INVESTING IN NEW JERSEY'S ADULT LEARNERS

Needs Analysis and Recommendations Regarding the State of Adult Literacy Education in New Jersey

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Erik Jacobson
Montclair State University
Author/Principal Investigator

Study Working Group:

Hal Beder, Rutgers University
Lansing Davis, New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission
Elease Greene-Smith, New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development
Nancy Fisher, Jewish Vocational Service
Barry Semple, Education Consultant

New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission

In Memoriam:

We dedicate this report in grateful recognition of Robert Santare, who served as Chairman of the State Council for Adult Literacy Education Services from February2009 to his death on December 25, 2012.

Mr. Santare was a strong advocate for adult literacy education and he understood that basic literacy is a foundation for workforce development as well as an increasingly important tool for carrying out the responsibilities of adulthood. Through his leadership and commitment, this Council has worked to enhance the adult literacy delivery system and to expand access to services in New Jersey. In his shepherding the completion of this report and supporting the implementation of its recommendations, a lasting legacy for Mr. Santare is evolving: an adult literacy system that is better posed to address the literacy skill gap of a significant portion of the State's population.

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Executive Summary

The goals and expectations for adult literacy education are varied, and include meeting learners' economic, social and personal needs. As with all education, the development of a given adult learner is also connected to the development of the community or state as a whole. For example, increasing adults' basic skills, literacy and workforce readiness are critical to strengthening New Jersey's economy. Similarly, parents who have stronger literacy skills and more education themselves are better situated to help their children learn. Additionally, higher levels of literacy and education are also associated with increases in civic participation. Across these various roles — as parents, citizens and workers —adults need to be able to access information, to articulate ideas and opinions, to solve problems and make decisions, and to continue learning and developing new skills.

This report looks at the current ability of the state of New Jersey to meet these needs within the adult literacy system. For the purposes of this report the term *adult literacy education* is inclusive of beginning level reading and writing instruction, pre-GED and GED education, numeracy, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), civics, and work readiness and preparation for and transition to postsecondary education and training. The report focuses on four themes: *The Need for Services*, *Access to Services*, *Intensity of Service Provision*, and *Program Articulation*. The report draws on previously existing data (e.g., the US Census, New Jersey state performance reports), newly collected statistical information (e.g., surveys completed by WIA II programs regarding hours of program provision and student retention) and information gathered in a series of stakeholder meetings and in surveys completed by WIB Literacy Committees.

Regarding the *Need for Service Provision*, the analysis indicates that a significant portion of the state's population could benefit from literacy and English language programs. For example:

- 17% of adults lack Basic Prose Literacy skills
- 12% have not earned a high school diploma

Although the problem of high school non-completion is often associated with New Jersey's large urban areas, the study found high levels of non-completion in diverse parts of the state. In Cumberland County, for example, 23% of adults 18 and older have not completed high school (the highest percentage in the state). The report presents evidence that the need is not isolated to a few communities. Indeed, the impact of low-levels of education on the state is clear. For example:

- 34% of those without a high school diploma are not in the workforce, while only 17% with some college or an Associate degree are in that category; and
- Those with less than a high school diploma on average earn about half of the State's median income.
- 20% of those without a high school diploma are living in poverty

With regards to English speaking skills, 14% of the States' 18+ population report speaking English less than "Very Well." For those who speak languages other than, or in addition to, English, the number rises to 47%. This population needs support to develop the English they need to enter the workforce, support their children, and move towards citizenship. Worth noting is the fact that immigrants in the United States tend to be more entrepreneurial than their native-born peers, and several programs around the country are targeting those adults who are interested in self-employment. These immigrant entrepreneurs also create jobs for other immigrants and the native-born population. In addition, in New Jersey, there are 90,437 college-educated immigrants 25 years of age or older (21.5 percent of the college-educated immigrant labor force), who are either unemployed or underemployed, i.e. working in unskilled jobs such as dishwashers, security guards, and housemaids. This population needs targeted education that will help them take advantage of their existing skill sets and maximize their contribution to the state's economy.

In the face of this need, the report expresses several concerns regarding *access to literacy services*. First and foremost, recent reductions in Federal and State funding have resulted in a corresponding reduction in the number of learners served by the system. For example, state funding for adult high schools has been eliminated, interrupting the education of thousands of students. Another concern is the location of programs. Many stakeholders expressed a concern

that limited public transportation routes in some regions or programs not being proximal to public transportation had an impact on student access. From a different perspective, an analysis of program location in relationship to population density revealed that adult literacy education programs in some counties are not well distributed, leaving some densely populated areas without a local program. A limitation to this particular analysis is that this is based simply on population, rather than assessed literacy needs. However, given large numbers of high school non-completion across the state, it is indeed likely that these areas would contain potential learners.

