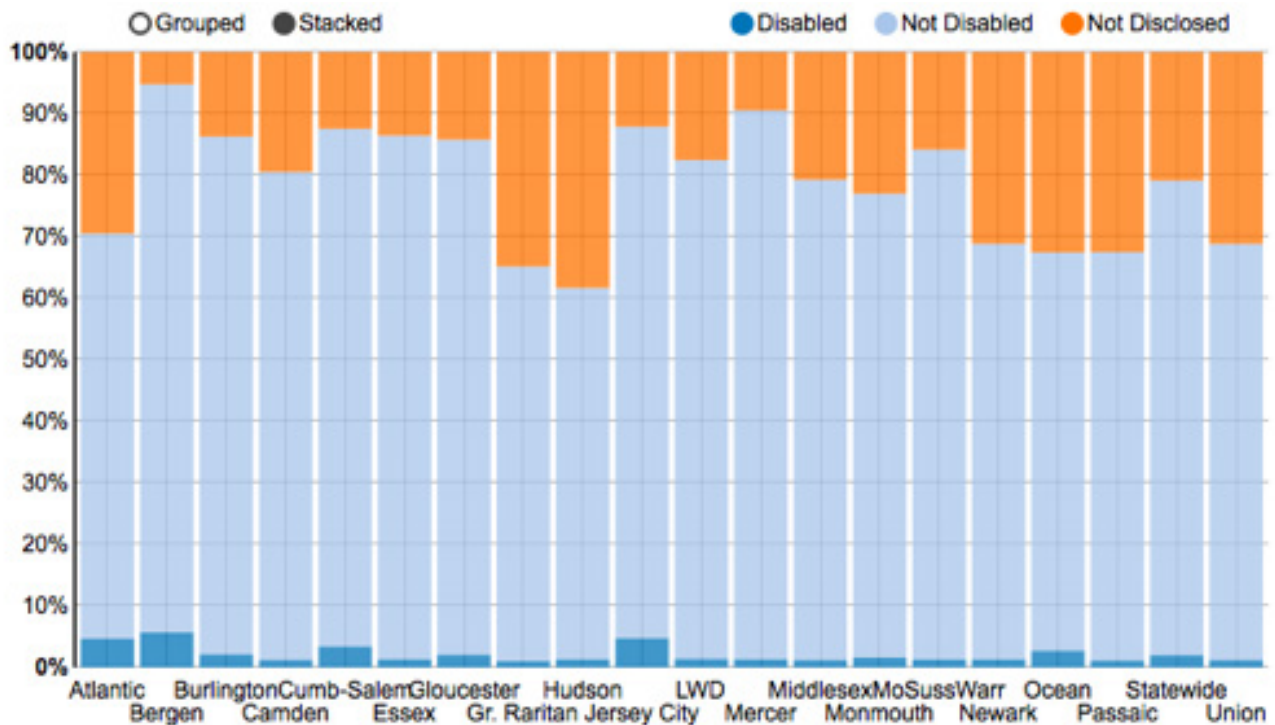




Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Disability Status, 2008

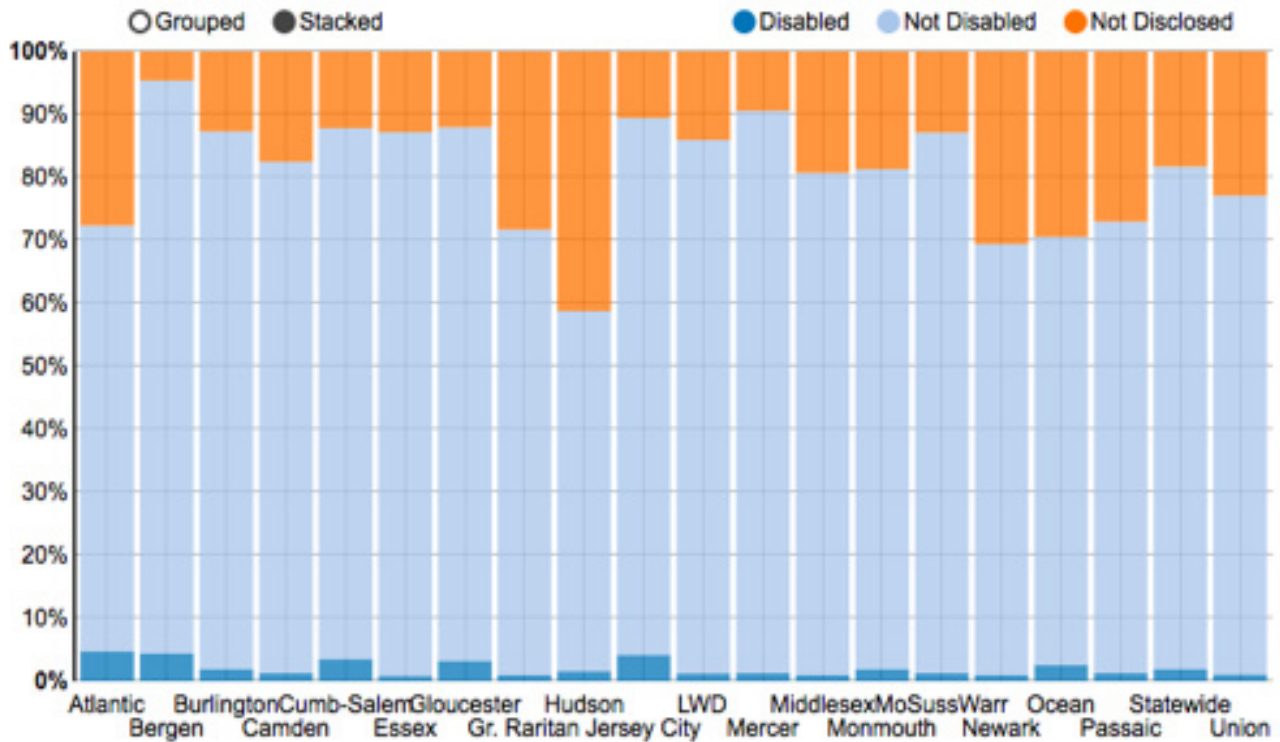


Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Disability Status, 2009

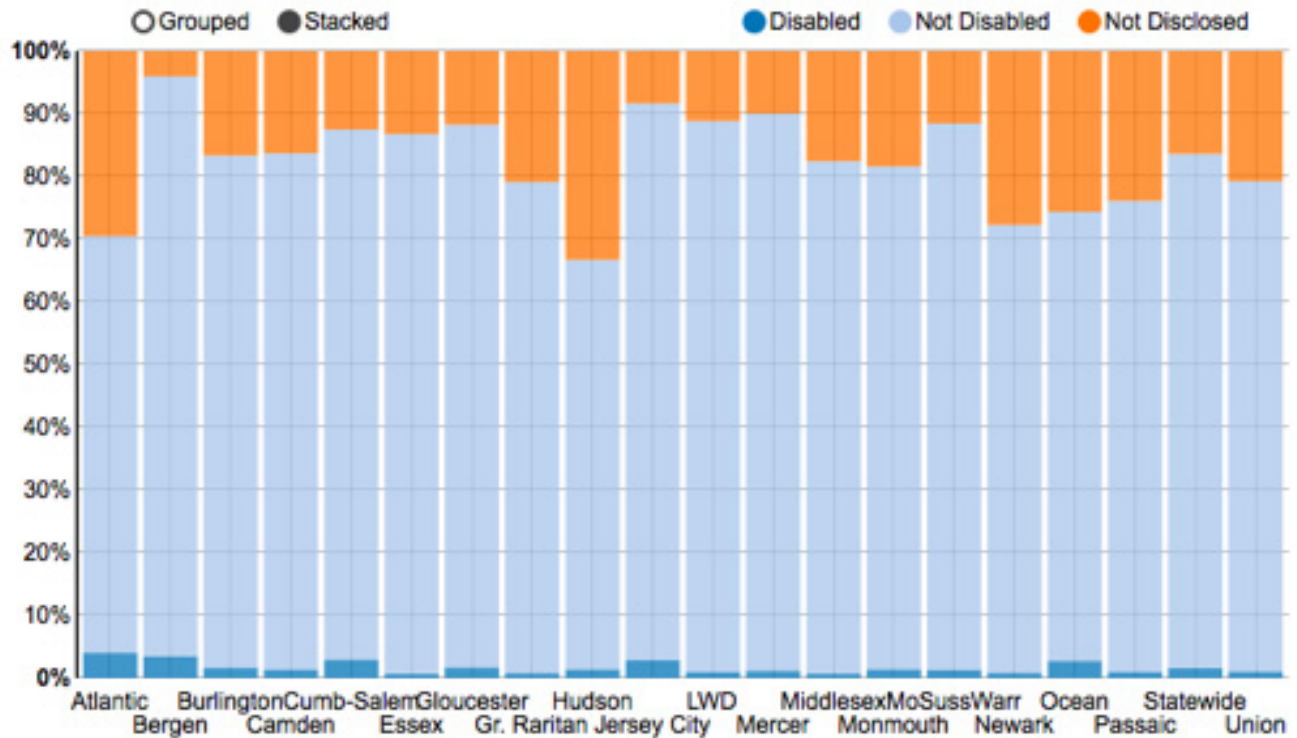


# Evaluation of One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey

## Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Disability Status, 2010

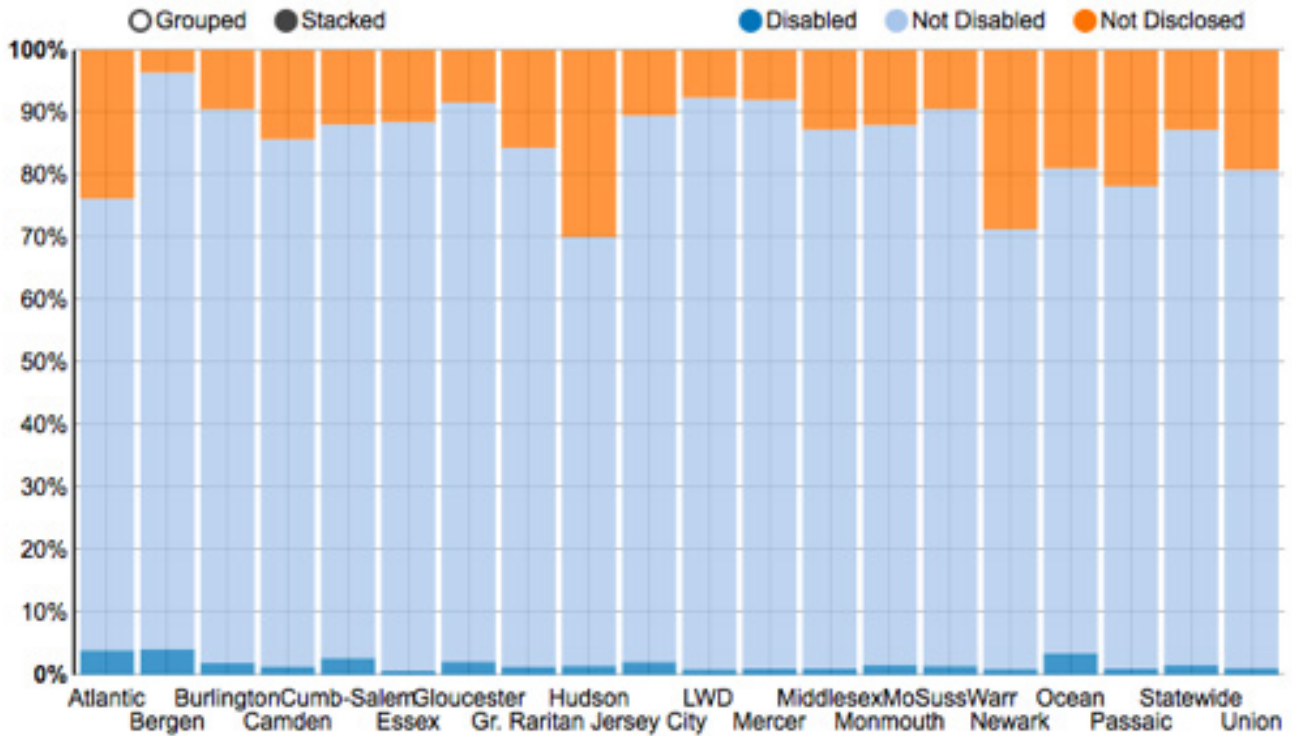


## Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Disability Status, 2011

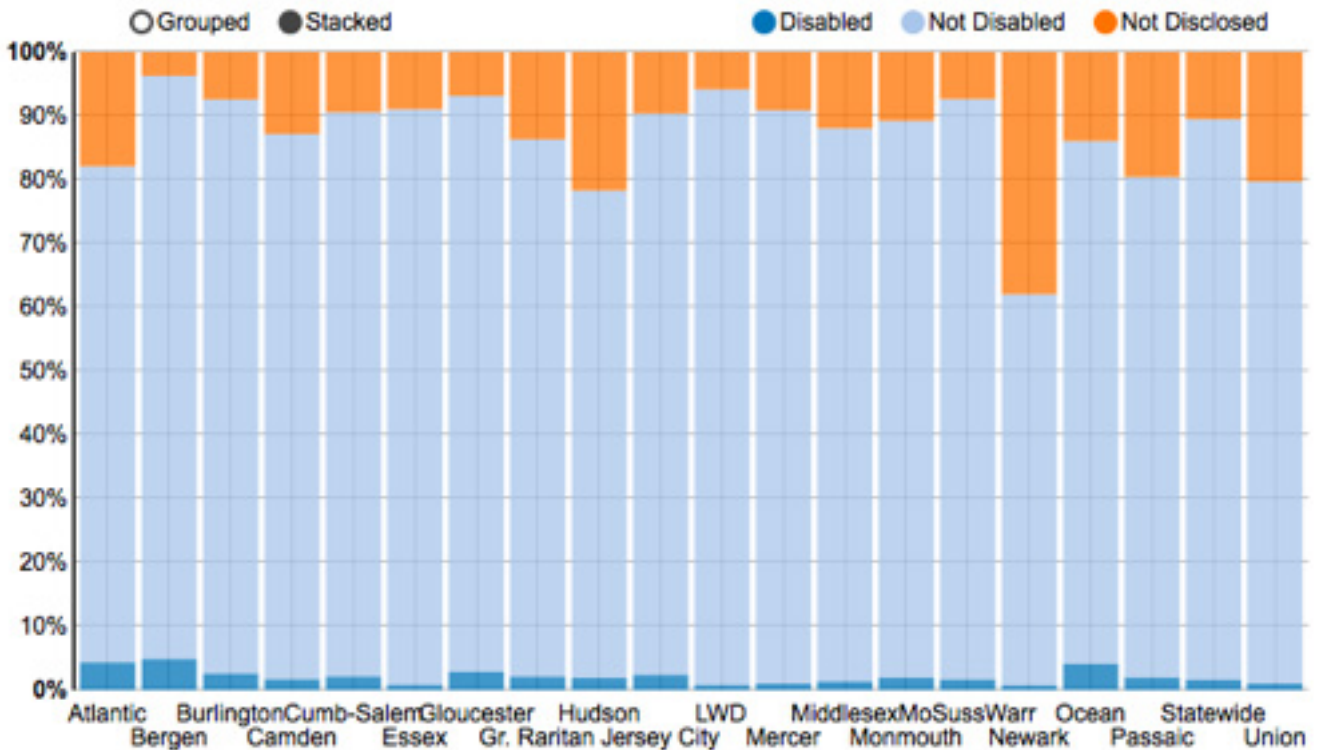


# Evaluation of One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey

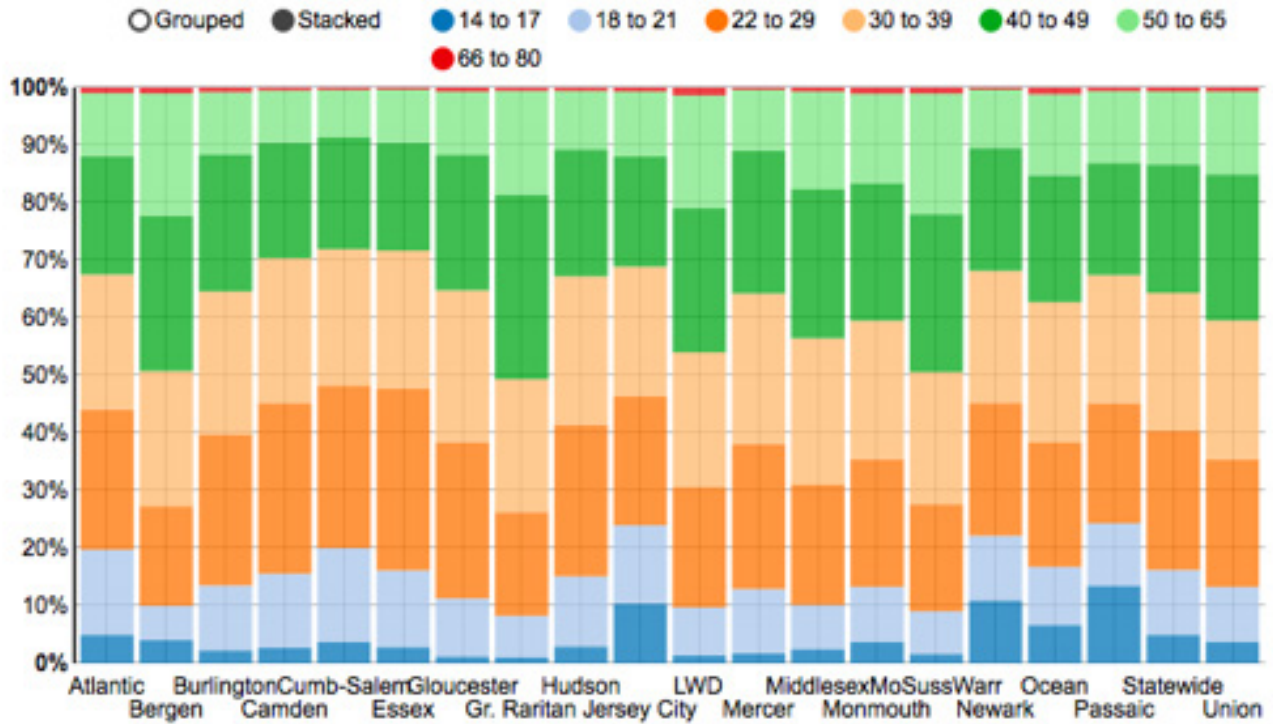
## Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Disability Status, 2012



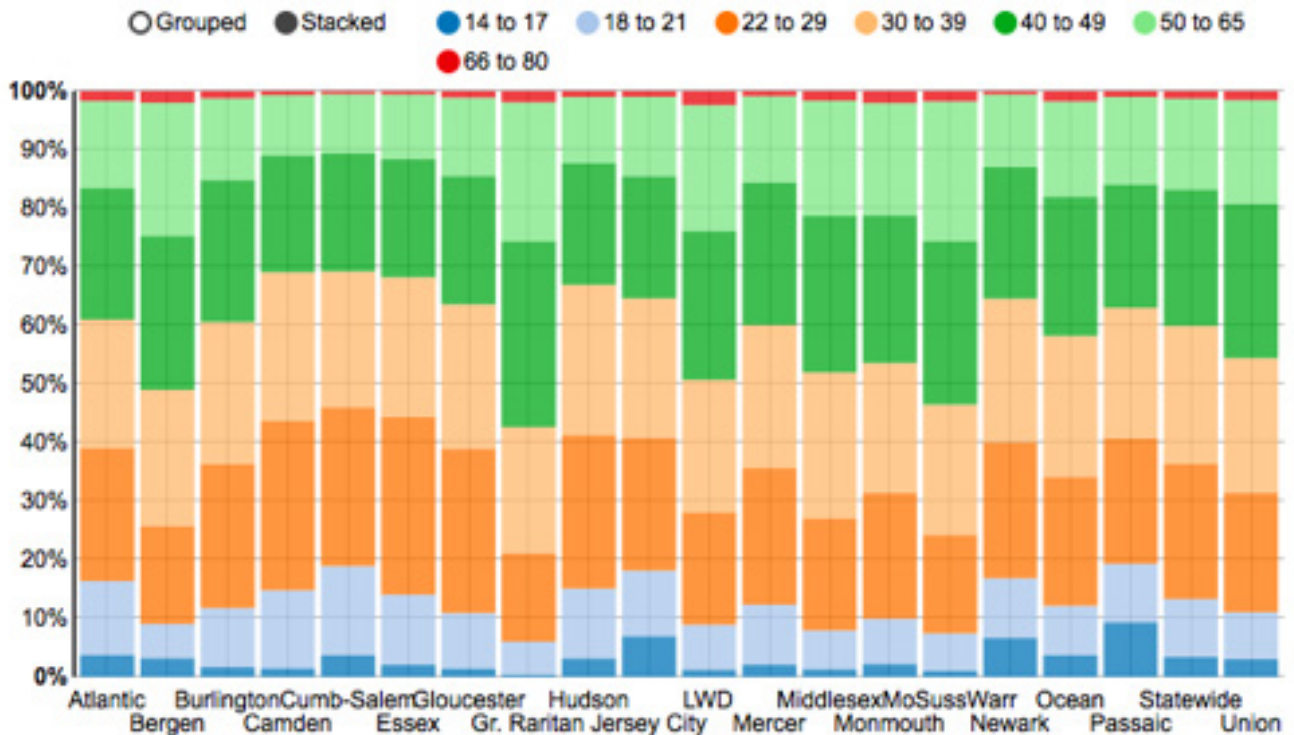
## Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Disability Status, 2013



Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Age Group, 2006

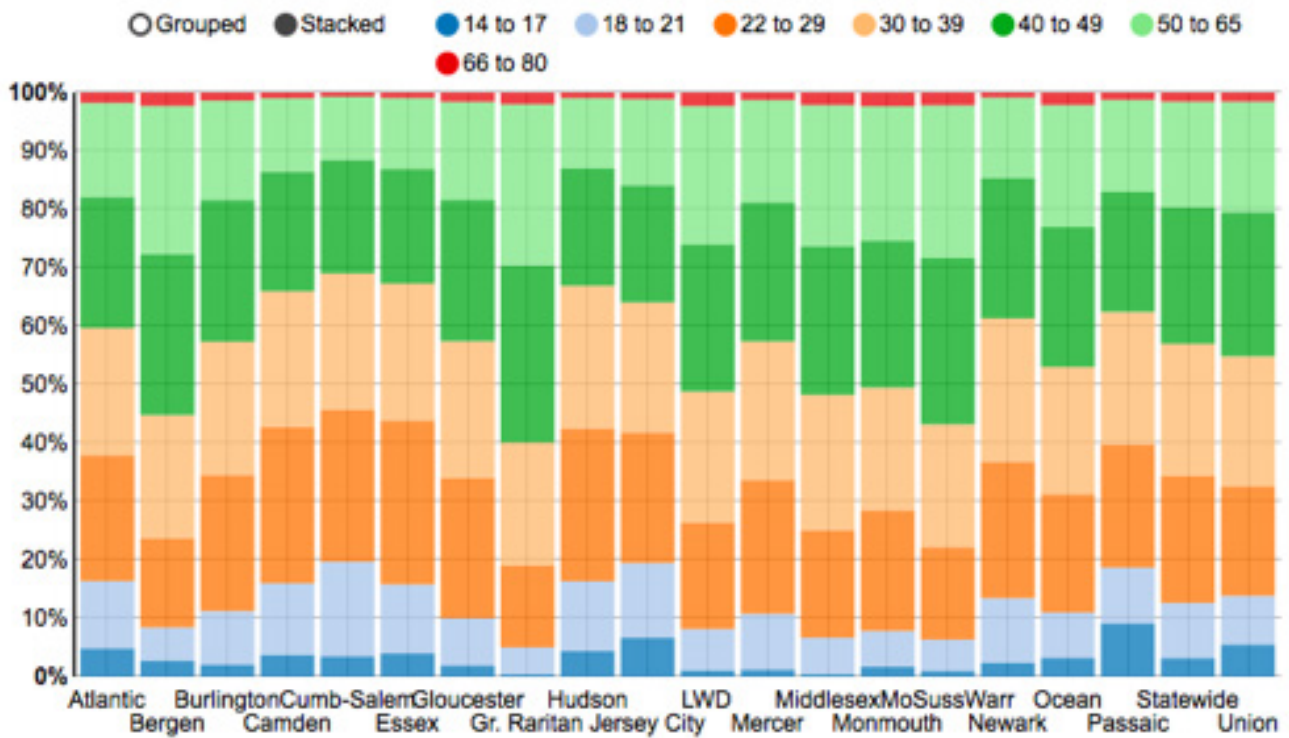


Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Age Group, 2007

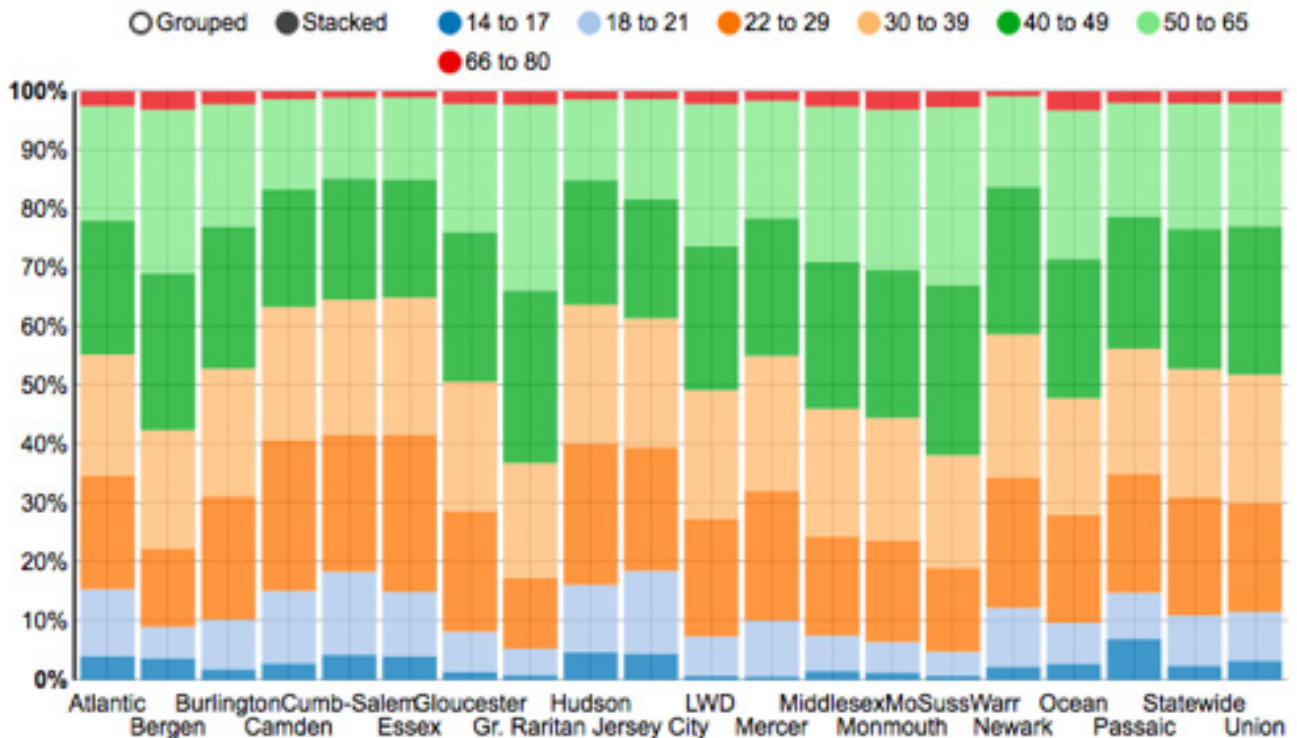




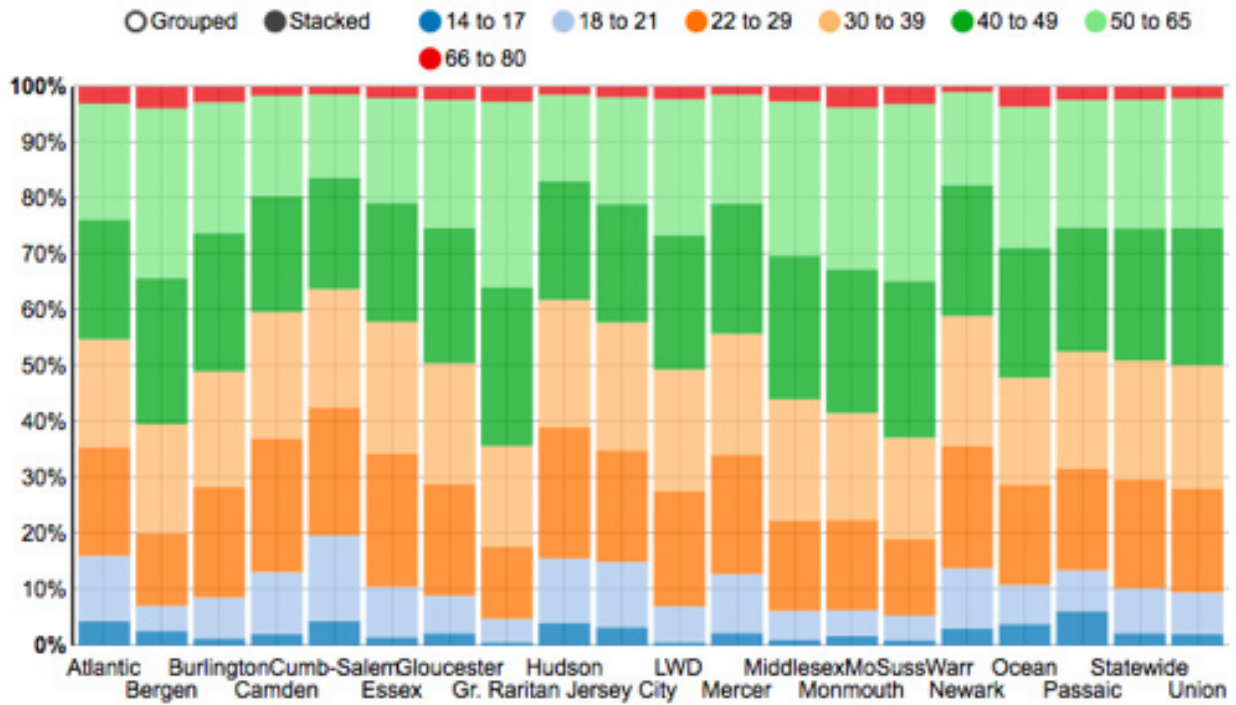
Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Age Group, 2008



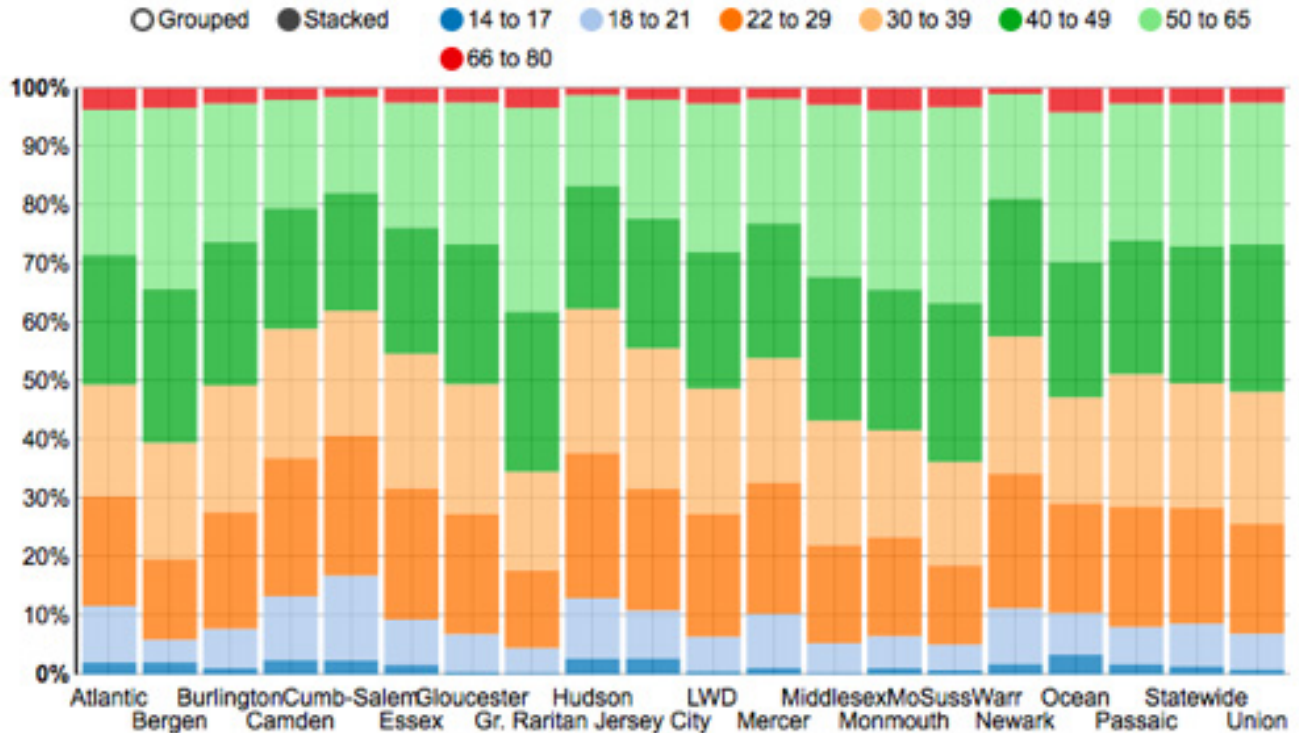
Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Age Group, 2009



Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Age Group, 2010

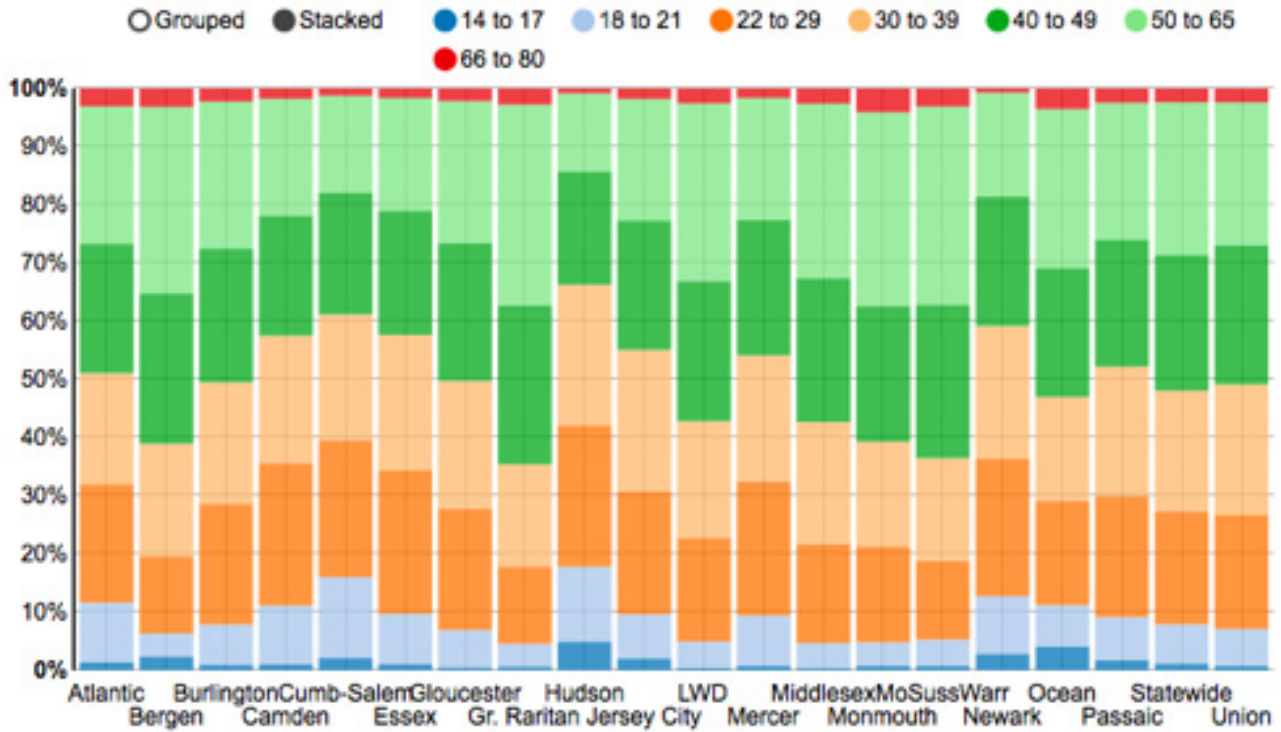


Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Age Group, 2011

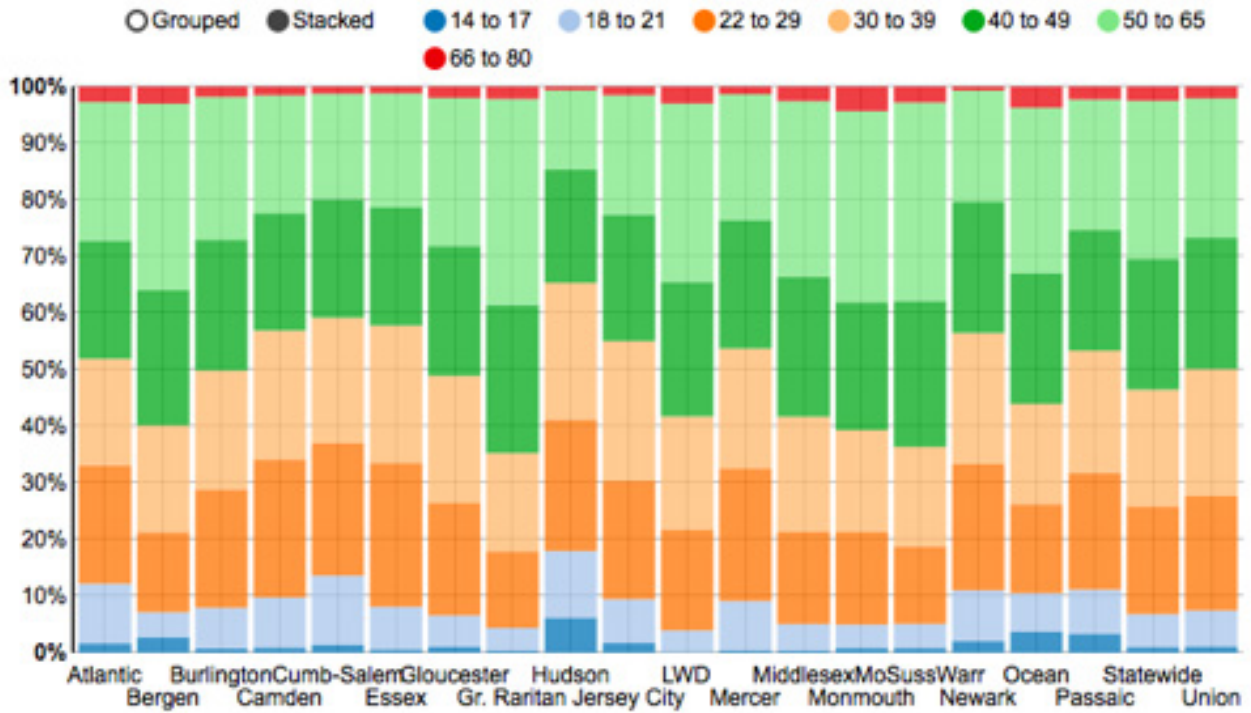




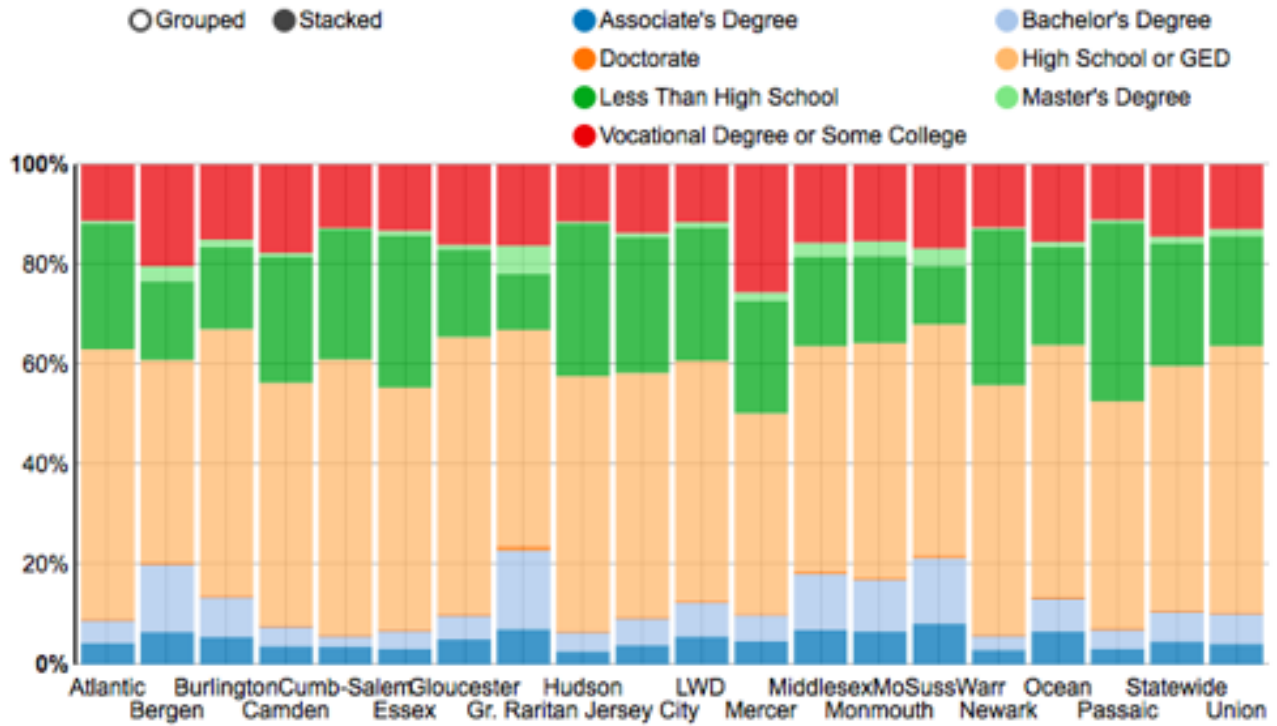
Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Age Group, 2012



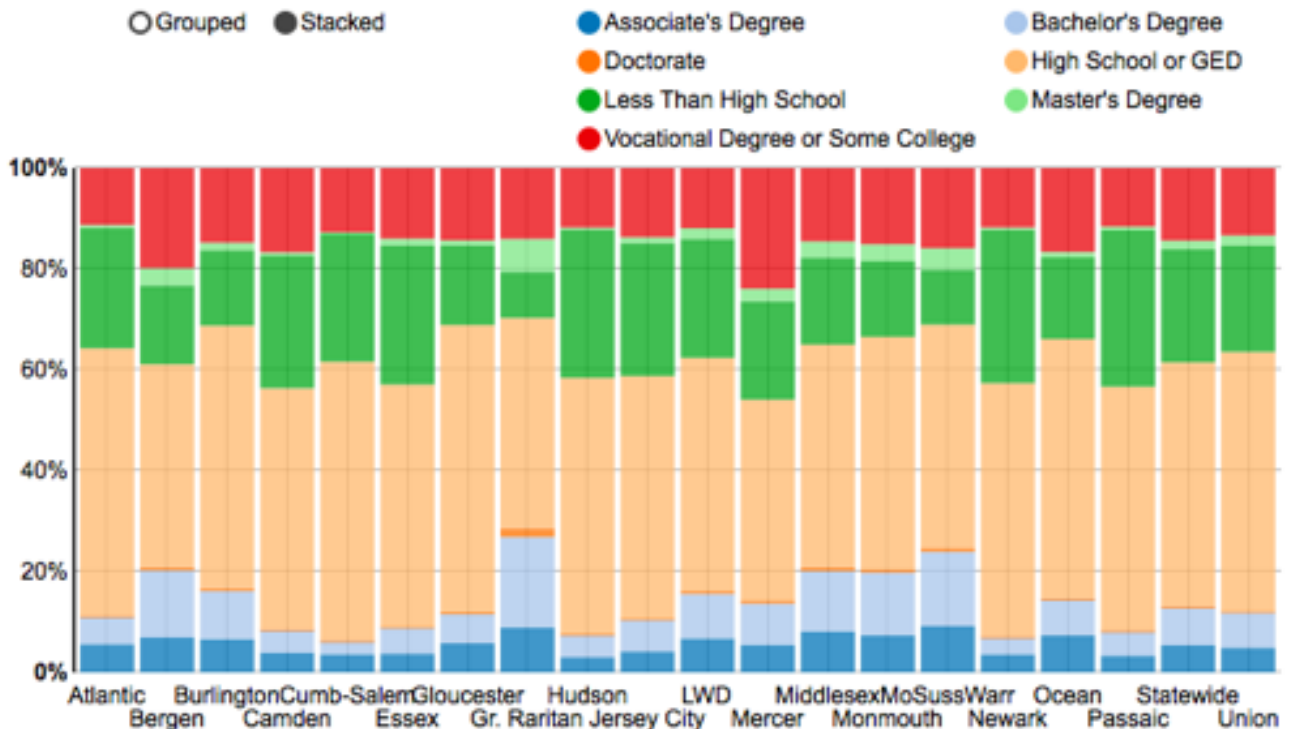
Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Age Group, 2013