Overall, roughly 3% of those in the state without a high school diploma are currently receiving services. The same holds true for those reporting speaking English less than very well. Although not everyone without a high school diploma (or who speak English less than very well) is currently seeking services, this low number suggests the size of the task facing the state. To move large numbers of New Jersey's residents out of poverty and into the workforce, access to programs needs to be substantially increased.

The *intensity of service provision* is also a crucial issue. Research indicates that it requires approximately 100-120 hours of instruction for adults to progress a grade-level. For this reason, access is not enough. Learners must have the opportunity to be in class (or be studying) for a substantial number of hours per week and for an extended period of time. An analysis of data collected to for the study suggest that the majority of learners in the state spent 80 hours or less in a program before withdrawing, which is typically not enough time to make grade level progress. Additionally, programs across the state vary in terms of how many hours of services they offer learners per week. The vast majority of the programs that responded to a survey meet less than 20 hours per week (an amount previously offered by adult high schools and many different types of programs), and only 19% of the respondents indicated that they provided 13-20 hours of instruction per week. Across the state, 40% of programs reported offering classes that met between 7 to 12 hours per week. However, the most commonly reported format was four hours per week. As with access, there was variation across counties. Learners in some counties were more likely to have access to intensive instruction than learners in other counties.

The final element of service provision the report examined is the issue of *articulation* between and across programs. As ratified by State Council for Adult Literacy Education

Services (SCALES), the goal of adult literacy education in the state is for students to complete at least one year of postsecondary education and/or receive industry certification. For this to take place, several things have to happen. First, students must be able to identify this objective as a long-term goal and they must have a clear path to follow. Second, because students who enter college via developmental programs are less likely to complete their programs and take longer to do so, their adult secondary education must prepare them to enter college via traditional credit-bearing classes. With limited resources, it is crucial for all the programs in a county to collaborate in order to maximize results. Currently, it is not clear how this will take place at the county or state level. There were variations across counties in terms of how clear the path is to postsecondary education and/or training and industry recognized certification. Stakeholders expressed concerns about how difficult it can be for students to move from one program to the next. Structural barriers limit programs' ability to accept referrals. Finally, some programs expressed a concern that the funding stream under which learners enter the system drives their options to progress rather than their goals. These programs suggested that more explicit coordination and support is needed to reach the level of articulation required to make the desired transitions possible.

Overall, the report details the necessity for a high quality adult literacy system and specifies deficiencies in the system that must be remedied to maximize the talents and potential of undereducated adults in NJ.

Recommendations

As New Jersey's designated state agency for adult education, the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD) is responsible for administering the major programs that support adult literacy locally: WIA Title II, WIA Title I, Supplemental Workforce Administrative Fund for Basic Skills, and the employment directed activities through TANF. However, other state agencies, most notably the Department of Education (DOE) and the State Employment and Training Commission, maintain significant program and/or policy authority for components of the adult education system and should continue to be key partners in policy, planning, and oversight of the system.

SCALES sits within the State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) and is charged with facilitating statewide and local policy development, planning and oversight in consultation with the stakeholders in the area of adult literacy, and as such SCALES is the forum for these activities. LWD should work closely with SCALES to: 1) Ensure effective planning and oversight of literacy funds and programs across state departments; 2) Increase integration of basic, work readiness, occupational skills and career pathways, and secondary and postsecondary credential attainment; and 3) Provide leadership and professional development and technical assistance to programs, system administrators, and local policy makers. To the extent possible, given different program goals, outcome metrics across programs should be consistent and complementary.

At the local level, the State's 17 Workforce Investment Boards – 12 county-based, 4 multi-county, and 1 city – are required to have Literacy Councils, which are responsible for planning, policy and oversight of the literacy system, including WIA Title II and Workforce Learning Links. WIBS will be asked to facilitate a planning process that focuses on reconfiguring their local adult literacy system.