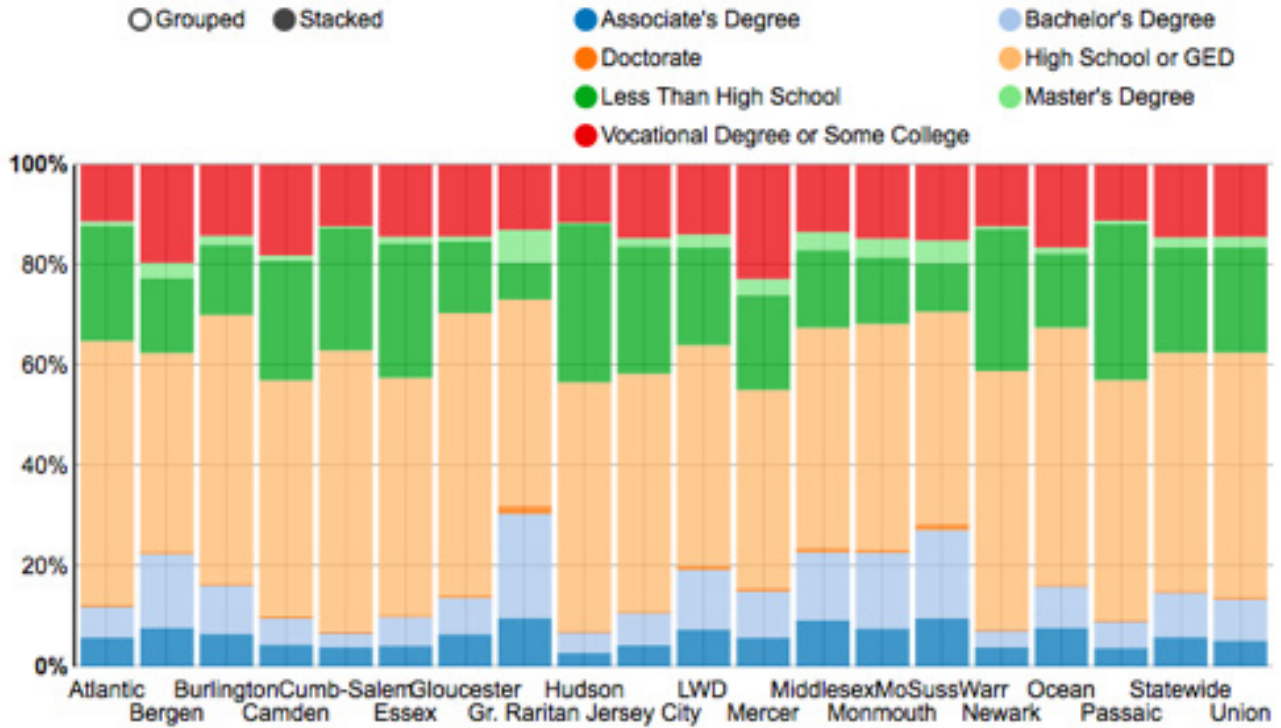
Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Educational Level, 2006



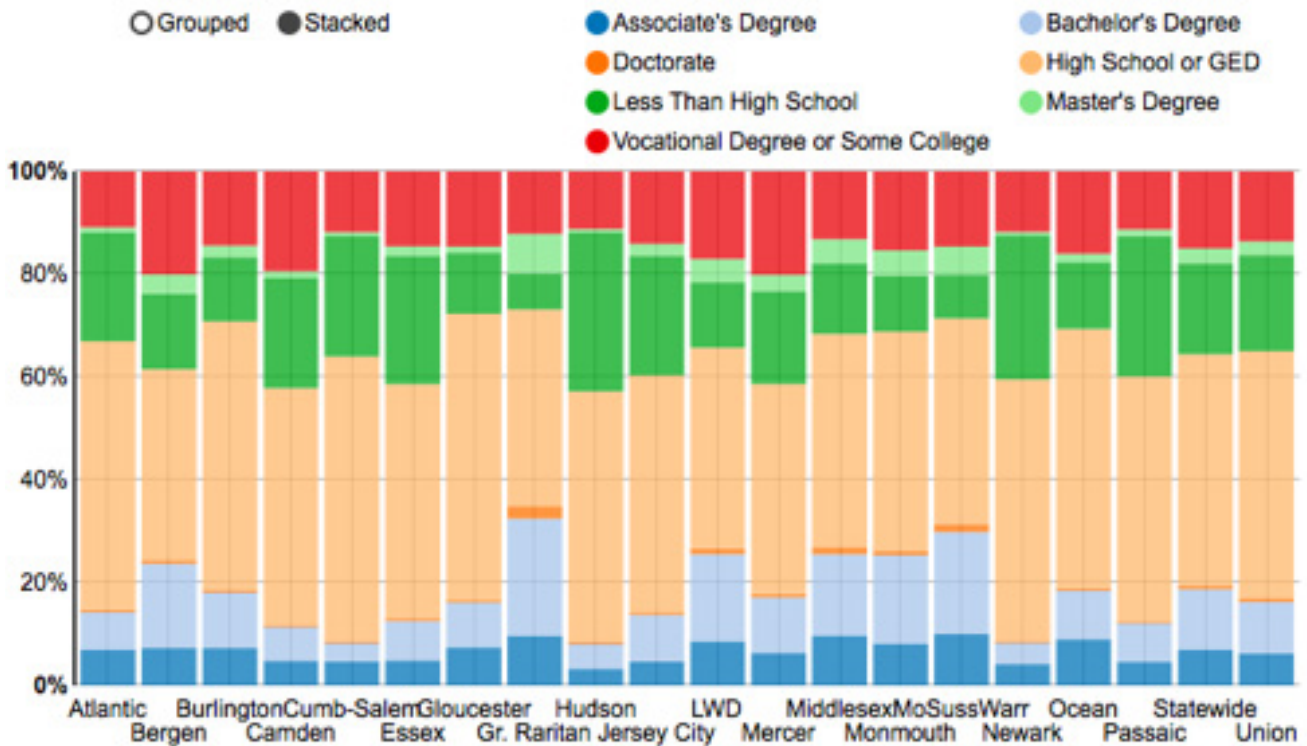
Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Educational Level, 2007



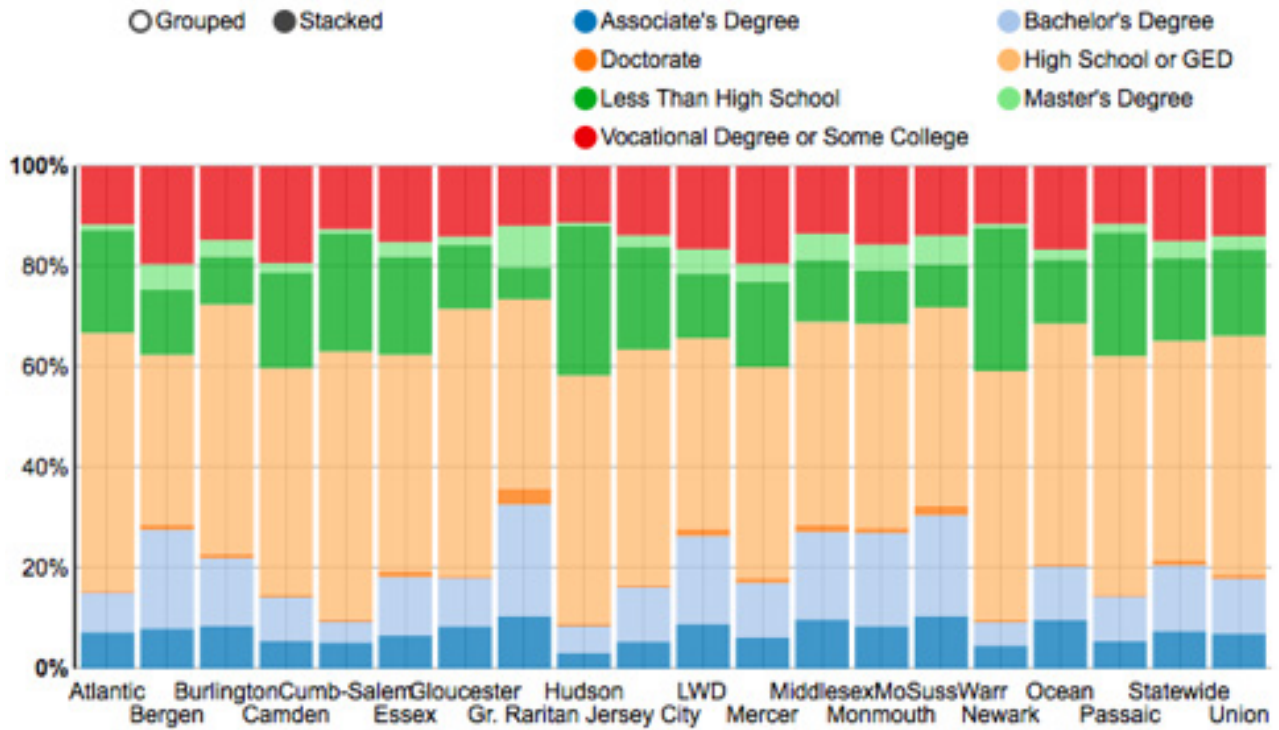
Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Educational Level, 2008



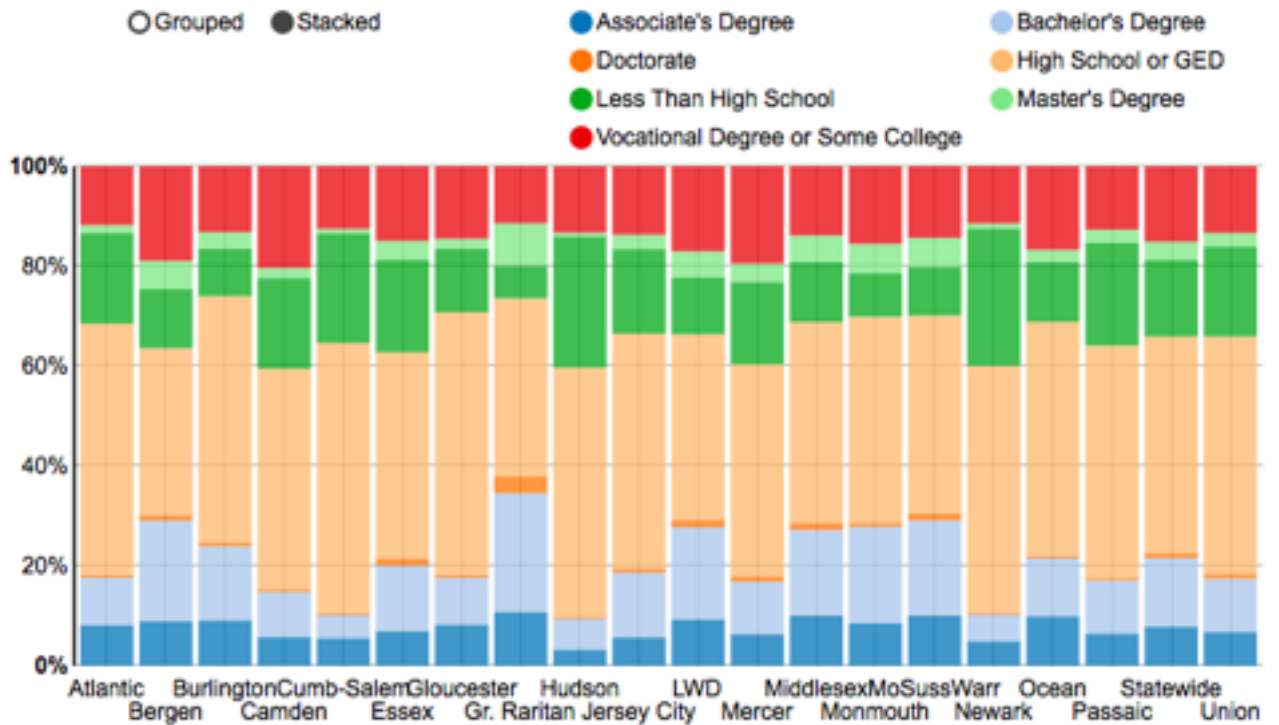
Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Educational Level, 2009



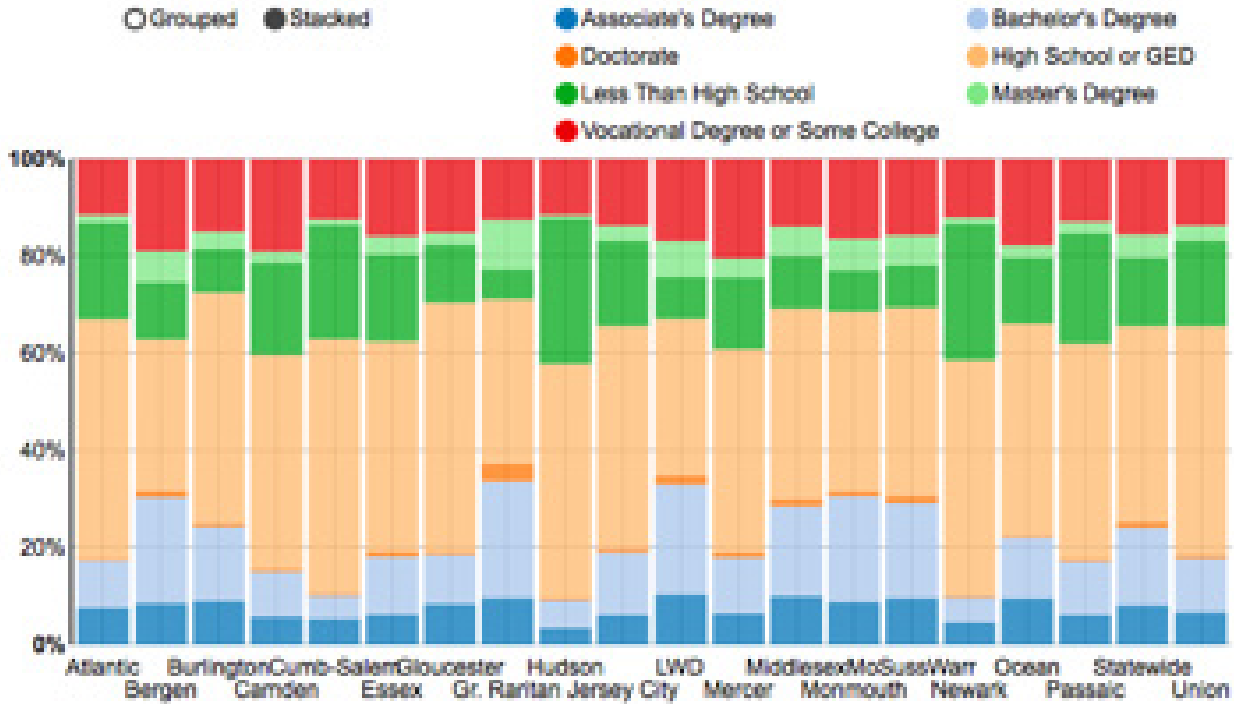
Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Educational Level, 2010



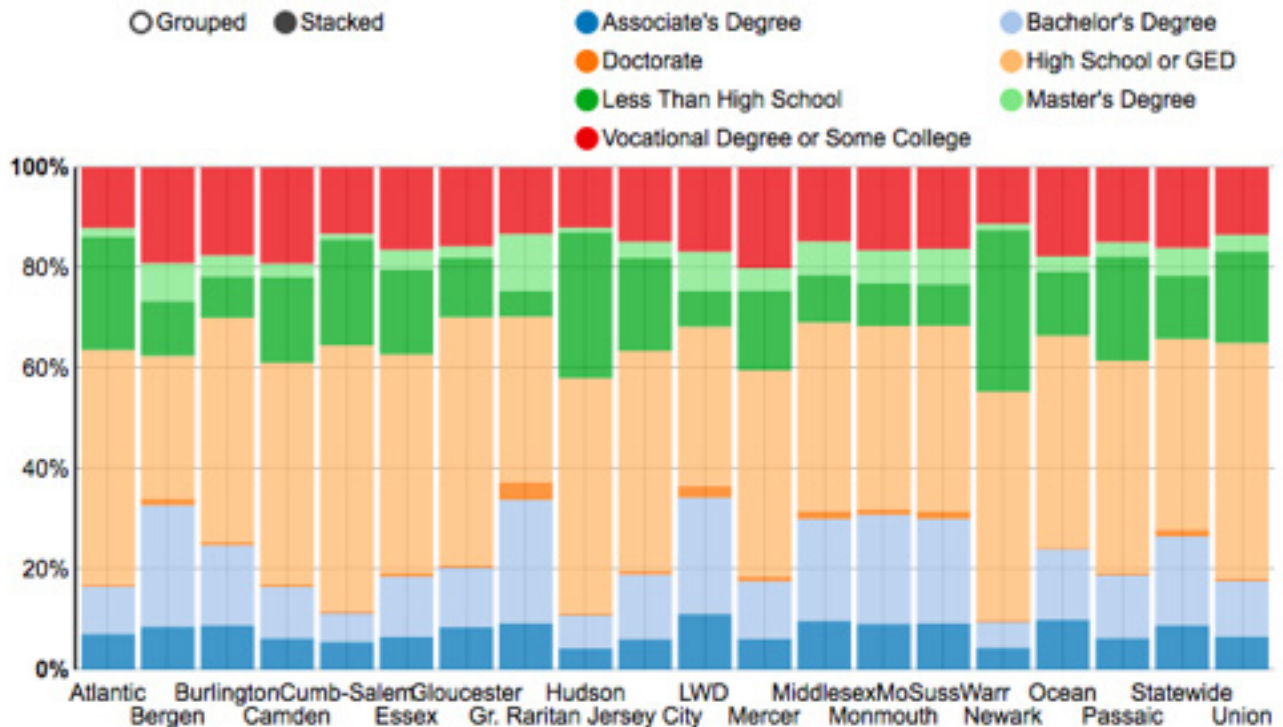
Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Educational Level, 2011



Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Educational Level, 2012



Percent Served in Each Workforce Area by Educational Level, 2013





## Number of Customers Served Relative to the Population

Center researchers also used data from the ACS from the U.S. Bureau of the Census to compare the One-Stop customers served in each area to the local population. The purpose of this analysis was to get a sense of the extent to which the One-Stops are serving the local population and to understand how the characteristics of One-Stop customers differ from the characteristics of the general population.

Specifically, each of the charts presented below shows the percentage of the population of a specific group in a geographic region that was served by a One-Stop Center. For example, the first chart, “Percent of Population Served in Each Workforce Area by Race, 2006” shows that for Atlantic County, about 9% of the “Black or African American” population in Atlantic County was served by a One-Stop in 2006. For comparison, the statewide percentages are presented at the far right of each chart. Statewide, on average, about 4% of the “Black or African American” population was served by a One-Stop in 2006.

Three caveats about these charts are in order. First, the process by which the One-Stop customer numbers (the numerator in these calculations) was vastly different from the process by which ACS population estimates were produced. The purpose of these charts is not, therefore, to state that the One-Stops serve precisely X percent of the state or local population, but rather to provide a general sense of the overlap between One-Stop customers and the general population. These charts are valuable in terms of the general trends they suggest rather than the exact percentages they present.

Second, one of the manifestations of the different data-generating processes used by the One-Stops and ACS is that they used different categories for sorting and classifying individuals. As a result, some of the age and education categories are different across the two data systems. This report, therefore, features only those categories that over-

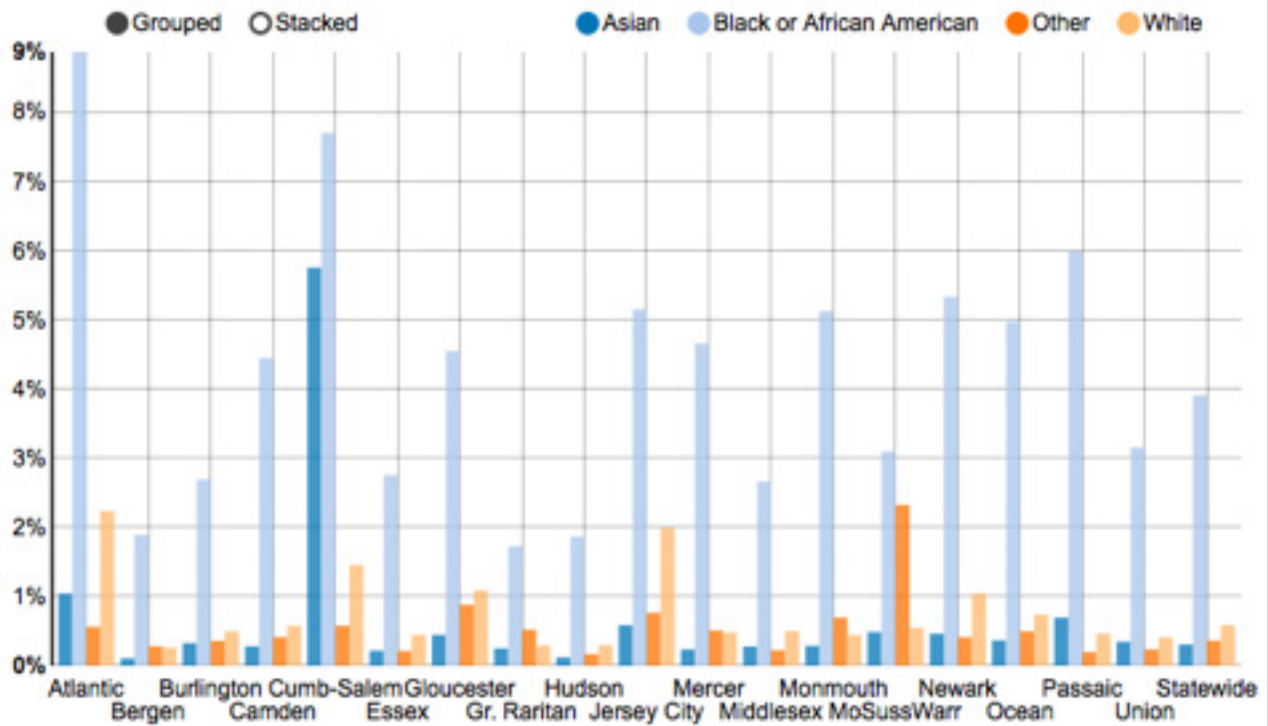
lap, which is why the reader may notice slightly fewer categories in these charts than in the previous set of charts that displayed solely the One-Stop customer data.