This planning process must include coordination with the Department of Education. Proposed changes regarding the adult education part of the state's education code will have a profound impact on the functioning of the system (e.g., the proposal that local boards of education and institutions can charge students for instruction at adult high schools). Additionally, changes to the GED test require that the state revisit policy for adult learner credentialing. Restructuring of this element of adult basic education cannot be done in isolation from the parts of the system that LWD is responsible for.

To move forward there must be a shared vision for adult literacy education. So as a first recommendation, the following is proposed:

1. The SETC should adopt a vision for the adult education system which focuses on its foundation for workforce development and outlines its scope. The following vision statement is suggested:

   In keeping with the Equipped for the Future model, the adult literacy system will provide adults learners with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in their roles as family members, citizens, and workers. As an integral part of the Workforce

Investment System, the system will support skill development and credential attainment while providing a continuum of instructional services from basic adult education and beginning ESL through transitioning to postsecondary education and career/work readiness.

Although the shared vision should emerge from the SETC, which through its membership includes representation from business, state agencies, education, organized labor and community-based organizations, the above suggested version reflects the breadth and depth necessary to address the needs of the systems broad constituency base.

The recommendations below provide strategies to improve the adult literacy system so it can better respond to the needs of those who would benefit by improving their literacy skills and/or earning credentials associated with skill advancement. If carried out, these recommendations will have a positive impact on program access, intensity and articulation.

Access

2. The State should articulate a governing philosophy on service provision and explain budget decisions in light of that philosophy. For example, is the intention to provide intensive services to fewer learners, or to provide limited service to the largest amount of clients possible?

3. There must be increased levels of state funding and the state should advocate for increased levels of federal funding. There must also be better integration and coordination between funding streams, improved accountability to ensure that enrollment outcomes are aligned with funding allocations and that program goals are met.

4. Building on LWD's current professional development efforts, WIA Title II Leadership Funds, as well as other dollars earmarked for leadership or professional development should be targeted to spur innovation and facilitate leadership with a focus on expanding capacity and improving services to better meet learners' needs. Leadership and

professional development activities should support system change that aligns with the Unified State Plan as well as the strategic vision for adult education as outlined in this report. Any assessments of program performance should include targeted feedback and opportunities for professional development and mentoring.

5. The State should support the use of technology to expand access to educational services. For example, the LWD resource center proposed below (#18) should coordinate a website that provide access to online resources for adults who wish to enroll in a program, for current students who need additional materials to complement the work they doing in a program, and for those who are involved in self-study. The center should:
    - Create a website that provides a directory of adult education programs.
    - Contain a collection of online study resources for learners. These resources should be vetted by a group of teachers and learners and should include study materials and practice tests.
    - Link to One-Stop online information/resources which will reinforce for the learner the connection between literacy and workforce development.

6. Applications in response to grant opportunities should present a rationale for program location that takes into account local population density, public transportation resources, and availability of other literacy program resources in a coverage area.

Intensity

7. Students should have the opportunity to stay in programs long enough to make progress.

8. Each local system should have a learner referral transition plan that identifies the process for learners to move between programs when appropriate without interruption in study. Once in place, this plan needs to be evaluated to ensure that on the ground policy and practice do not run counter to its realization. This may require directly addressing the ways programs are reimbursed for services.

9. Within each county or WIB area, there should be at least one program that provides a highly intensive instructional option (defined as at least 20 instructional hours per week) for learners. There should also be a number of programs that offer at least 12 hours of instruction per week. Learners who cannot make these kinds of commitments should have flexible options for study.

10. Funding should be provided to support at least one district diploma program for adult learners in a designated geographic area. Options for funding should be explored at the State and district level.

Articulation

11. State level coordination of adult literacy should be strengthened to build a coherent system rather than a collection of loosely coupled programs. Policy should facilitate development of a well-integrated delivery system, rather than siloed programs. Furthermore to improve system accountability, a statewide information sharing process should be instituted semiannually.

12. The SETC should issue guidance that outlines the role of the local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) in oversight of the literacy system. Guidance should include instructions on development of local/regional adult literacy plans that align local systems with a statewide system vision and the literacy design elements and instructional delivery options delineated in these recommendations. Planning and implementing a reconfigured system is an ambitious endeavor and will require significant work on both the part of the State and local areas. As such the SETC (recommendations developed through SCALES but approved by the SETC) should identify major state-level issues that need to be addressed. The SETC should draft planning guidelines in concert with the Unified State Plan guidelines to ensure comprehensive planning endeavors. A phase-in approach to planning and implementation is recommended with July 2015 as the target date.

13. The SETC should work with each WIB Literacy Committee to ensure that all required participants are active members of that committee. The SETC should also provide for technical assistance and opportunities for committees across the state to share best practices. In addition, the SETC should ensure that WIB Literacy Plans are up to date and accessible to the public.

14. The reconfigured state-based, locally delivered adult literacy system should include the following design elements and instructional components:

- Adult Basic Education (ABE), English as a Second Language (ESL) and Civics education leading to skill advancement as measured by approved tests and other relevant measures;
- High School Completion leading to a district diploma (as in an adult high school) or a state issued diploma granted as a result of completing equivalency exams (currently GED) or 30 college credit option;
- Postsecondary Readiness/Transitions leading to college credit or 24-30 credit certificate and/or industry-focused training leading to industry-recognized certificate, e.g. apprenticeship, ASE, etc.;
- Workforce Literacy leading to improved workplace literacy skills and if appropriate, the Work Readiness Credential. (The Work Readiness Profile should be adopted as the skill standard for basic work readiness and the Work Readiness Credential should be metric for meeting this basic standard);
- Basic Computer Readiness based on an agreed upon standard.

The State should direct local areas to provide a variety of instructional delivery options such as:

- Teacher facilitated
- Tutoring (especially for learners with low literacy levels)
- Learner directed (instructor supported)
- Online learning (hybrid option)
- Computer-driven/self-paced with instructor supports available

15. As part of the guidance from the SETC, WIBs, working through their literacy committees, should be charged with determining appropriate strategies to coordinate the operational functions of the reconfigured local adult education system; develop a process for shared governance to facilitate collaboration; and identify performance metrics to ensure uniform and timely reporting to funders and the SETC.

16. To facilitate articulation between programs and tracking progress and performance, a system-wide uniform student and program data management system should be available to all literacy programs. WIA Title II programs currently use Literacy Adult and Community Education System (LACES). The feasibility of using this system for data management of Workforce Learning Link programs and other adult literacy programs as appropriate should be explored.

Additional Recommendations

17. The State Council for Adult Literacy Education Services (SCALES) should be the forum for facilitating adult literacy policy development, planning and oversight as noted in the legislation that established this Council. As such, State agencies, boards, and councils should engage SCALES in broad policy and planning discussions and as appropriate, share program data with SCALES. This in no way should be construed to abrogate the responsibilities or authorities of agencies, boards, or councils, but to provide them with a vehicle for greater stakeholder input.

18. A unit with a focus on professional development and which serves as an information resource center for adult educators should be established. The center should support innovation and capacity-building within the system. It is also recommended that at a minimum, the center should:
    - Link practitioners to resources that identify best practices for postsecondary transitions, use of technology in instruction, integrating basic skills instruction with occupational training, etc.

- Sponsor professional development offerings.
- Provide a calendar of US Department of Education sponsored professional development activities. To the extent possible and appropriate, the adult education office should participate in these professional development activities and then disseminate information back to the field.

19. SCALES, working with Stakeholder state agencies, adult literacy practitioners, and experts in designated fields, should prepare a series of information briefs to facilitate planning and policy development and staff development opportunities in the following areas:
    - technology-based resources that can be used to complement and extend learning taking place in existing literacy programs;
    - components of a clear career and educational pathway that begins at the adult literacy level and continues to postsecondary education and/or industry certification; and
    - contextualized learning principles.

20. To address the particular needs of highly skilled immigrants and potential entrepreneurs, efforts to support the blending of public and private funds with the goal of targeting resources and training to this population should be explored.

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Introduction

This analysis and report was commissioned by the State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) in order to help policy makers understand the current conditions for adult literacy education in the state of New Jersey. From the outset, there were four questions driving the analysis:

1) What is the overall need for adult basic education services in the state?
2) What is the current level of provision?
3) Are there any gaps in provision?
4) Are there structural issues that need to be addressed?

The working group assigned to this project was given the responsibility to review the answers to the guiding questions in order to provide recommendations for proposed changes to the state's system of adult literacy education. This report will present background to the study, outline the study's methodology, present findings and proposed recommendations.

Background

Definitions of Adult Literacy and New Jersey State Policy

The State Council for Adult Literacy Education Services (SCALES) has defined literacy in the following way (following the federal Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, which appears as Title II of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998): "An individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English, compute and solve problems, at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual, and in society." Furthermore, SCALES recognizes that adults must be prepared to use literacy in multiple contexts (home, work, the community), must move from competency in basic skills to developing higher-order thinking and problem solving skills, and must be able to adapt to the changing nature of technology.