Third, comparisons between One-Stop customers and the local population with disabilities have been omitted from this report for two reasons. First, the percentage measures at the local area fluctuate significantly from year to year, making it difficult to draw accurate conclusions from these data. Second, ACS has on a number of occasions changed how it measures whether a person has a disability, which can make it difficult to compare data from year to year.<sup>2</sup>

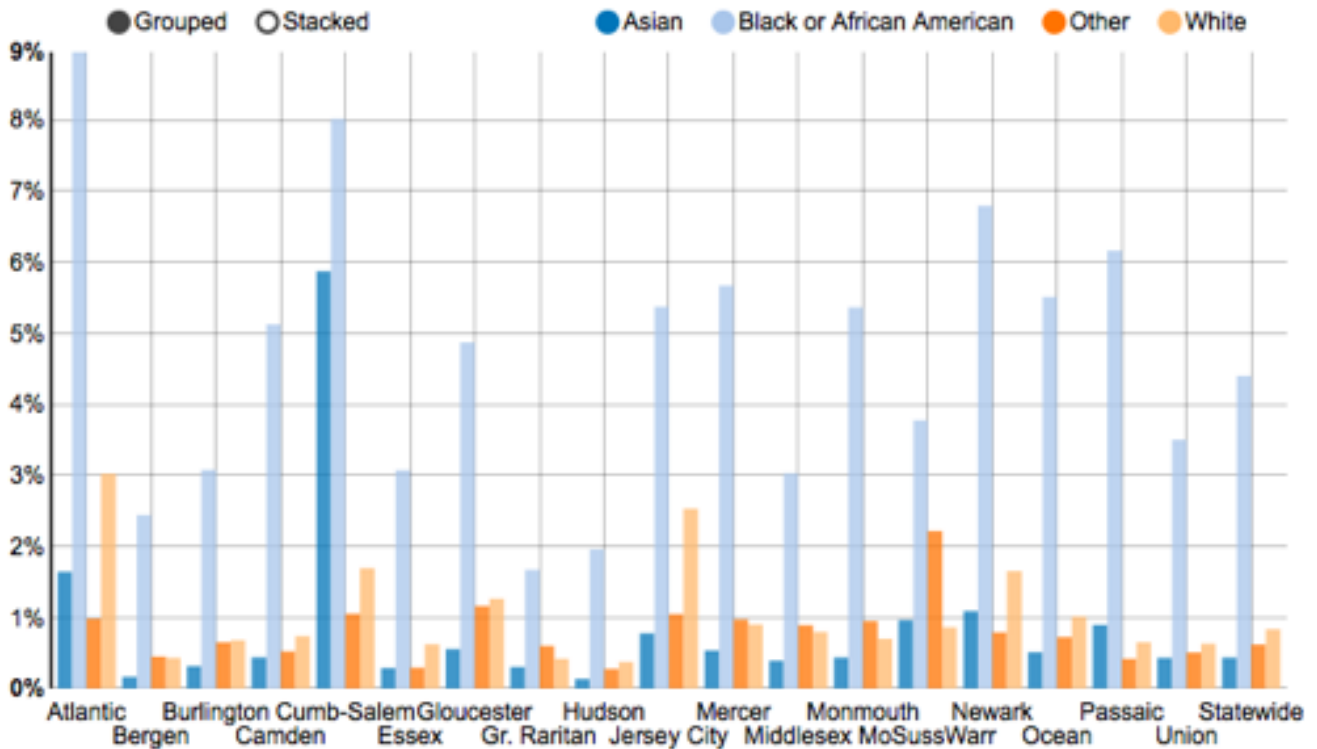


Evaluation of One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey

Percent of Population Served in Each Workforce Area by Race, 2006

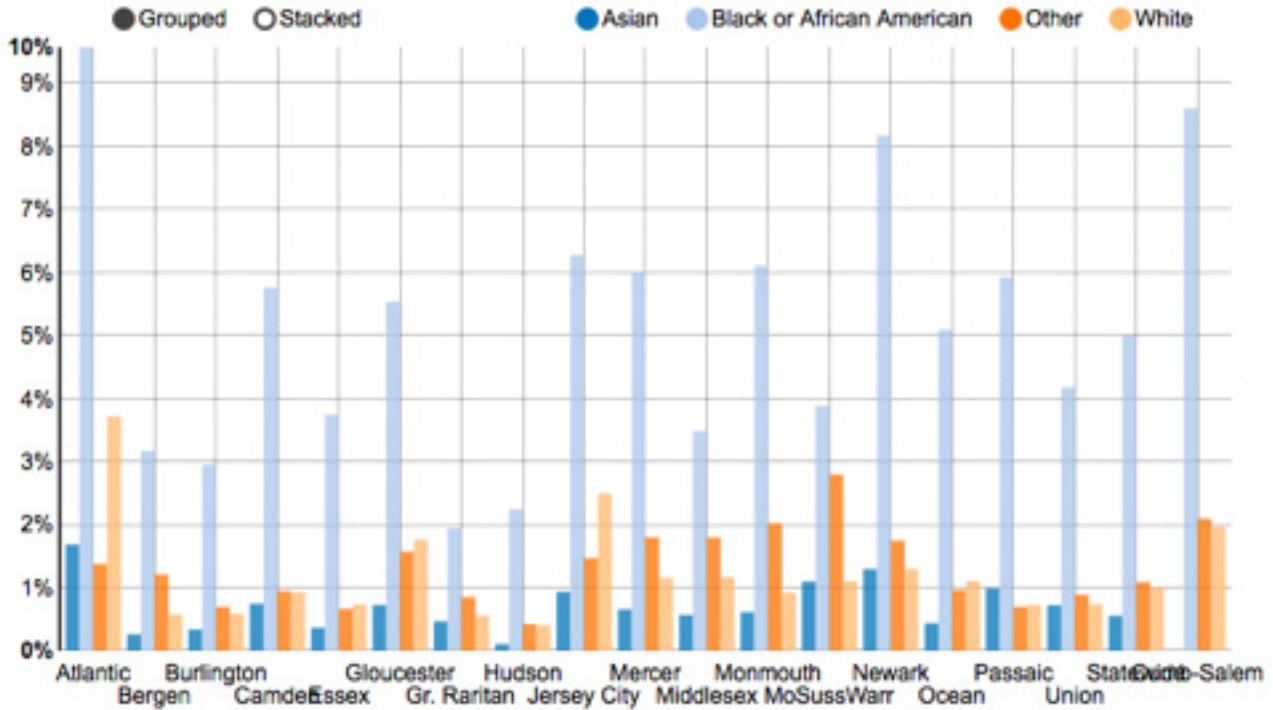


Percent of Population Served in Each Workforce Area by Race, 2007

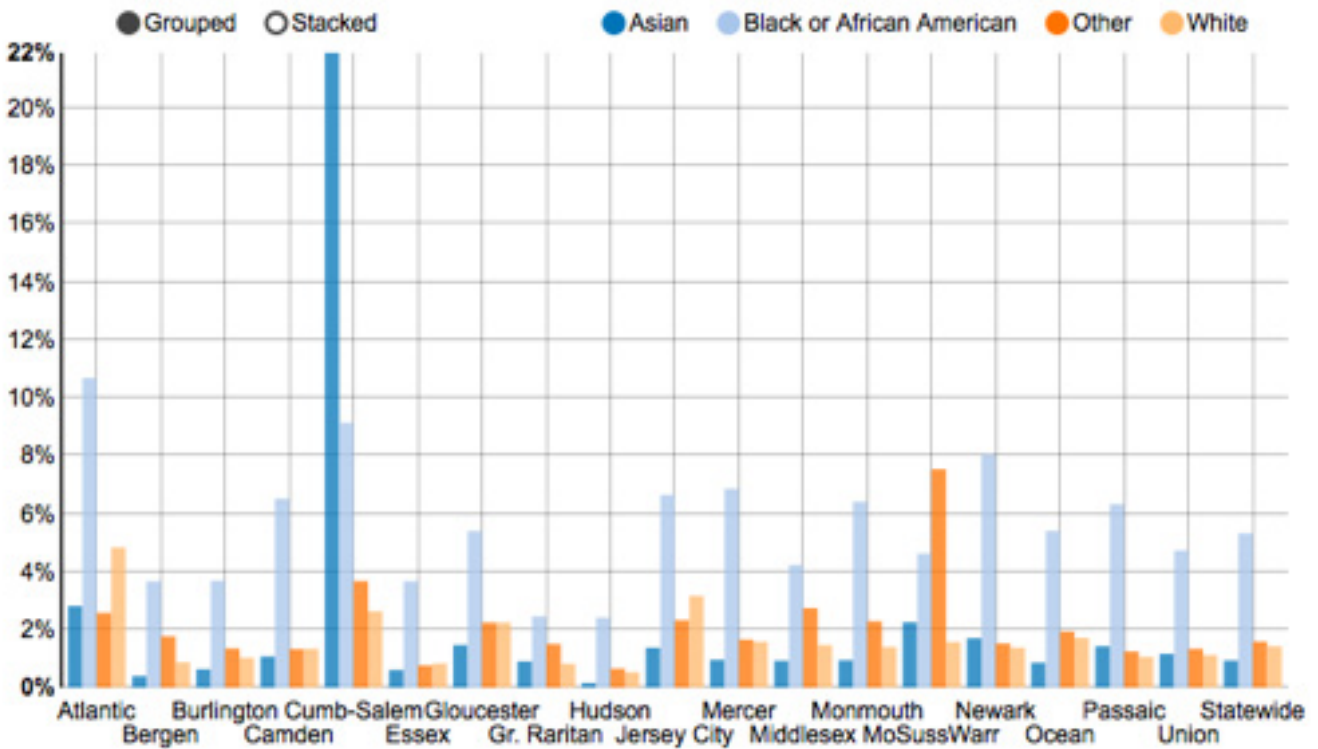


# Evaluation of One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey

## Percent of Population Served in Each Workforce Area by Race, 2008

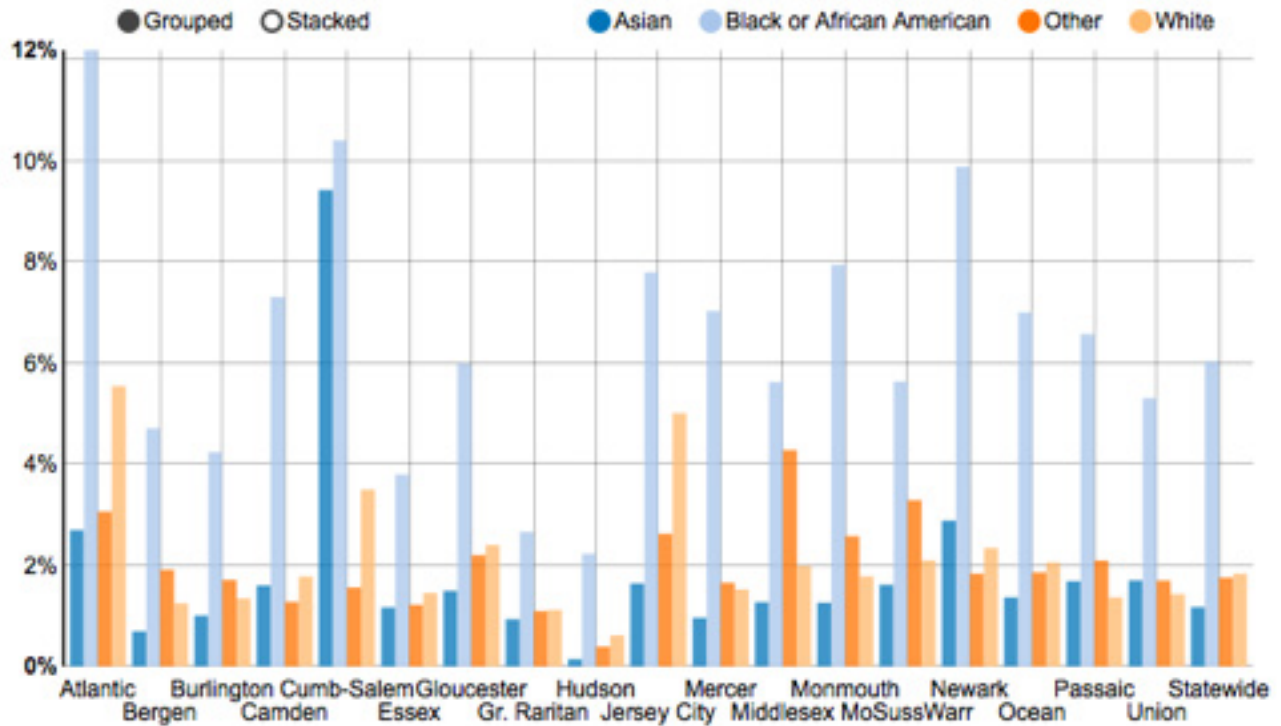


## Percent of Population Served in Each Workforce Area by Race, 2009

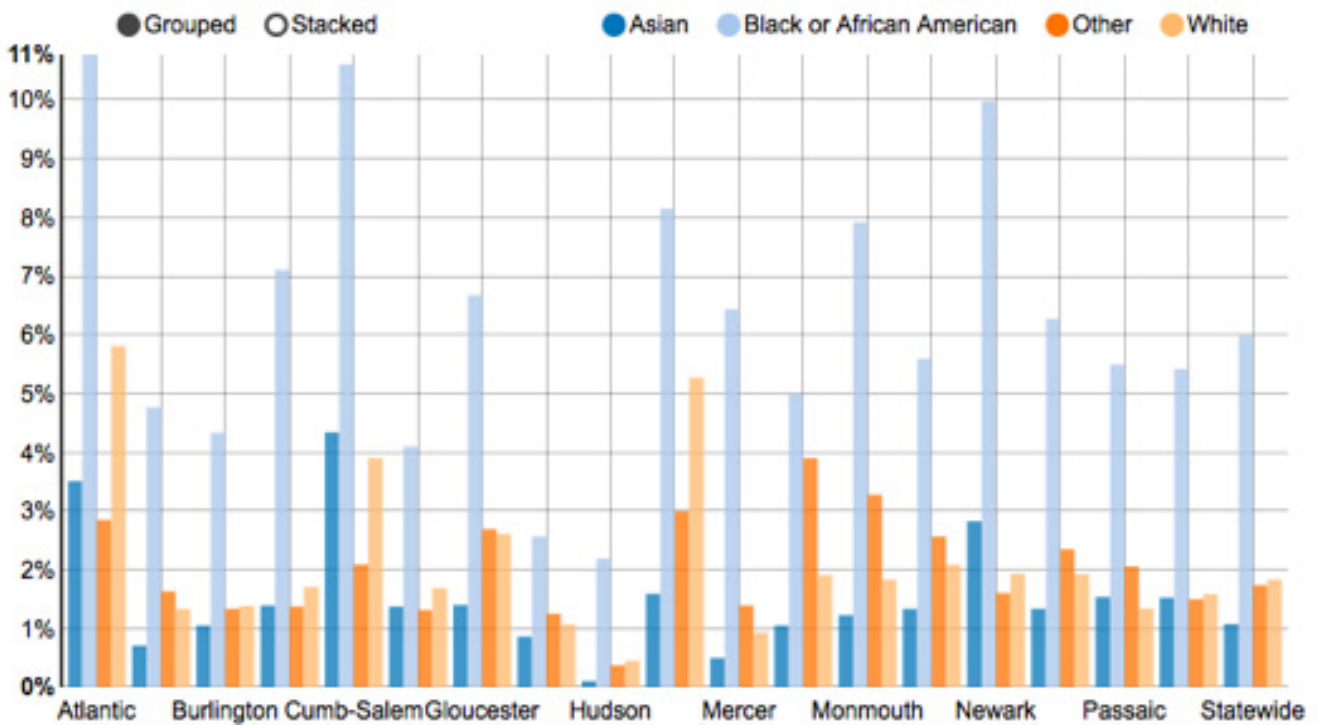


# Evaluation of One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey

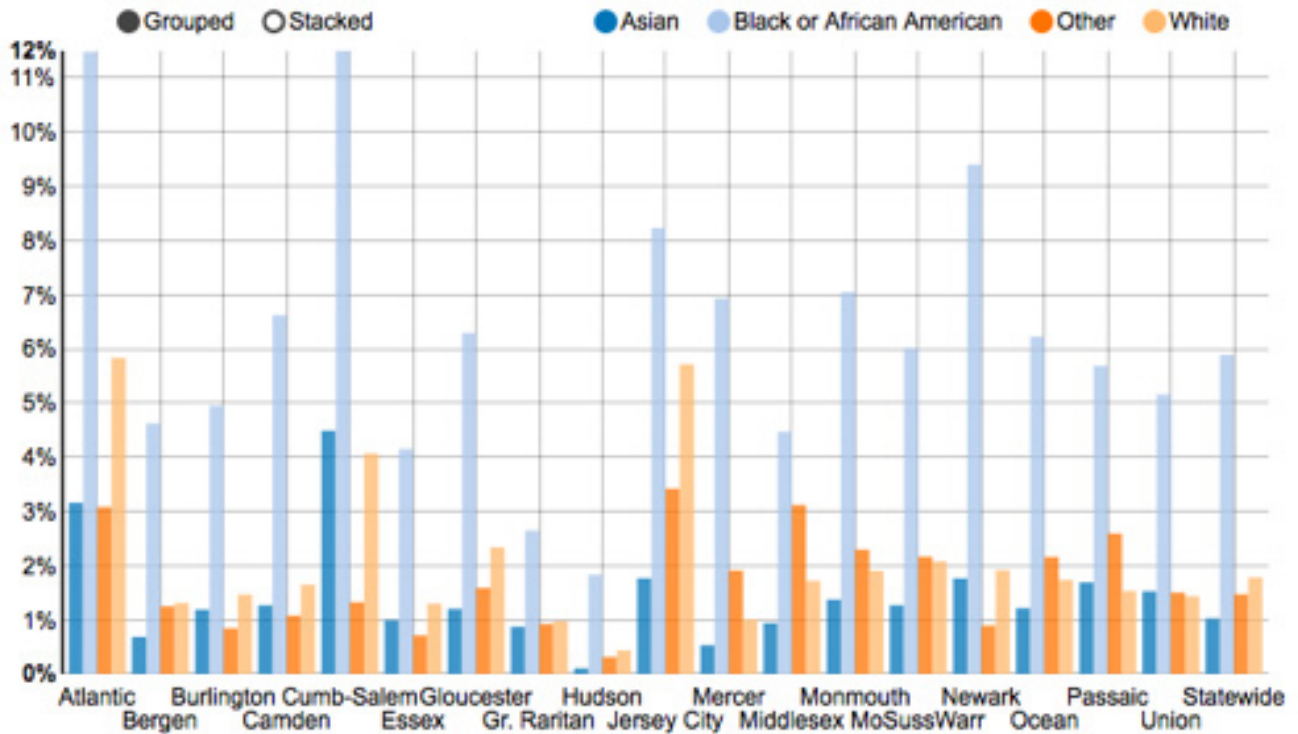
## Percent of Population Served in Each Workforce Area by Race, 2010



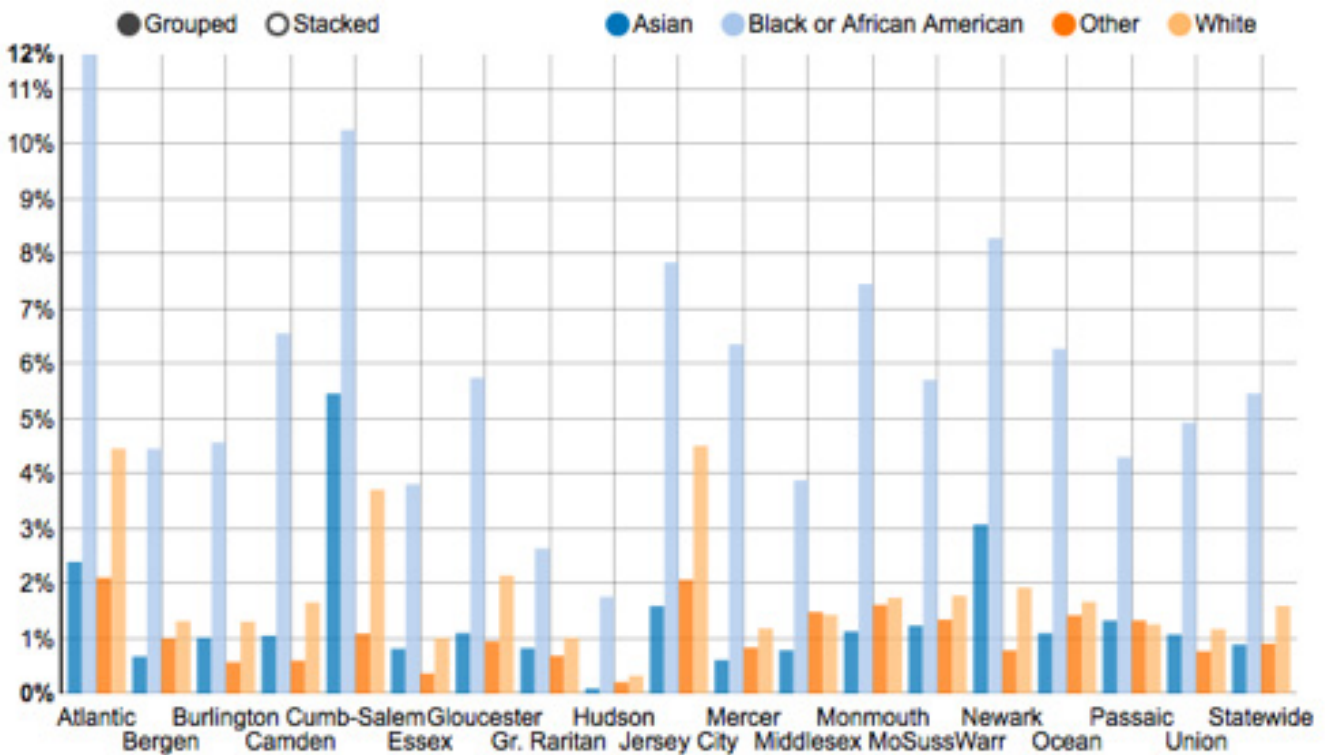
## Percent of Population Served in Each Workforce Area by Race, 2011



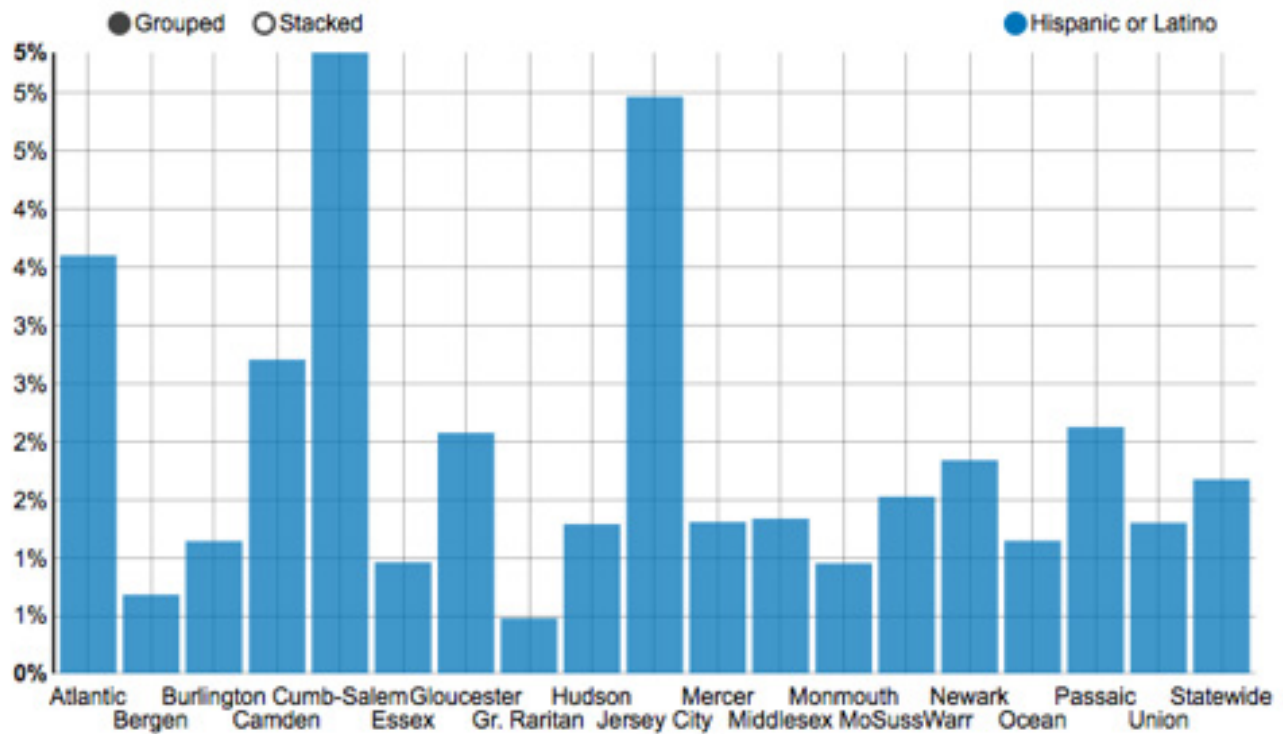
Percent of Population Served in Each Workforce Area by Race, 2012



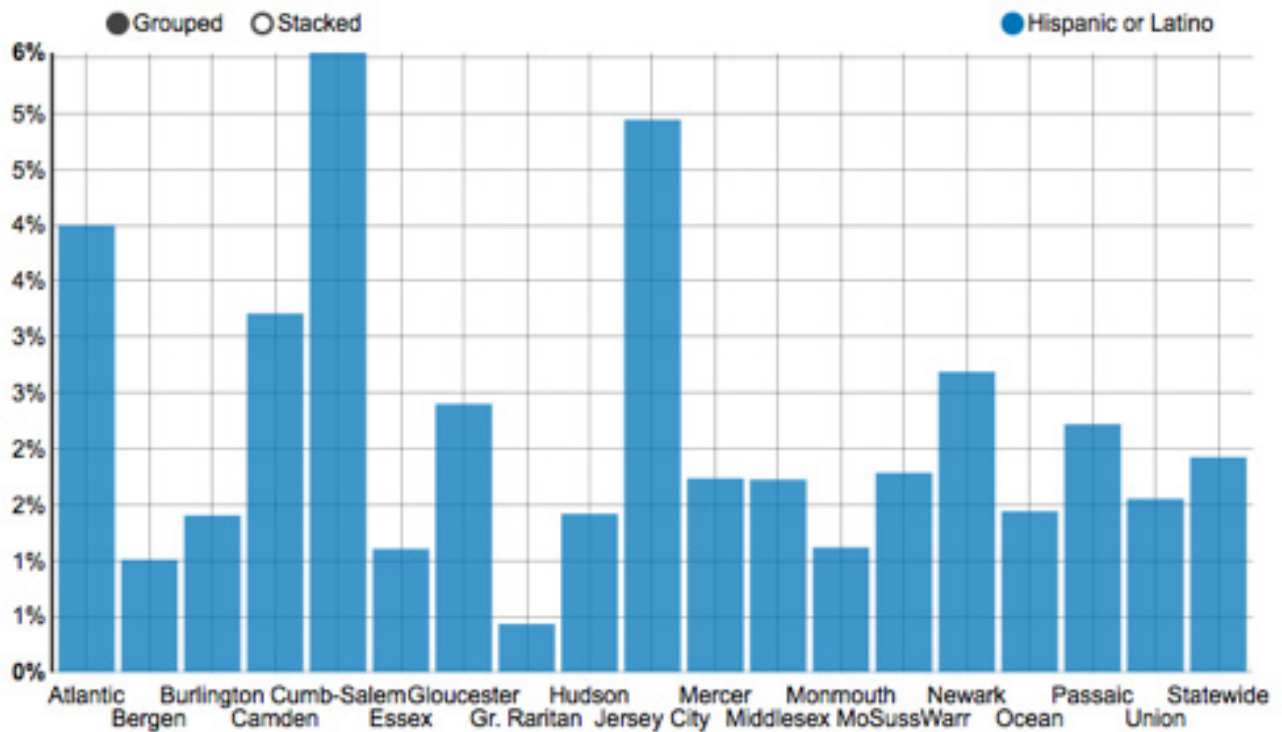
Percent of Population Served in Each Workforce Area by Race, 2013



Percent of Population Served in Each Workforce Area by Ethnicity, 2006

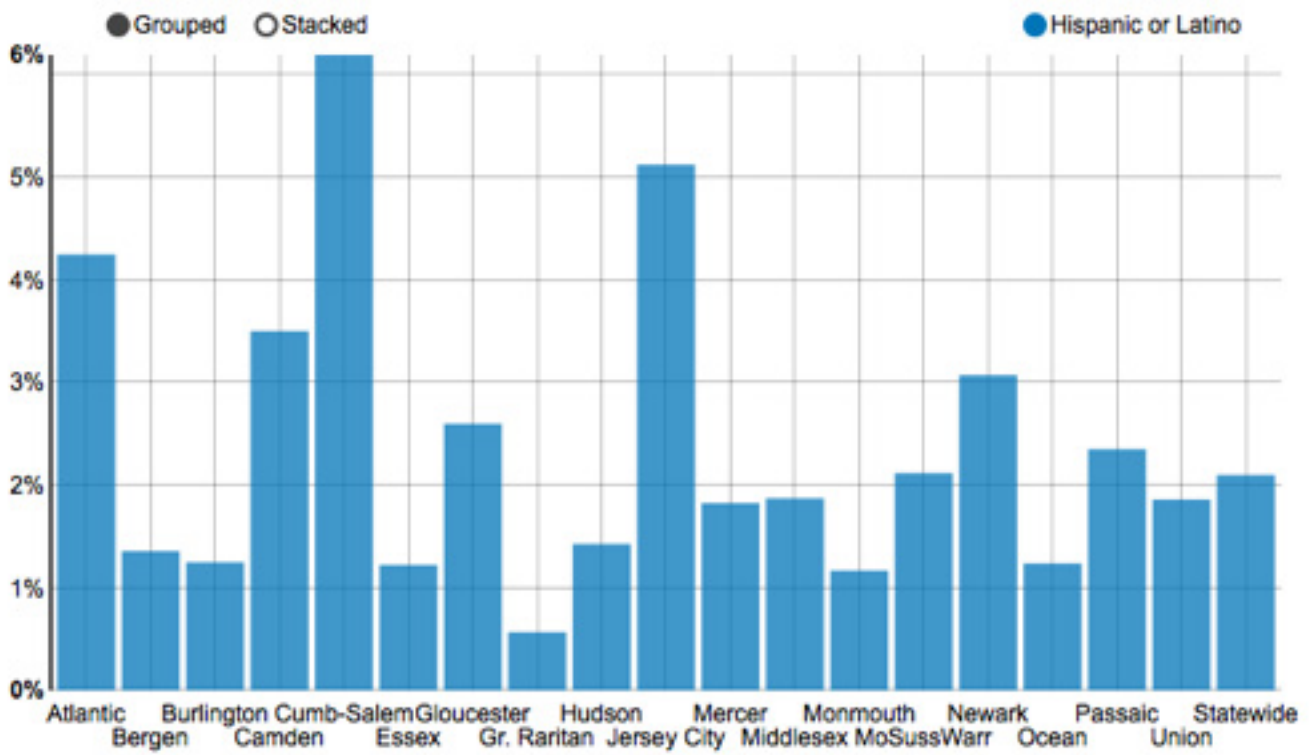


Percent of Population Served in Each Workforce Area by Ethnicity, 2007

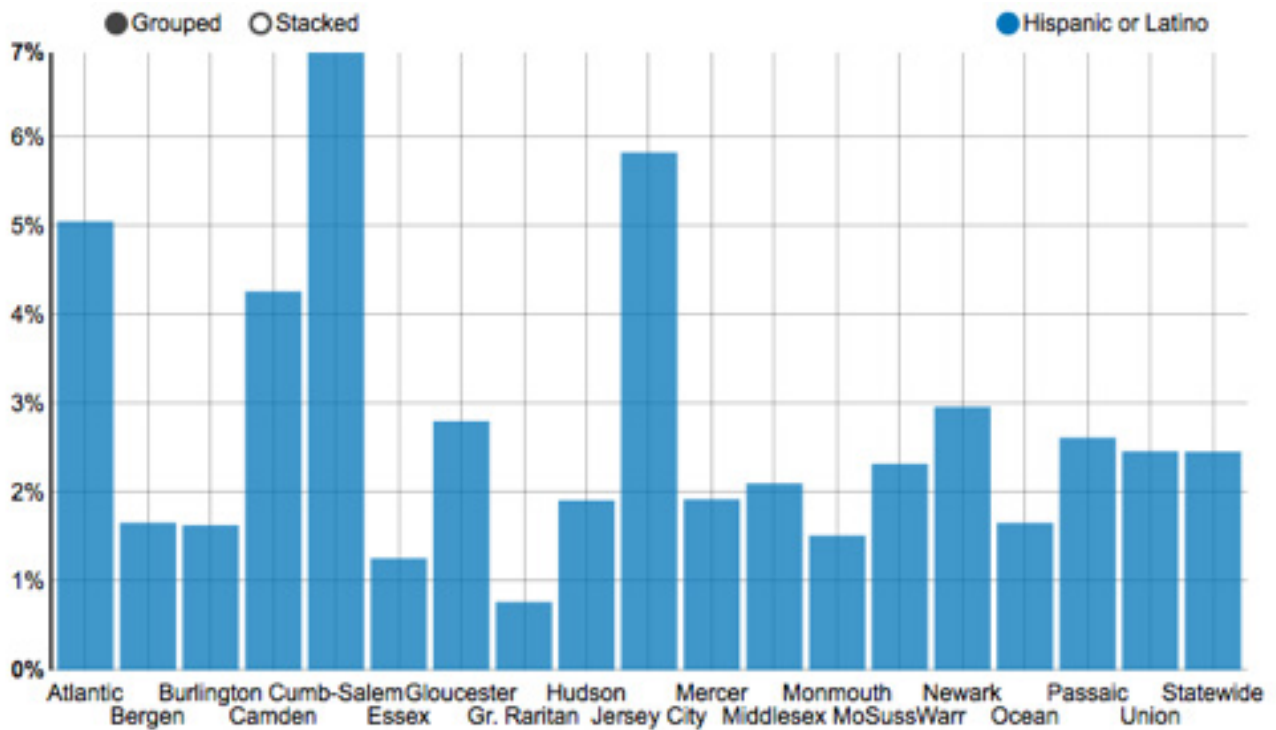




Percent of Population Served in Each Workforce Area by Ethnicity, 2008



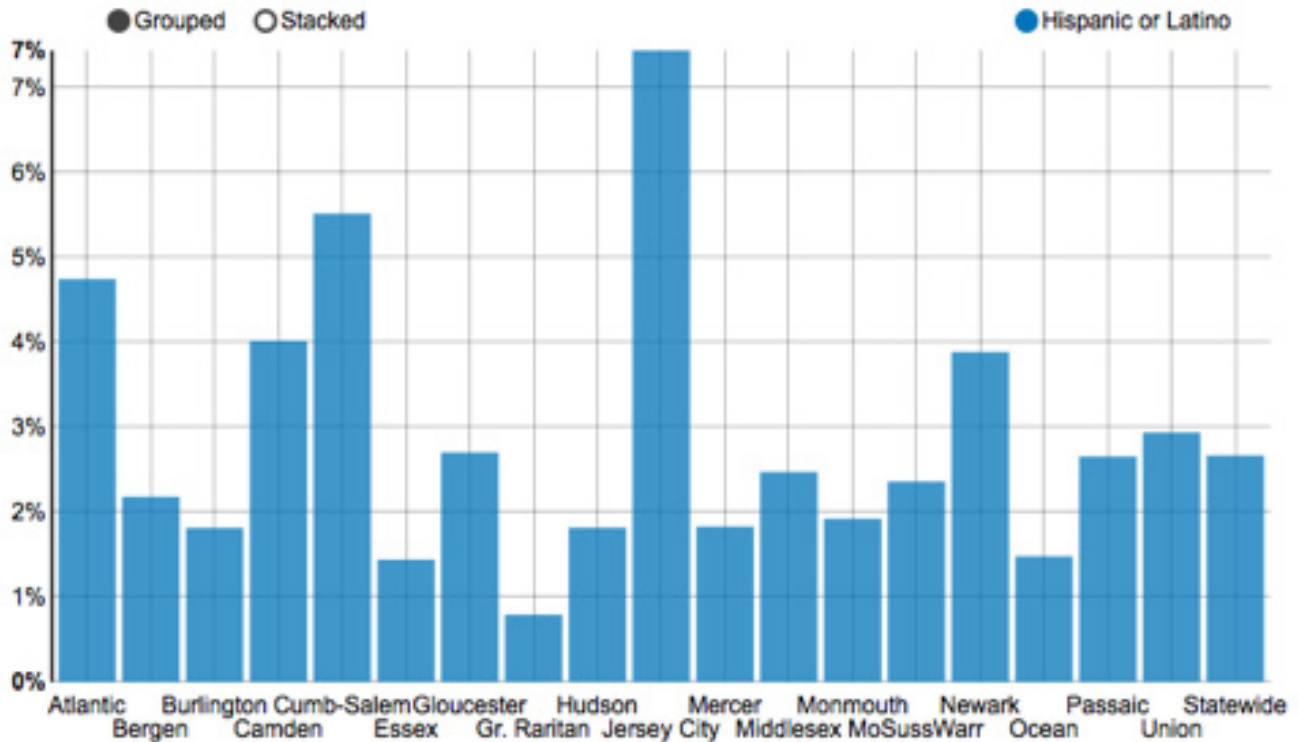
Percent of Population Served in Each Workforce Area by Ethnicity, 2009