Although the term 'literacy' is often associated with basic reading and writing tasks, the operative definition above includes a wider array of skills. For that reason, SCALES defines *adult literacy education* as educational services or instruction below the postsecondary level that focus on developing and improving one's ability to read, write and speak in English, compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family, and in society.

By federal law, WIA Title II funded programs can offer adult literacy education to individuals who:

(A) Have attained 16 years of age;

(B) Are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under state law; and,

(C) Who:

- (i) lack sufficient mastery of basic educational skills to enable them to function effectively in society;
- (ii) do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and have not achieved an equivalent level of education; or
- (iii) are unable to speak, read, or write the English language.

Additionally, SCALES has articulated the following as a desired outcome for adult literacy education in the State – Students will move from the completion of high school or its equivalency to completing at least one year of postsecondary education or training, which leads to attainment of an industry sanctioned certificate or degree. The rationale behind this goal will be discussed below, but in brief, it is recognized that stopping at high school completion (or its equivalent) limits learners' ability to realize the economic benefits of education.

Thus, in this report the term *adult literacy education* is inclusive of beginning level reading and writing instruction, pre-GED and GED education, numeracy, English for Speakers of Other Languages, civics as well as including work readiness and preparation for and transition to postsecondary education and training.

The Economic Impact of Literacy and Education

One reason that so much emphasis is placed on helping individuals complete their secondary education (either with a diploma or an equivalent) is that the economic impact of high school non-completion is well understood at both the individual and societal level.

At the individual level, data indicates that, "Over a working lifetime, an individual with a high school diploma will receive about $320,000 more in income than a high school dropout" (National Commission on Adult Literacy, 2008, pg. 38). In 2009 this lifetime earnings gap translated into median weekly earnings of $454 for dropouts and $626 for high school graduates and GED recipients with no college (Reder, 2010, pg. 1; citing U.S. Department of Labor, 2010). From a different perspective, there is a strong association between failure to complete high-school and individual economic vulnerability. Reder (ibid) reports that high school dropouts are more than twice as likely to be living in poverty as high school graduates (24% to 11%), and that 74% percent of dropouts spend one or more years in poverty between the ages of 25 and 75 (citing Rank & Hirschl, 2001). These findings are consistent with several decades' worth of studies that focus on outcomes for high school non-completers (e.g., National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; Kirsch, Braun, Yamamoto & Sum, 2007; McClendon, Jones & Rosin, 2011).

The difference that level of education makes in earning power becomes even starker at the postsecondary level. For example, over their lifetime "A person with a bachelor's degree will receive nearly twice as much ($2.14 million) as a high school graduate ($1.06 million)" (National Commission on Adult Literacy, 2008, pg. 38). Calculated at the level of a year, "The mean personal income of a U.S. resident (25–64 years old) in 2005 with only a high school diploma was 50 percent lower than that of a resident of similar age with a bachelor's degree ($54,532)" (Ibid.). Additionally, although it is often promoted as a means of securing economic security, studies have suggested that the GED as a terminal degree has a limited impact. GED holders are more likely to be employed and earn higher wagers than high-school drops out, but are less likely to be employed and earn less than holder of traditional diplomas (Reder, 2007, pg. 9). The GED path seems to help those who had low-levels of skills (Tyler, 2004) and those who can use the GED to move onto postsecondary education.

Not surprisingly, there are also clear economic benefits for individuals who enroll in English language classes. Better English skills make it easier to join the workforce and to have

more options with regards to work. In the National Adult Literacy Survey, earning power clearly rises with improvement in English skills (ProLiteracy, 2003, pg. 27).

The impact of low-levels of literacy and non-completion of high school can also be analyzed at the societal level. This can be seen from several different perspectives. First, "on average, each high school dropout costs the U.S. economy about $260,000 in lost earnings, taxes, and productivity over his or her working lifetime, compared with a high school graduate" (Reder, 2010, pg. 1: citing Amos, 2008). In addition to a reduction in productivity, there is additional cost associated with lower levels of education. One study found that 40% of youth between the ages of 16 and 24 who drop out of school receive public assistance (Reder, 2010, pg. 1; citing Bridgeland, DiIulio & Morison, 2006). Connections between education and crime and recidivism have been firmly established. It has been calculated that "Increasing the high school completion rate by just 1 percent for all men aged 20–60 would save the United States up to $1.4 billion per year in reduced costs from crime" (National Commission on Adult Literacy, 2008, pg. 36). Other studies found that high school drop outs cost various local, state and federal governments more than they paid in taxes - a net loss of $671 per year (Khatiwada, et. al, 2007, pg. viii). Yearly contributions above the cost of services provided increase with each level of education - $5,464 for high school graduates, $17,664 for Bachelor degree holders, $26,773 for adults with a Master's or higher degree (ibid, pg. ix).