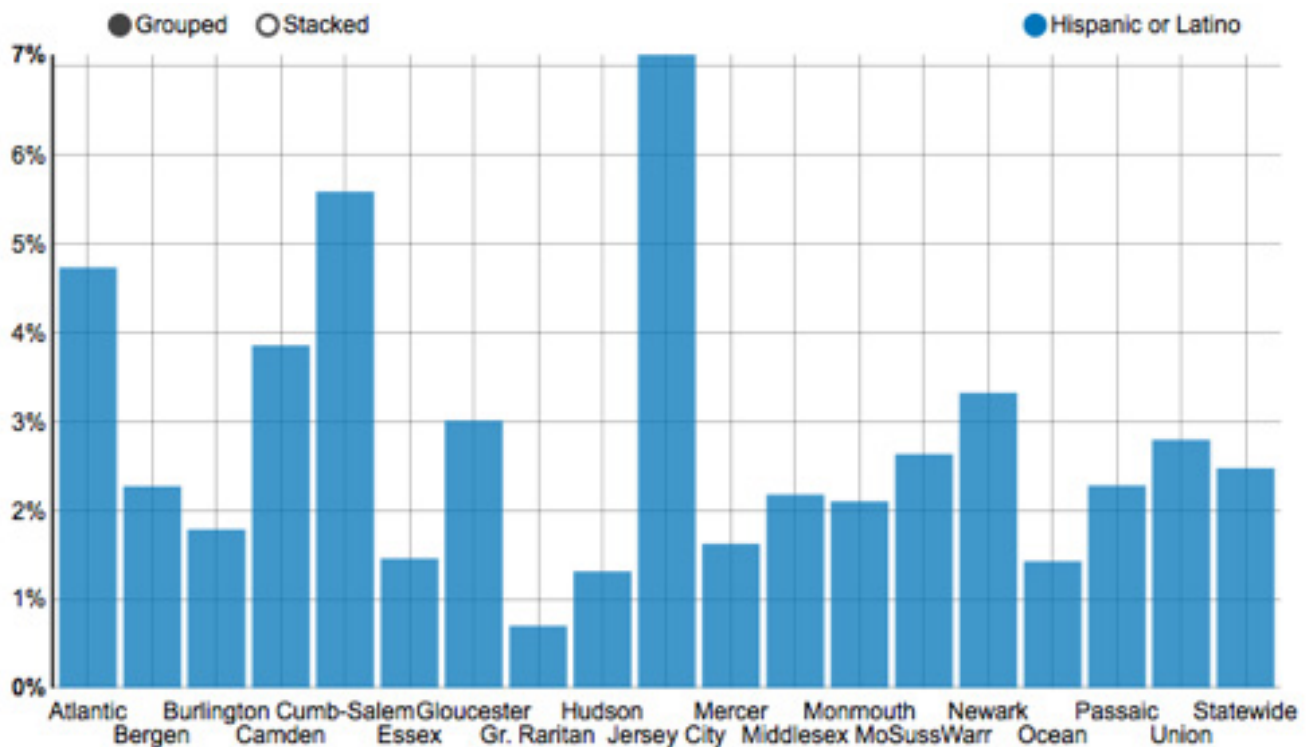


## Evaluation of One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey

### Percent of Population Served in Each Workforce Area by Ethnicity, 2010

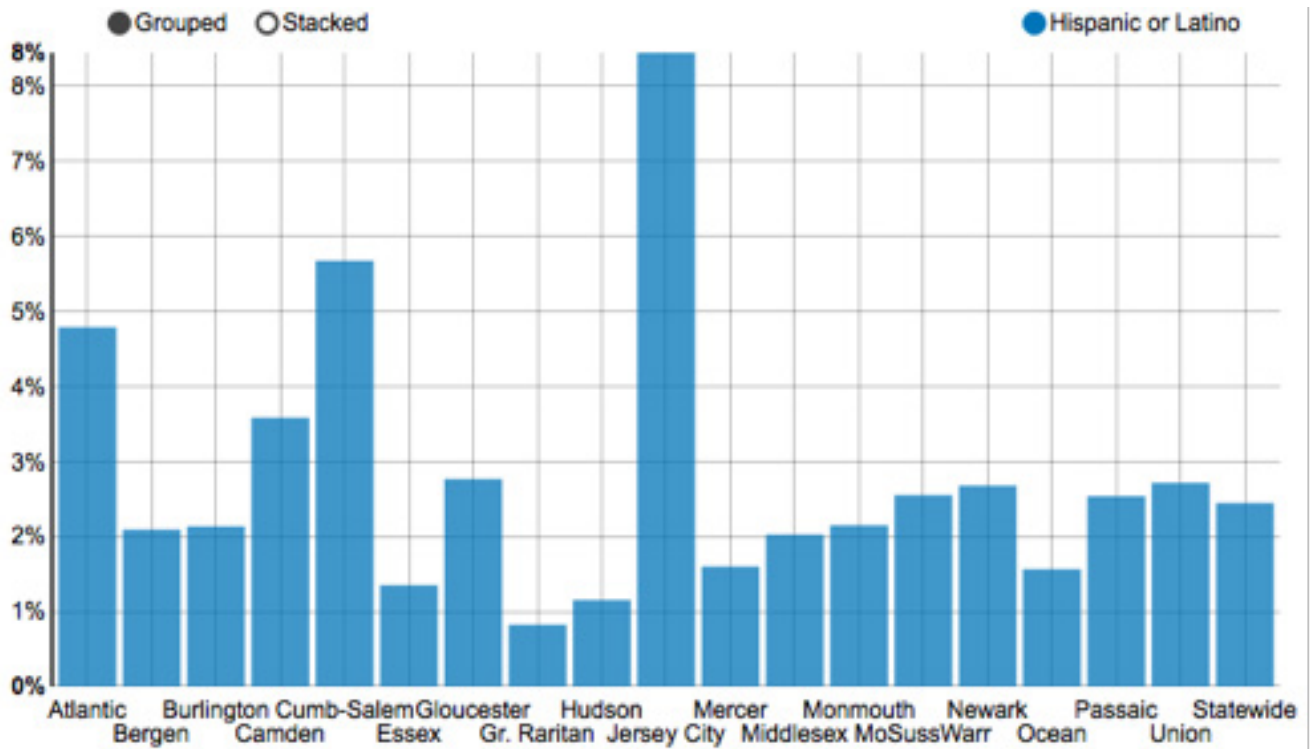


### Percent of Population Served in Each Workforce Area by Ethnicity, 2011

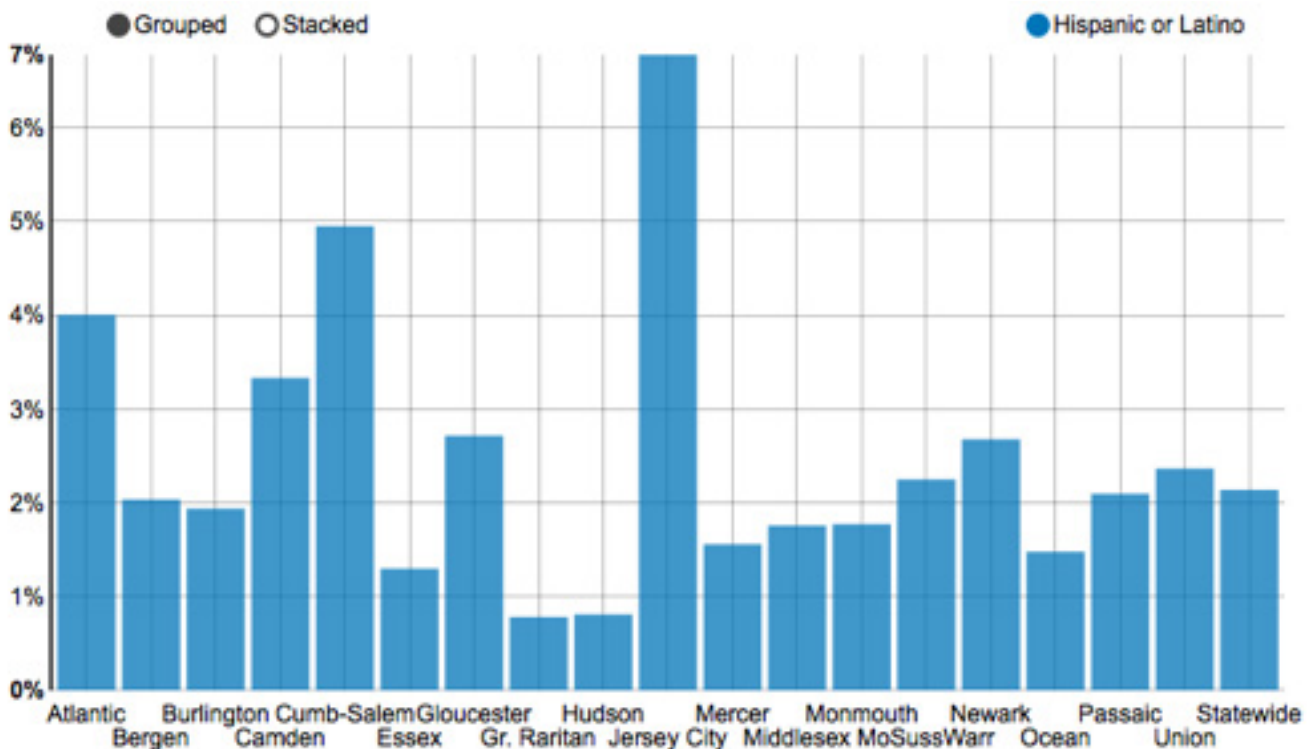


## Evaluation of One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey

### Percent of Population Served in Each Workforce Area by Ethnicity, 2012

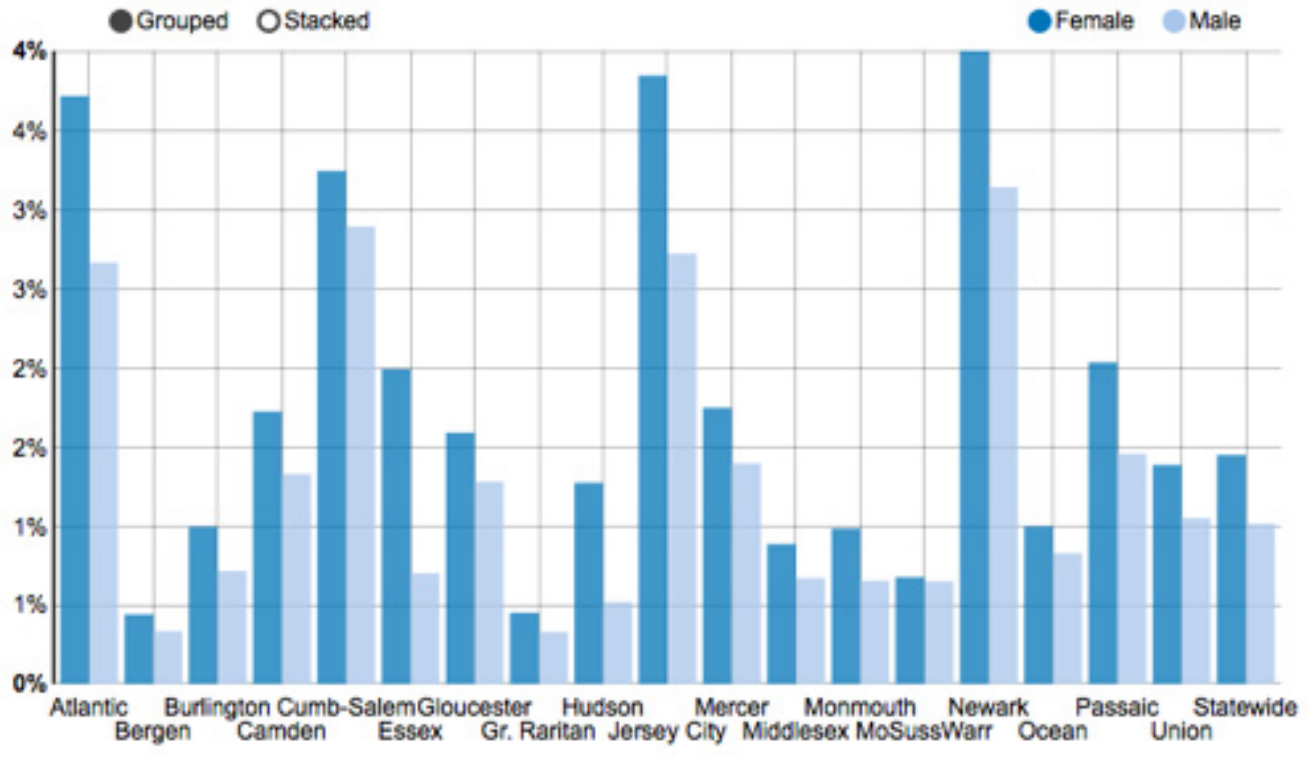


### Percent of Population Served in Each Workforce Area by Ethnicity, 2013

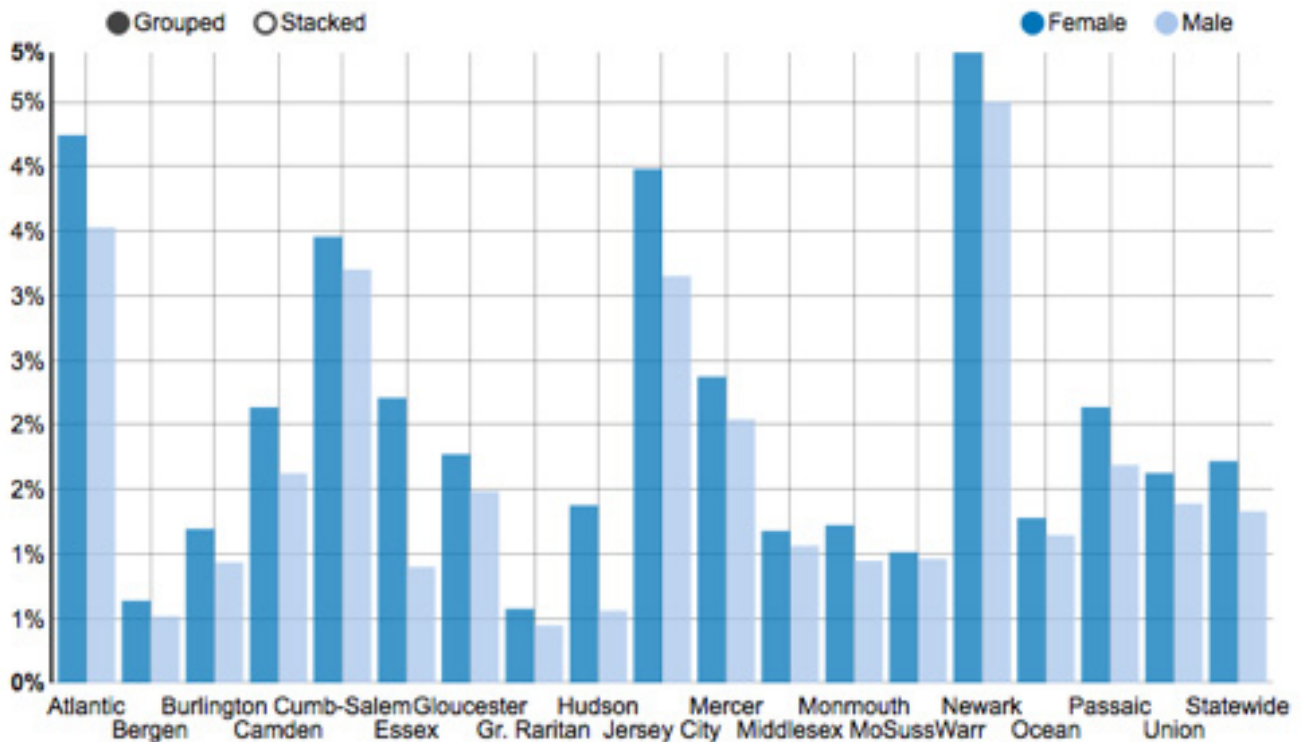


# Evaluation of One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey

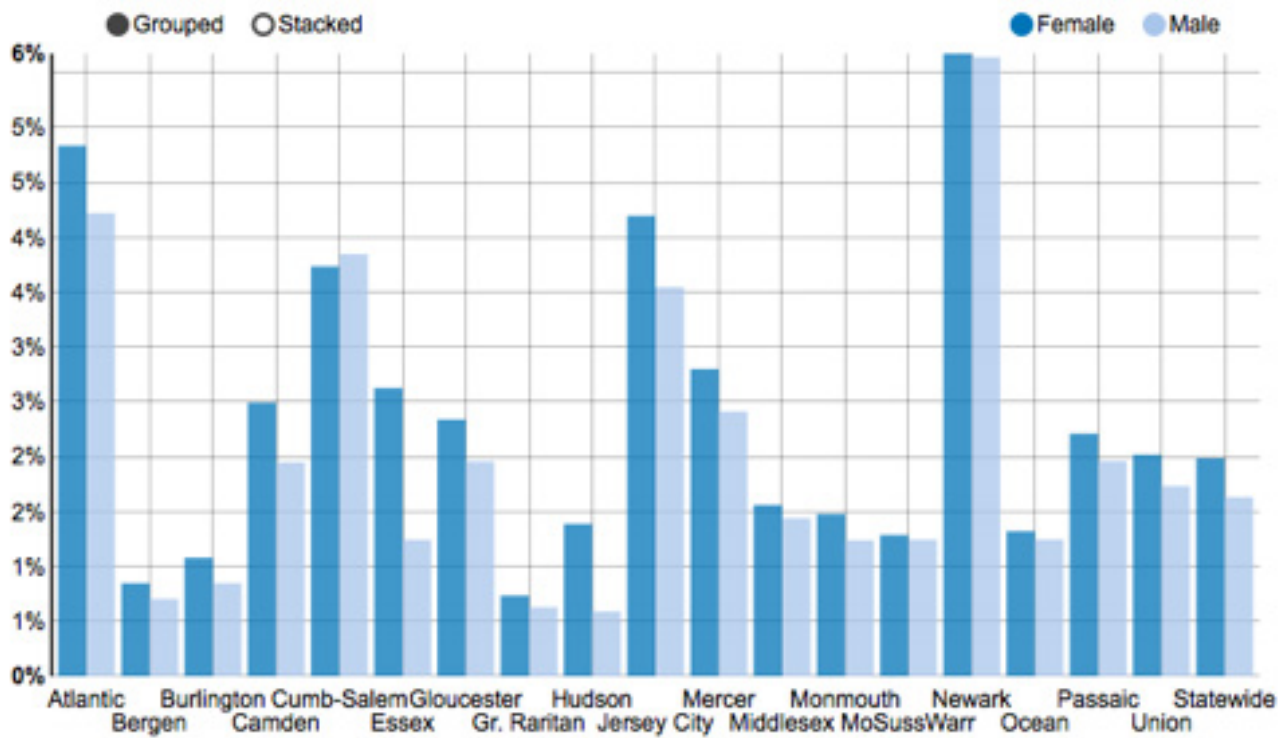
## Percent of Population Served in Each Workforce Area by Sex, 2006



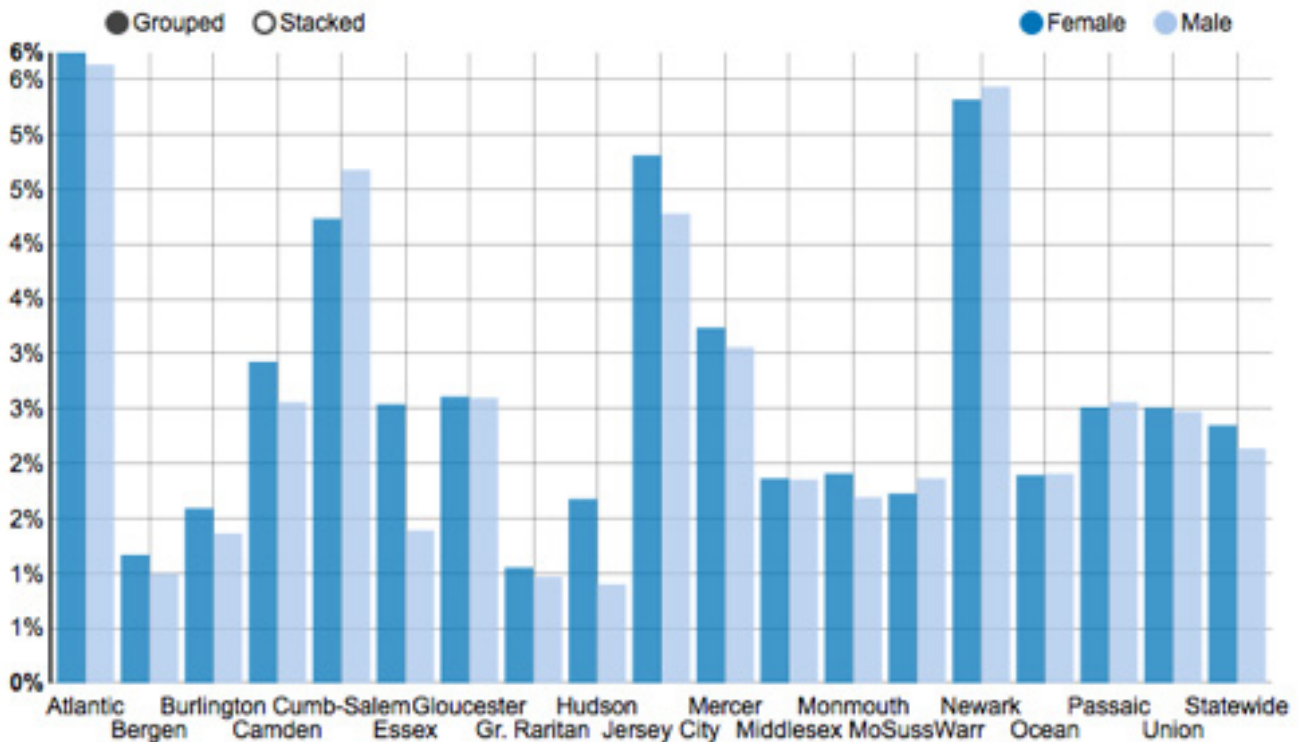
## Percent of Population Served in Each Workforce Area by Sex, 2007



Percent of Population Served in Each Workforce Area by Sex, 2008

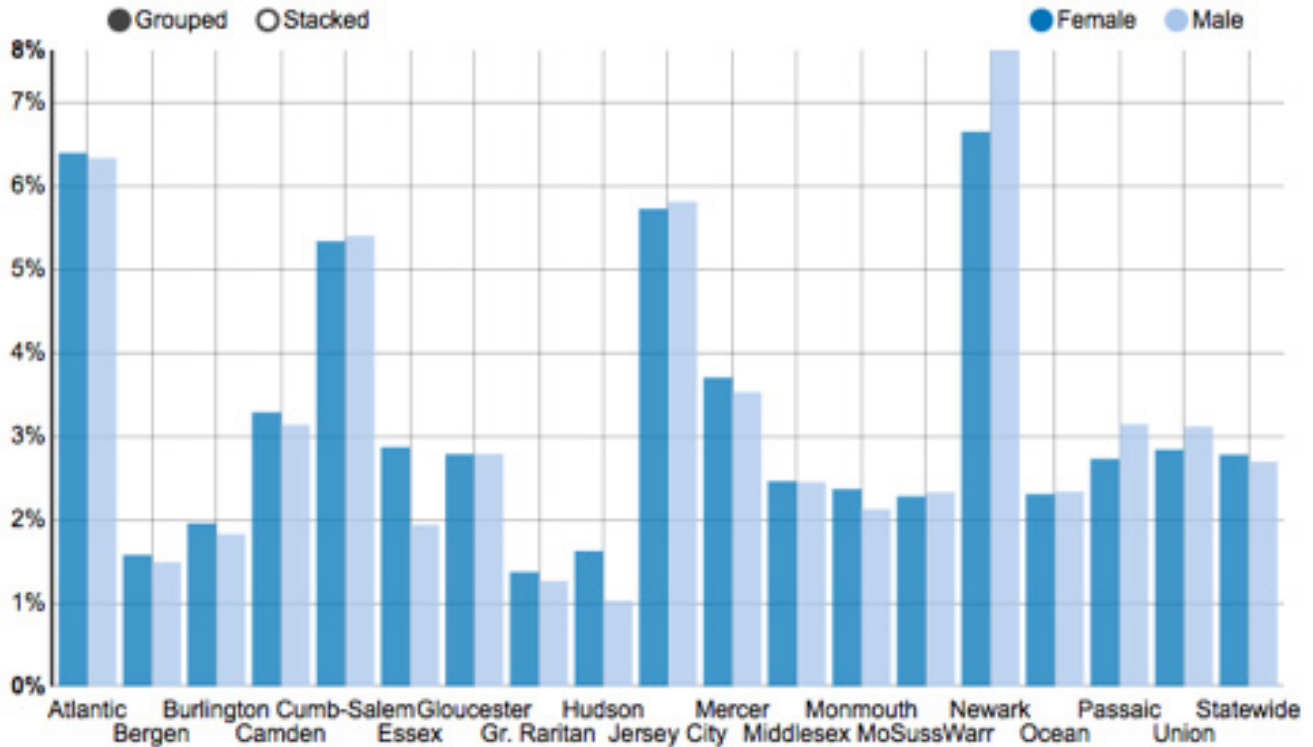


Percent of Population Served in Each Workforce Area by Sex, 2009

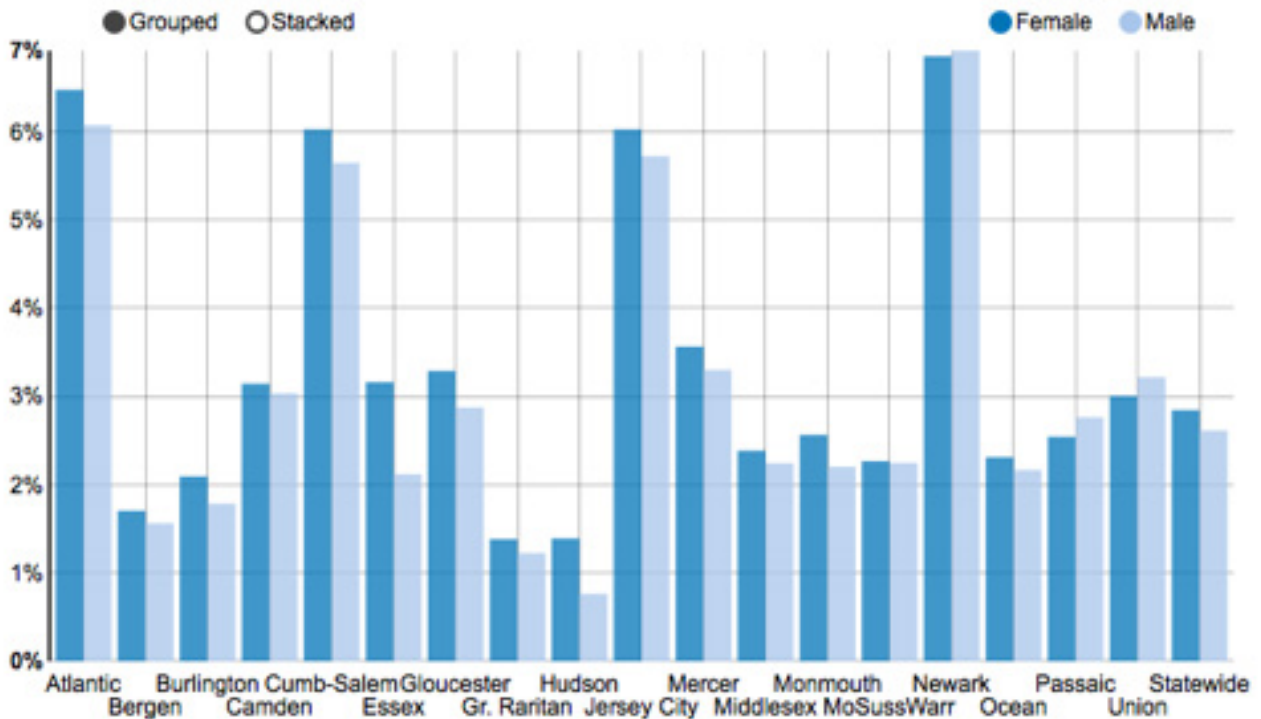


# Evaluation of One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey

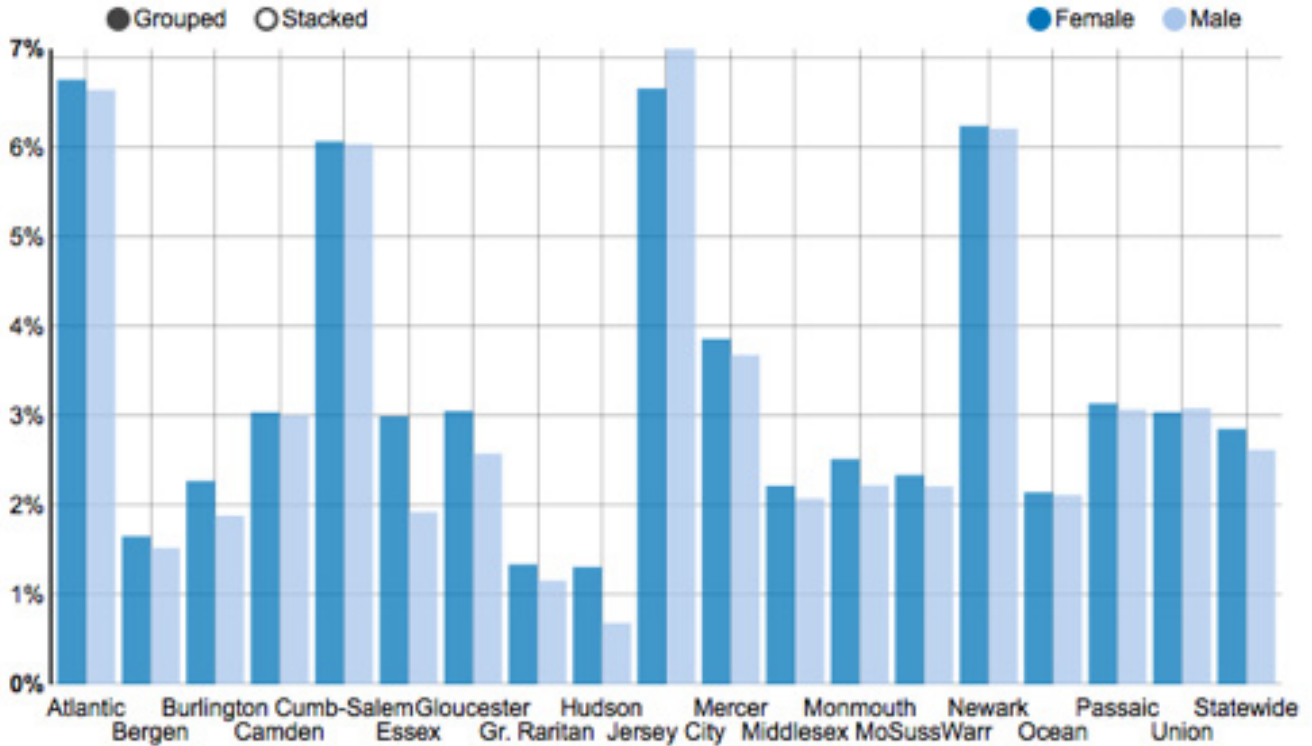
## Percent of Population Served in Each Workforce Area by Sex, 2010



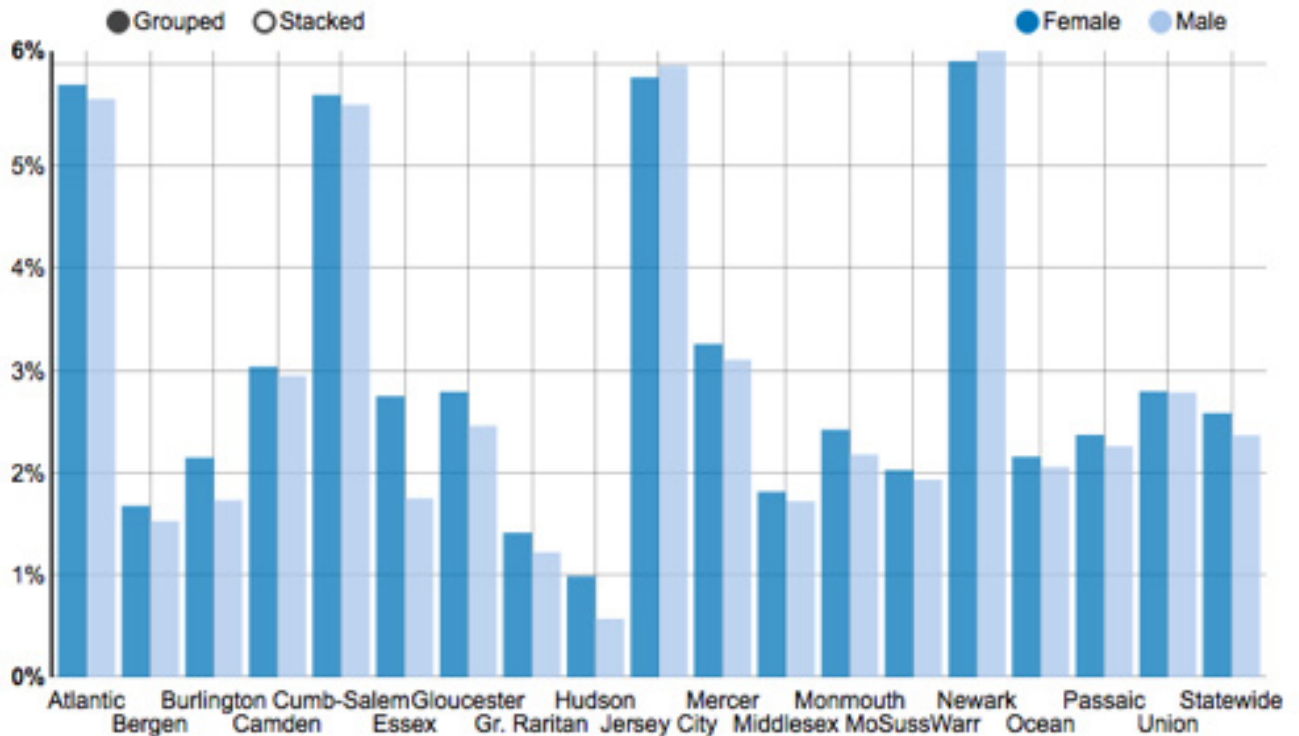
## Percent of Population Served in Each Workforce Area by Sex, 2011



Percent of Population Served in Each Workforce Area by Sex, 2012

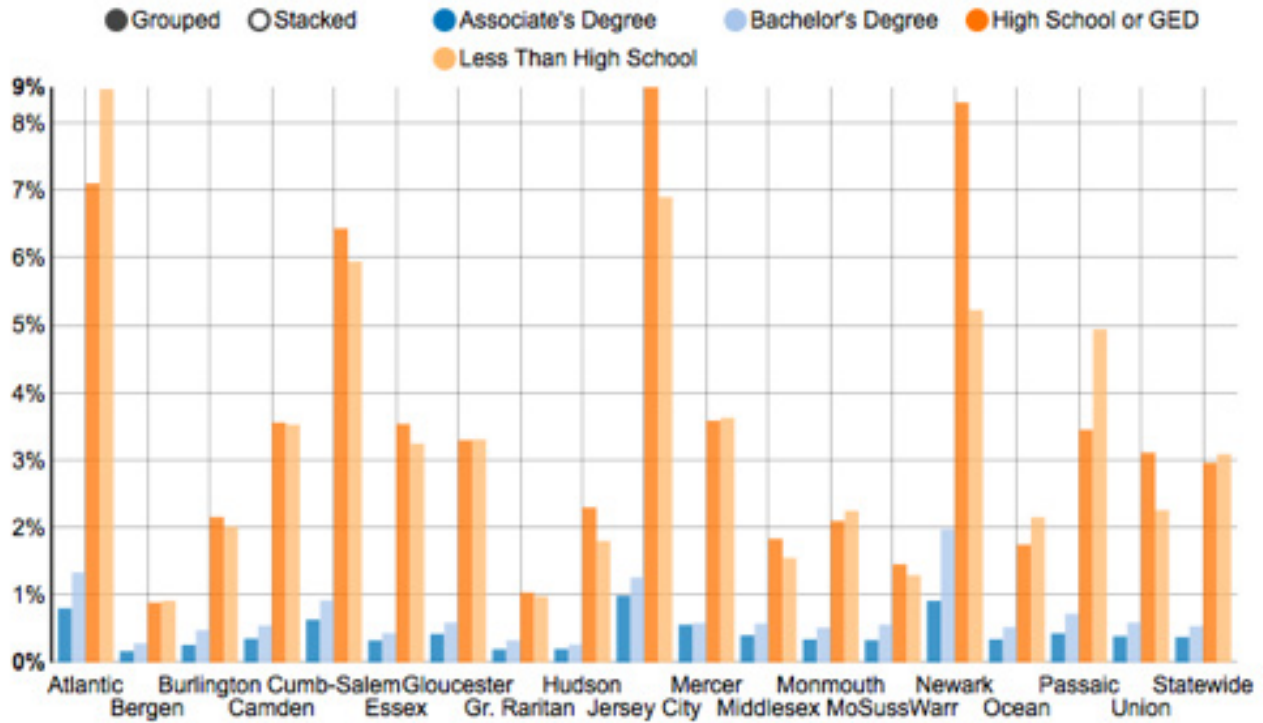


Percent of Population Served in Each Workforce Area by Sex, 2013

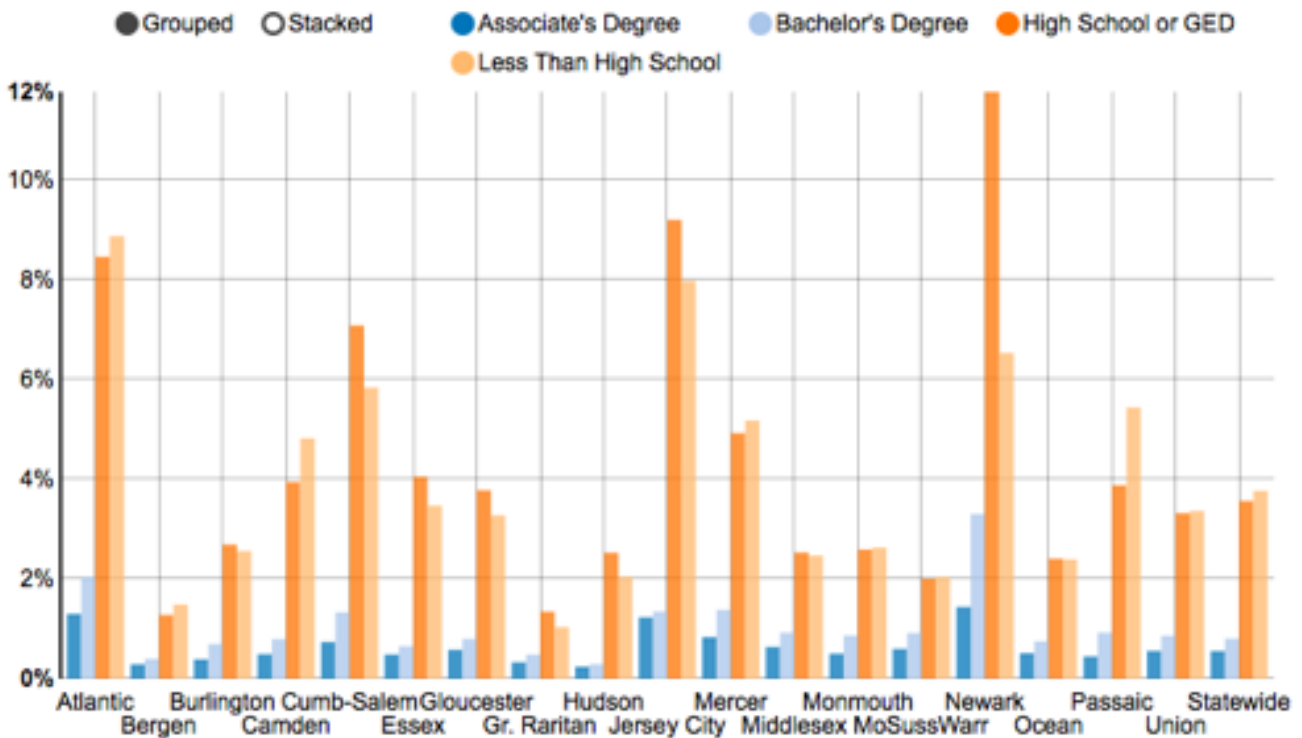




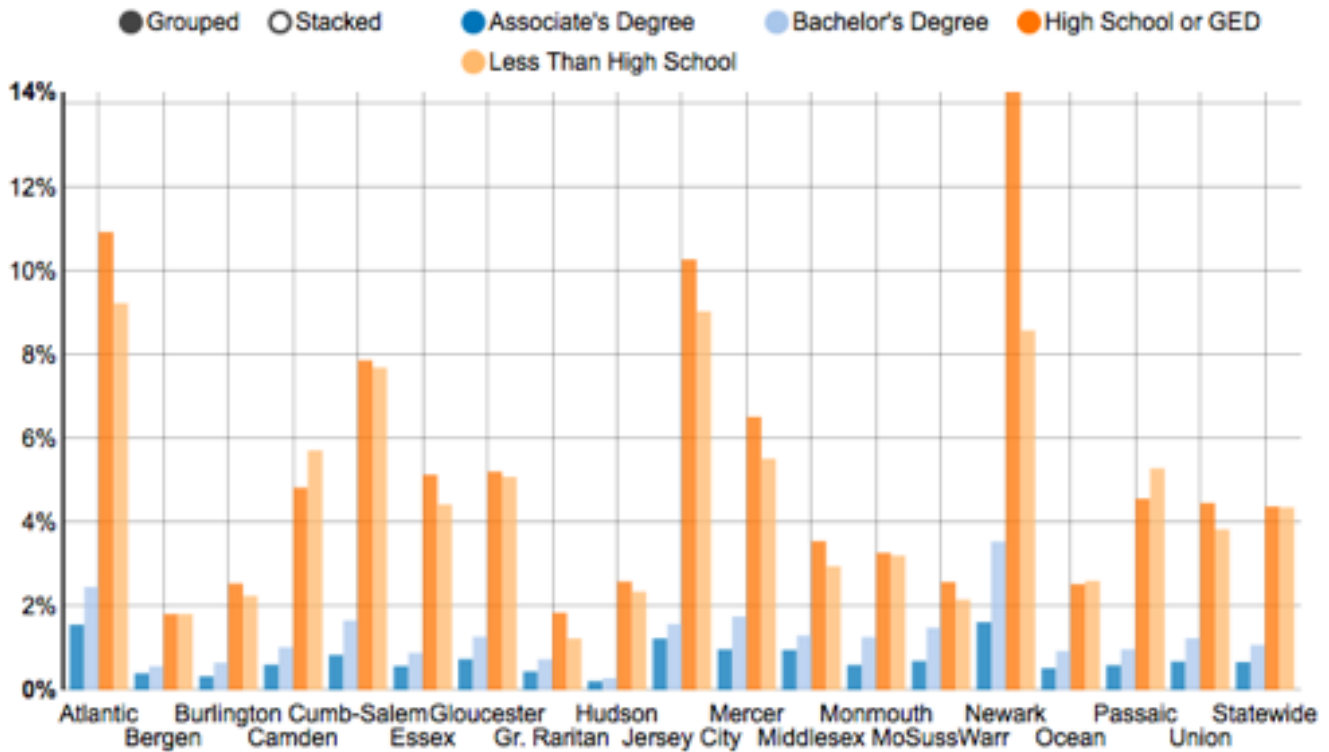
Percent of Population Served in Each Workforce Area by Educational Level, 2006



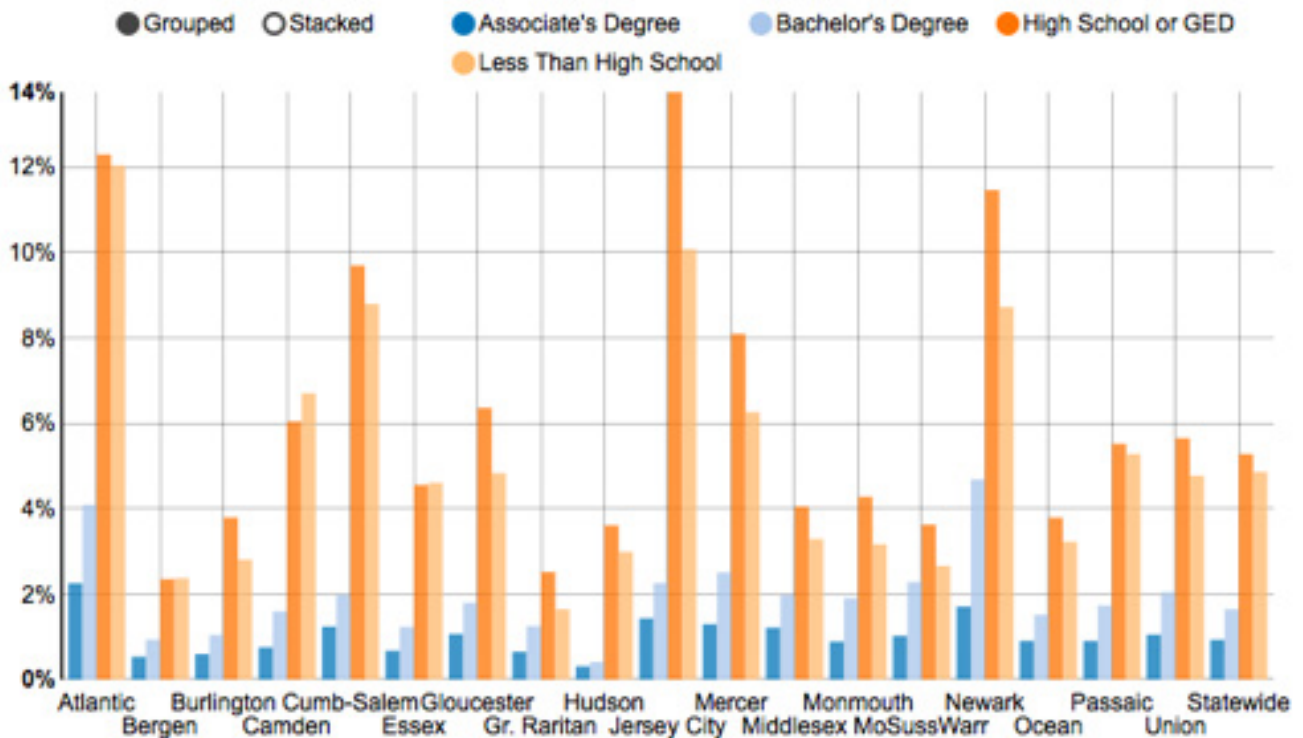
Percent of Population Served in Each Workforce Area by Educational Level, 2007