The evolving global workplace is demanding increased education and training. For example, "the Bureau of Labor Statistics forecasts that between 2004 and 2014, 24 of the 30 fastest growing occupations will require workers with postsecondary education or training" (National Commission on Adult Literacy, 2008, pg. 9). Although 40% of all job openings still only require high school diplomas, to compete in the global market workers in the United States will have to develop complex skills. Ganzglass (2007) makes clear that this issue cannot be addressed by revisions to K-12 education alone, because "the number of people (50 million) aged 18 to 44 with a high school diploma or less is equal to the number of people that will be graduating high school over the next 17 years. If we want a skilled workforce in the future, we must invest in the skills of those already working right now" (pg. 3).

To the extent that literacy programs are oriented to employment outcomes, they tend to focus on paid employment, rather than self-employment. However, states around the country are starting to recognize and support entrepreneurship. This is particularly notable in the English

language learner population. Immigrants, with the right training and supports, are able to create businesses of their own. Indeed, immigrants in the United States tend to be more entrepreneurial than their native-born peers (Immigration Policy Center, 2011, 15). These immigrant entrepreneurs not only create employment for themselves, but also for other immigrants and the native-born population. The fact that immigrant entrepreneurs include significant numbers of people without high school diplomas (Pearce, Clifford & Tandon, 2011) does not mean that further education would not be beneficial. In fact, targeted educational assistance helps immigrant job creators realize their potential.

Literacy and Other Measures of Well-Being

In addition to economic benefits, literacy and adult educational attainment is associated with a number of other key measures of well-being. New Jersey has adopted Equipped for the Future (EFF) as the guiding framework for curriculum development. EFF identifies the key skills and abilities that adult have to have in a variety of roles - Worker, Parent and Family Member, and Citizen and Community Member. For example, as parents and family members, adults are expected to guide and mentor other family members, including supporting the formal and informal education of children (See http://eff.cls.utk.edu/). Research into the impact of parents' education level on children's development has found that:

> Children of parents who have less than a high school education tend to do poorest on reading tests. Children of high school graduates do considerably better, and children of parents who have education beyond high school do considerably better than that. These differences in test scores have held constant since 1971, and the same differences show up in the scores of third, eighth, and 11th graders (ProLiteracy, 2003, pg. 19).

The time parents spend in literacy programs is associated with their own literacy growth and changes in their attitude towards education. This, in turn, is associated with increased outcomes for children – including changes in reading habits (Mikulecky & Lloyd, 1995) and increases in the likelihood of completing their education (Padak & Rasinki, 1997).

In the role of Citizen and Community Member, adults are expected to become and stay informed, form and express opinions and ideas, work together and take action to strengthen

communities. Studies have seen an association between participation in literacy programs and civic activities such as registering to vote (Wirt & Snyder, 2000), participation in community organizations (Beder, 1999), and increased confidence around social skills (Padak, Sapin & Baycich, 2002). In one study, 76% of learners noted that their literacy programs were responsible for them achieving goals they had set for themselves in their role as a citizen (Kearne, 1999). Given larger concerns about levels of civic engagement in the United States, adult literacy programs can be seen as playing a valuable role.

To shift to a different domain, there is a clear relationship between literacy, levels of education and health outcomes. One study of socioeconomic factors that correlate with health status concluded that educational level had the most explanatory power, and that "low educational attainment appears to be a primary factor in poor health" (ProLiteracy, 2003, pg. 13; citing Pincus & Callahan, 1995). Other studies have found that adults with lower than sixth-grade literacy skills "were significantly more likely than others to present with advanced prostate cancer" (ibid, pg. 14; citing Bennett, et al., 1998) and "the lower the patients' literacy scores, the higher the proportion of those who reported a history of heart disease or diabetes" (ibid.; citing TenHave, 1997). Part of this is associated with other risk factors (economic status) but some of it is directly related to literacy. For example, one study of 2,659 low-income outpatients at two public hospitals revealed:

- 26% could not read their appointment slips
- 47% could not understand written directions to take medicine on an empty stomach
- 60% did not understand the standard consent form
- 21% could not understand instructions written at the fourth-grade reading level

(ProLiteracy, 2003, pg. 13; citing Williams, et al, 1995)

In addition to negative health outcomes for individuals, the association between literacy and health produces higher costs to society as a whole. One study of a randomly selected group of Medicare patients found those with the lowest reading levels had health care expenses more than six times the average for the group as a whole (Kefalides, 1999). Another study found that patients with low literacy skills were 52% more likely to be hospitalized than other patients (Williams, 1995), while another found longer hospital stays for those with low health literacy

skills (Center for Health Care Strategies, 1999). These results suggest that both for the individual and for society, addressing literacy is essential way of dealing with the health care crisis in this country.

Noting connections between health, civic participation and family responsibilities helps extend the analysis of adult literacy attainment beyond the strictly economic. Rather than being exhaustive, they are included to suggest that while workforce development is a major driver of adult literacy efforts, it should not be the only criteria for the success of a system. We do not image K-12 education to be solely about preparation for employment, and it would be a mistake to limit adult literacy to narrow goals and agendas. Historically, adult literacy efforts have been connected to movements for women's suffrage, better working conditions and civil rights. Looking ahead, adult literacy education can and should play key role in addressing many of the complex issues our society is facing.

Study Methodology

The study took place in six distinct phases: 1) Reviewing Previous Reports; 2) Analyzing Existing Quantitative Data; 3) Discussions With Stakeholders; 4) Surveying Programs in the State; 5) Discussions Within the Working Group; and 6) Revision of a Draft Report Based on Feedback from Relevant State Agencies. Each of these phases will be discussed below.

Phase One: Reviewing Previous Reports

The report began with a review of reports and studies previously produced by the State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) and the State Commission for Adult Literacy Education Services (SCALES). The goal behind the review was to gain a better historical perspective on the development of the system and to identify any issues that seem to carry across the reports. Next, selected national reports were reviewed to get an understanding of the larger context of adult literacy education. These included reports about adult literacy development inside and outside of formal education (Reder, 2009), studies of the impact of GED instruction (Tyler, 2004) and studies looking at the transition of adults in postsecondary education (e.g., Patterson, et al. 2010; Strawn, 2007).

Phase Two: Analyzing Existing Quantitative Data

The second phase of the study began with an analysis of a variety of previously available quantitative data. Large data sets (e.g., the U.S. Census, the National Assessment of Adult Literacy) were examined for New Jersey specific results and comparative information. Next, information about service provision in New Jersey was collected. This included reports regarding the number of clients serviced by One Stop Centers, by WIA Title II funded programs, and by adult high schools. Additionally, information about Customized Training Provision was reviewed, as was data from Literacy Volunteers-New Jersey programs. The goal behind this analysis was to get a snapshot of the adult literacy education system. In particular, it was important to identify what kinds of services clients were receiving and where they were receiving them. This included information about services provided by libraries, CBOs and other volunteer organizations. The final part of this phase was an analysis of state funding for adult literacy services (e.g., which state departments provide funding for adult literacy services). Comparisons were made between New Jersey data and other states (information located in the National Association of State Directors of Adult Education's "Blue Book").

Phase Three: Discussions With Stakeholders

The third phase of the study was a series of stakeholder meetings. These were open to the public and were held in three different parts of the state – Sewell, Gloucester County; Trenton, Mercer County; and Newark, Essex County. Attendees included learners, teachers, program administrators and representatives from state agencies. To organize the meetings, the principal investigator presented a statistical summary (created as a result of phase two) and drafted a list of questions (based on the first two phases of the study). At the Gloucester meeting, three learners provided written testimony about the value of adult education and its significant impact on their lives. An additional conference call was held with One Stop Operators. The following four key themes emerged from these meetings; 1) The clear need for adult literacy education in all parts of the state; 2) Difficulties learners have accessing services; 3) Variations in the intensity of provision; and 4) Structural or policy issues that decrease the level of articulation between programs.

Phase Four: Surveying Programs in the State

For the fourth phase of the study, two surveys were drafted and circulated. The first was designed to get information about Workforce Investment Boards (WIB) Literacy Committees (See Appendix I). This was distributed to each of the literacy committees across the state and there was a 100% return rate. The second survey was drafted and circulated to each of the WIA II funded programs in the state (see Appendix II). For this survey, 67 of the 85 programs responded for a return rate of 79%. The data from both of these forms was collected and analyzed by the principal investigator and presented to SCALES as a working draft.