Percent of Population Served in Each Workforce Area by Educational Level, 2008

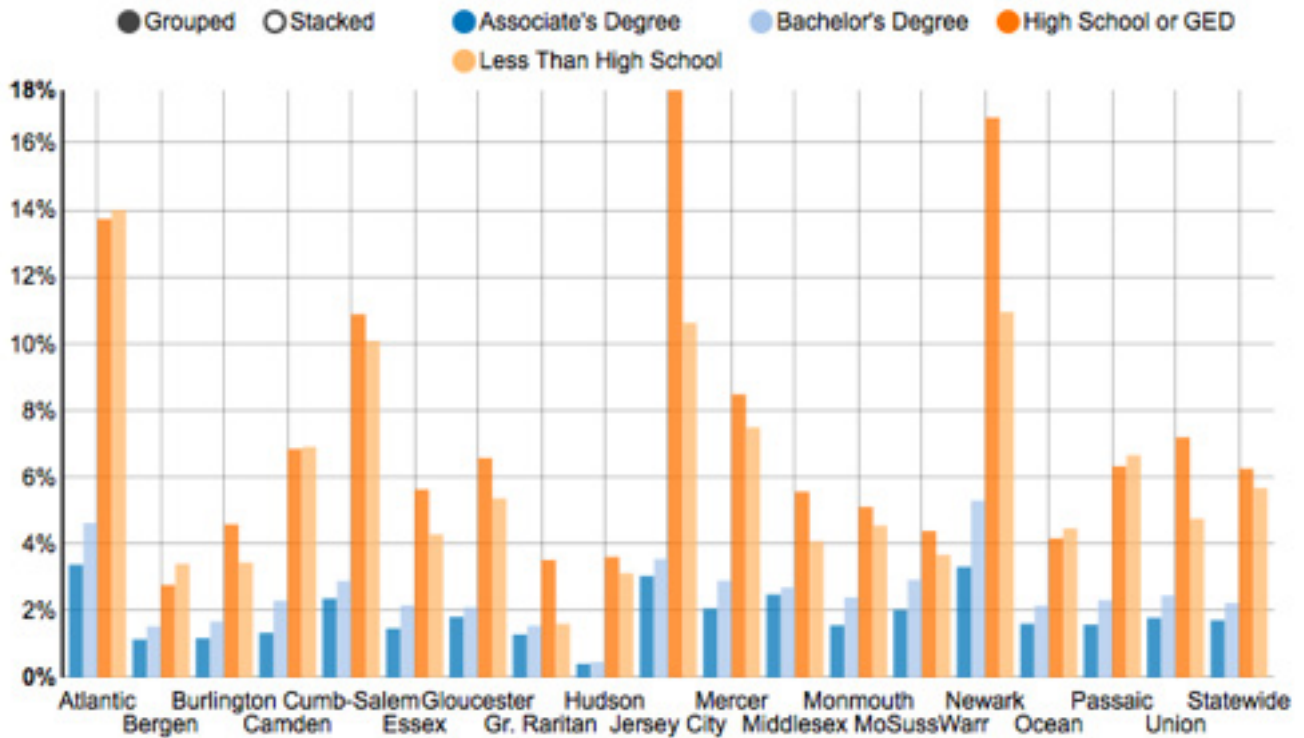


Percent of Population Served in Each Workforce Area by Educational Level, 2009

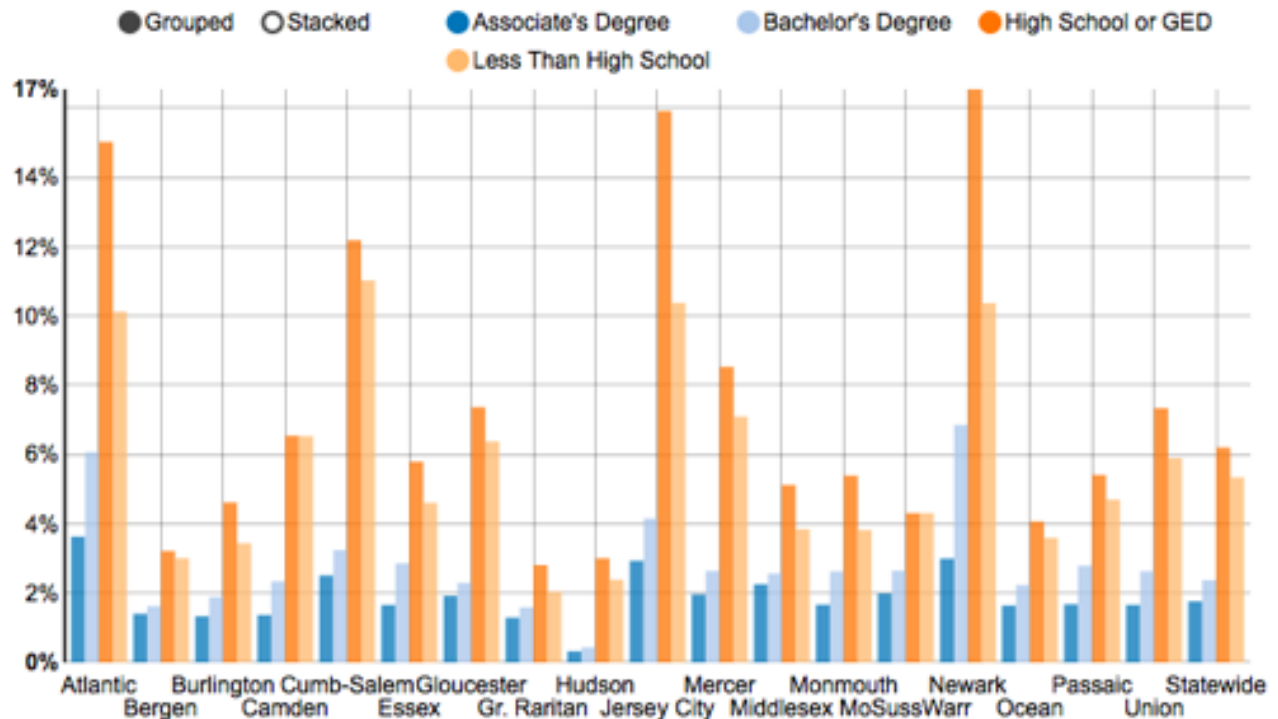


# Evaluation of One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey

## Percent of Population Served in Each Workforce Area by Educational Level, 2010

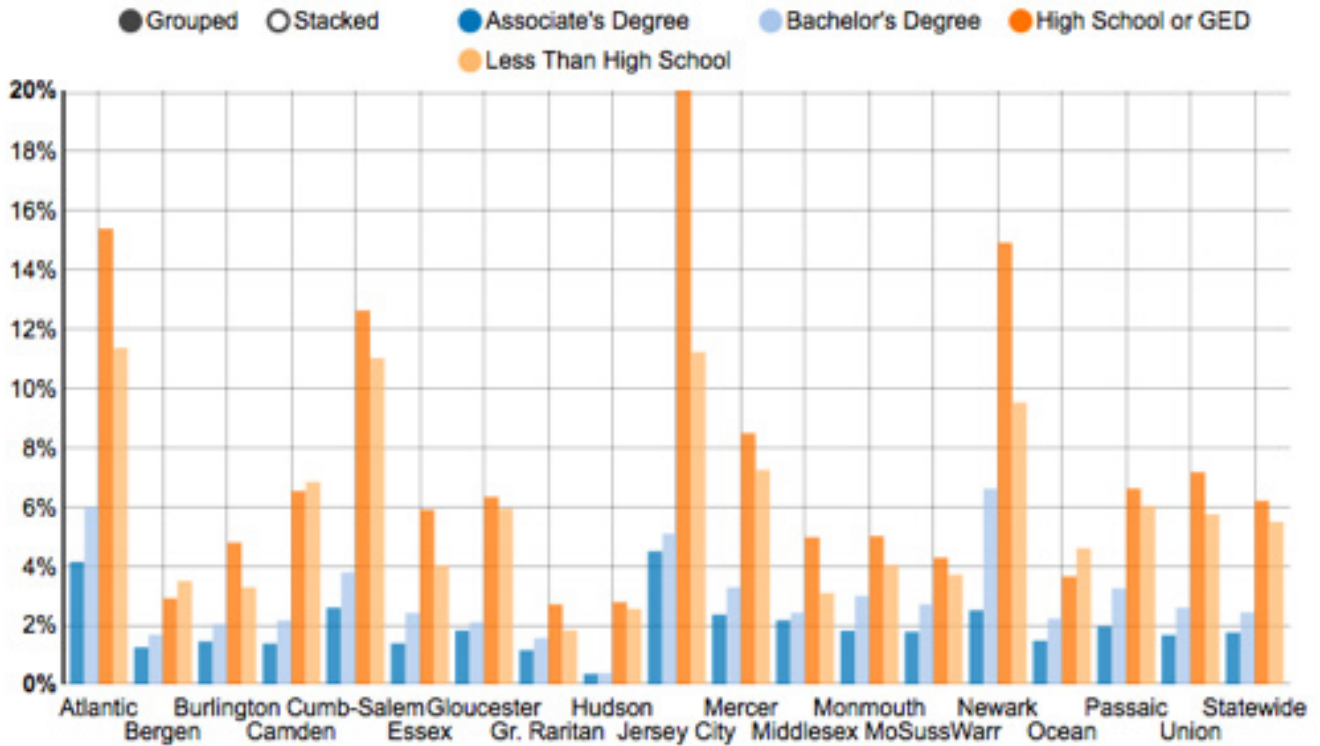


## Percent of Population Served in Each Workforce Area by Educational Level, 2011

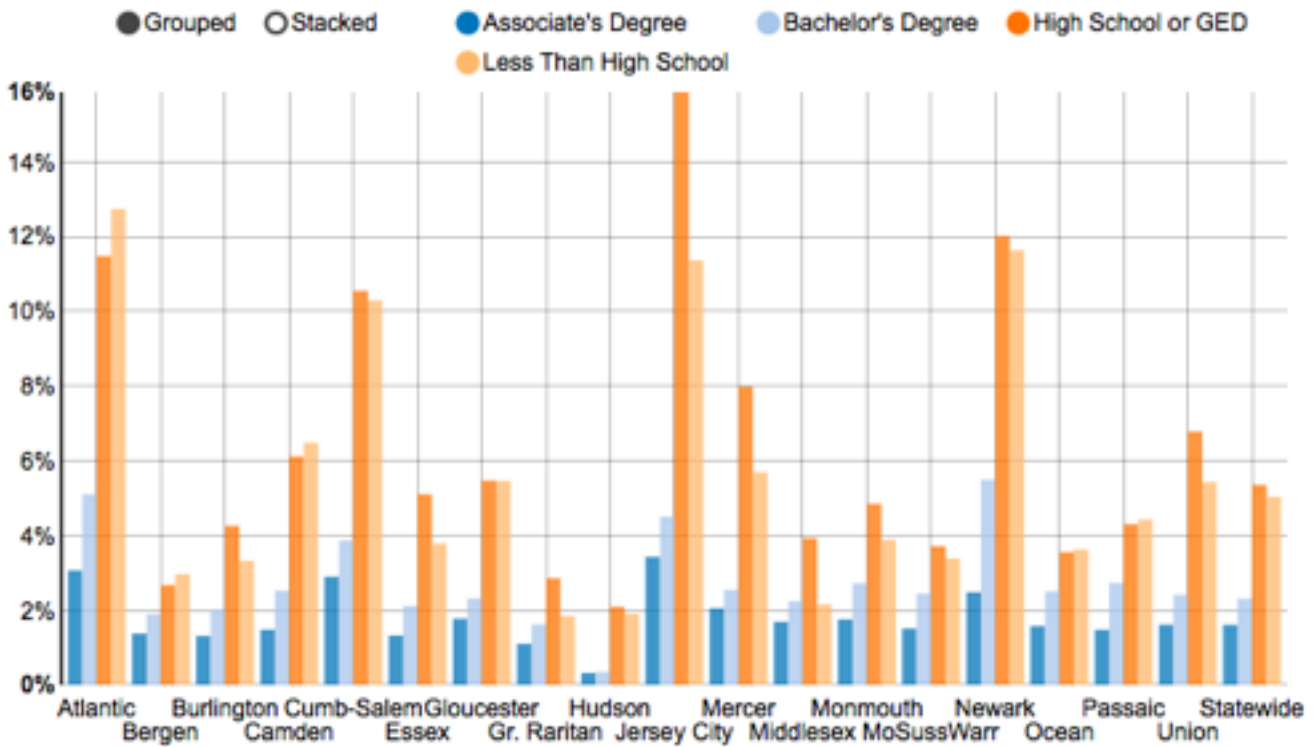


# Evaluation of One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey

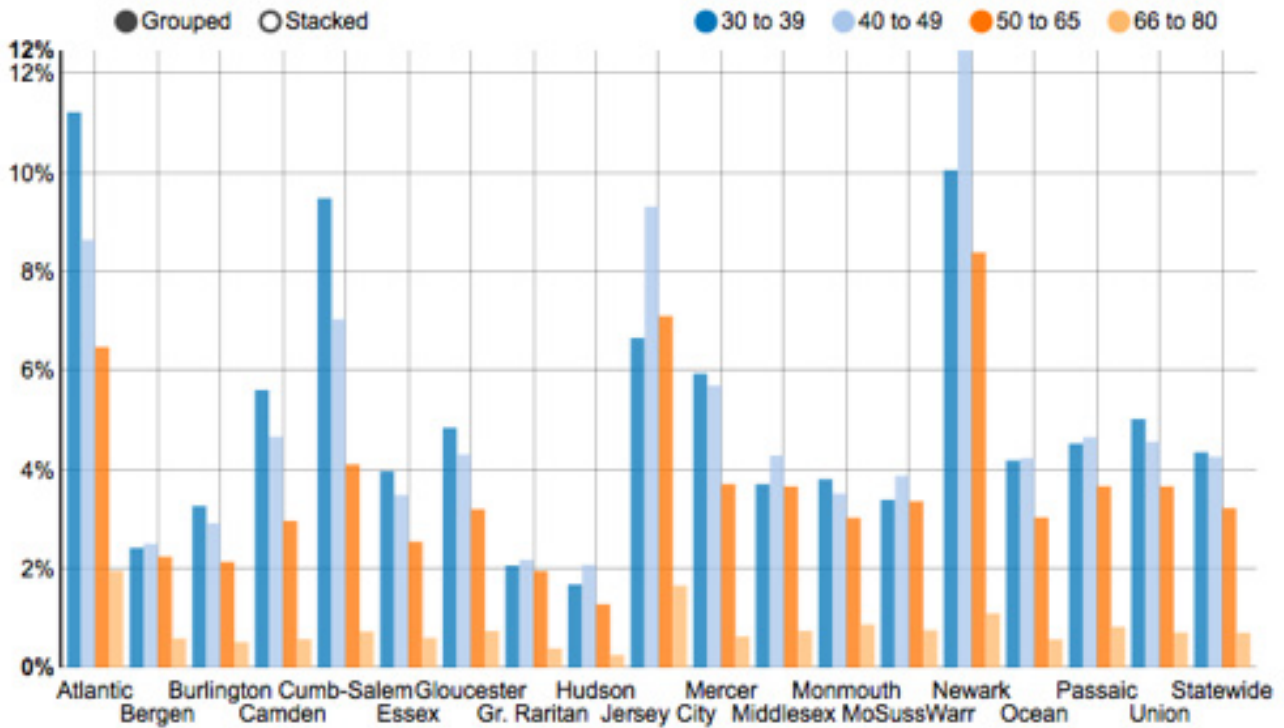
## Percent of Population Served in Each Workforce Area by Educational Level, 2012



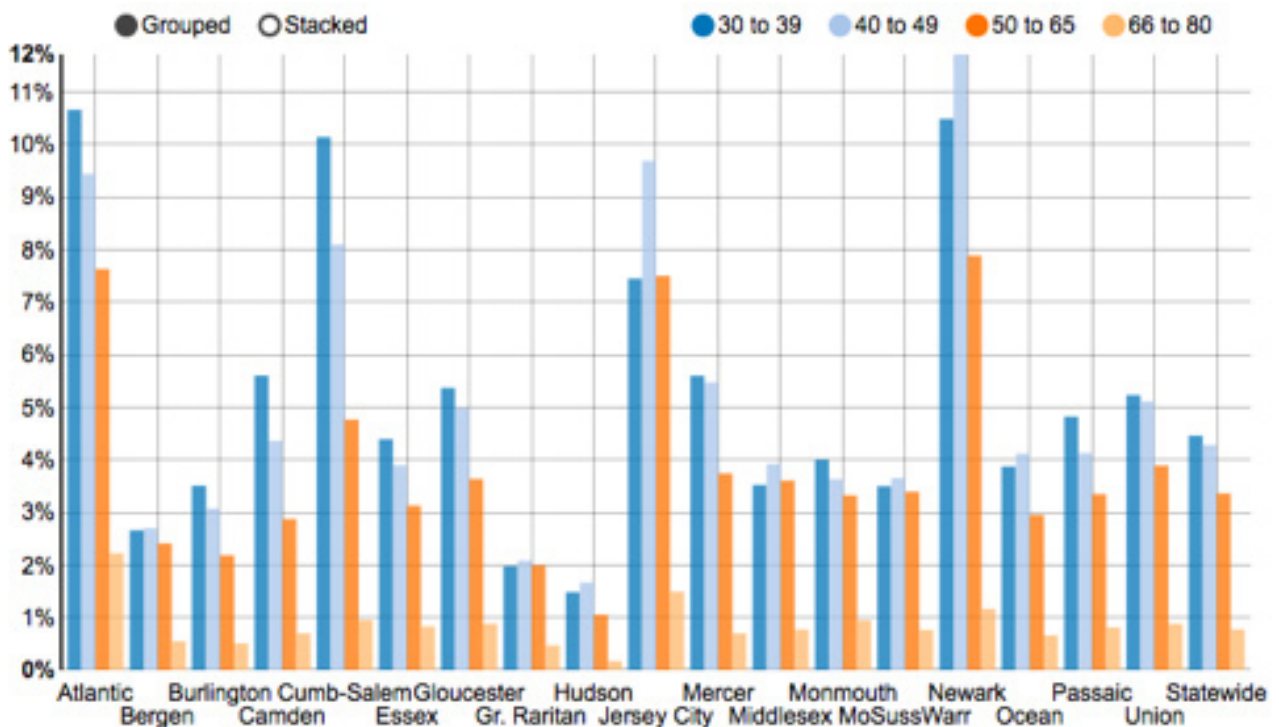
## Percent of Population Served in Each Workforce Area by Educational Level, 2013



Percent of Population Served in Each Workforce Area by Age Group, 2010

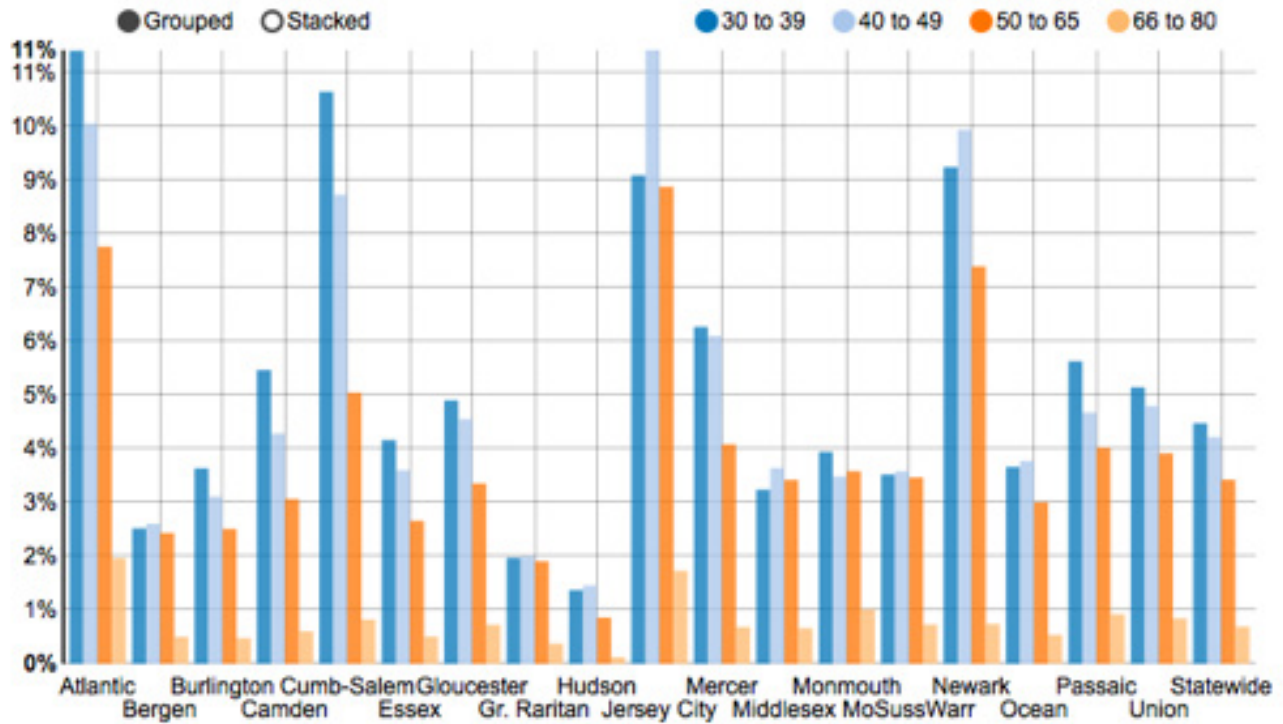


Percent of Population Served in Each Workforce Area by Age Group, 2011

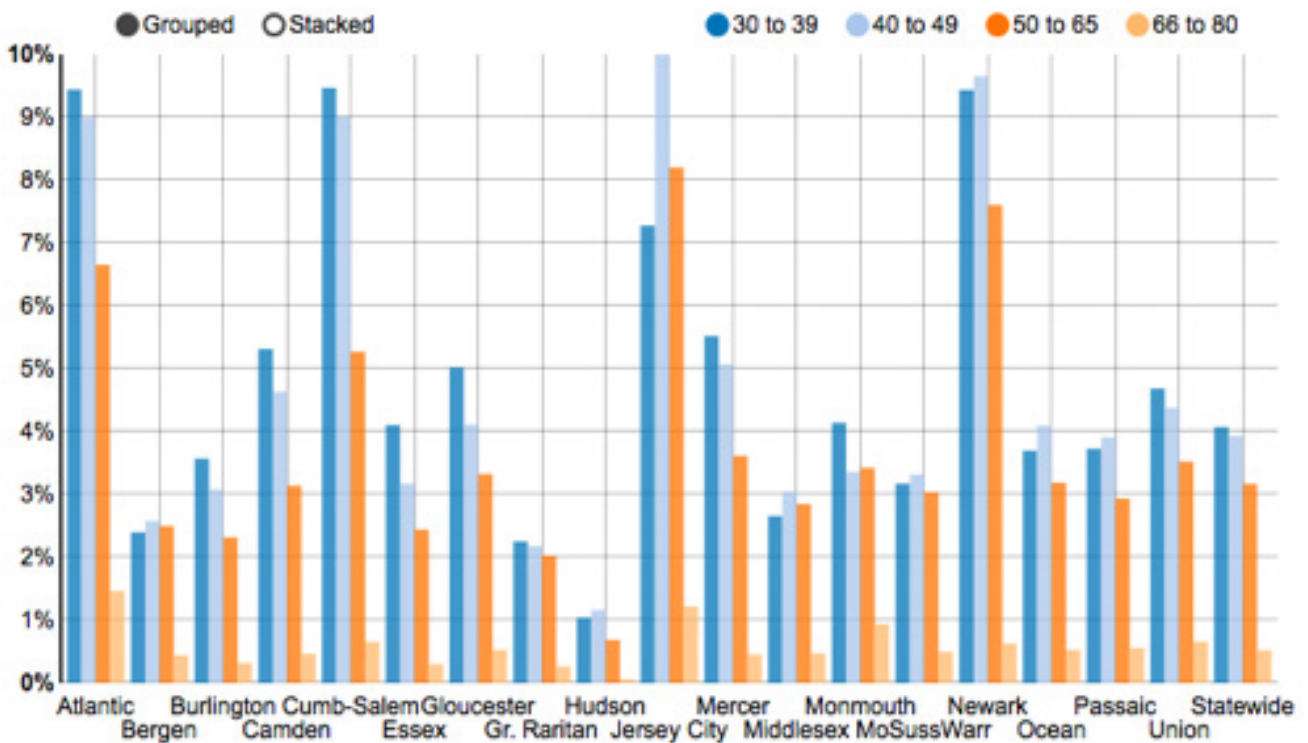




Percent of Population Served in Each Workforce Area by Age Group, 2012



Percent of Population Served in Each Workforce Area by Age Group, 2013





### Endnotes

1. In the first set of charts (in the “Customer Profile by Workforce Area” section), the statewide results appear second from the right, just before the Union County results. In the “Number of Customers Served Relative to the Population” charts, the statewide results appear as the rightmost results. Unfortunately, a software quirk makes it impossible to display the statewide results in both sets of charts.
2. Prior to 2010, the American Community Survey age categories did not overlap with the age categories of the workforce data. Therefore, Heldrich Center researchers were only able to make comparisons in age groups for the two data sources for the period from 2010 through 2013.