Phase Five: Discussions Within the Working Group

The fifth phase of the study was the drafting of recommendations. This was done during meetings held by the working group associated with the study. Updated analysis was provided to the group, along with organizing concepts (Need, Access, Intensity, Articulation). The group was asked to identify ways to address each of the issues. In particular, the group was asked to think through structural or policy issues. The goal was to not simply ask for more funding for adult literacy educations (although that was indeed a starting point), but to identify concrete ways to improve service provision.

Phase Six: Revisions of the Draft Report

After a draft of the report was created, a conference call took place with selected Labor and Workforce Development staff during which time they provided feedback. Two questions were raised.

The first question concerned the accuracy of the language regarding WIA Title II eligibility (see page 2 above). Specifically, there was concern that as presented in the first draft of the report, the language implied that the law allowed learners who lack sufficient basic skills but have a high school diploma or equivalency to receive WIA Title II services. After some discussion, it was concluded that the section of text in question was consistent with that of the actual language of the law. As a postscript, LWD is considering an amendment to the WIA Title II literacy state plan that indicates that adults who lack sufficient mastery of basic educational

skills to enable them to function effectively in society, but have a high school diploma or equivalency can be served through programs funded with these dollars.

The second question concerned data used in the analysis, in particular data regarding provision of services at Workforce Learning Links. The analysis in the initial draft relied upon data provided by the data unit in LWD, but the investigator and a key member of working group were informed by the literacy program unit in LWD that this data was not consistent with their numbers. The literacy program unit staff requested that their data be used in the analysis. Once the study team received the new data set they raised questions with LWD to try to understand the discrepancies between the two data sets. In the short term, this somewhat complicated the analysis and slightly delayed the process of the producing the final report. In the near future, LWD should determine why a single request for data could produce contrasting results from different units within the agency.

The results of the study and related recommendations have been organized into the following themes: Need, Access, Intensity and Articulation. In other words, what kinds of services are needed, how easily can potential students access those services, how many hours of instruction do students receive, and how well do the pieces of the system fit together?

Need

Indications of the need for adult literacy services in New Jersey will be discussed in three different ways. First, state level data about associations between level of education and economic status will be presented. Second, county-by-county data about literacy skills and high-school completion will be presented. Finally, similar data will be presented regarding the need for English language instruction.

Associations Between Education and Economic Status

As with the national data noted above, within the state there are clear associations between level of education and economic status (see Table One). The overall state median income is $42,723. This drops to $21,463 for those with less than a high school diploma (a loss of $21,260, less than half of the overall median). Those with a high school diploma have a median income of $31,295 – an increase of roughly $10,000 compared to those with no diploma.

Those with a bachelor's degree earn $57,081 – nearly double what those with a high school diploma make. The divisions here are clear and compelling – the state will benefit from reducing the number of drop-outs and increasing the number who have completed postsecondary education.

Table One: Median Income in New Jersey By Level of Education
(Source: U.S. Census, 2010)

Median Income	State:	$42,473
	Less than high school	$21,463
	High school (or equiv.)	$31,295
	Some college/AA	$40,213
	Bachelor	$57,081
	Graduate or professional degree	$80,417

Another window on the effects of level of education can be seen regarding participation in the workforce (see Table Two). Over a third (34%) of those without high school diplomas are not in the workforce. Having some college or an Associate's Degree cuts this figure in half, as only 16% of adults in this population are not in the labor force. This reinforces the state's goal of having adult learners complete as least one year of postsecondary education or an industry certification.

Table Two: Participation in the Workforce in New Jersey by Level of Education

(Source: U.S. Census, 2010)

Less than High School	In the labor force 66%
	Not in the labor force 34%
High School Graduate	In the labor force 77%
	Not in the labor force 23%
Some College or Associate	In the labor force 83%
	Not in the labor force 17%
Bachelor's Degree of Higher	In the labor force 86%
	Not in the labor force 14%

There are also clear associations between level of education and poverty (see Table Three). In New Jersey, 20% of those with less than a high school education are in poverty. Clearly, the impact of limited labor force participation and the types of work available create profound economic challenges for drop-outs. Those who have completed high school are less likely to be living in poverty (10% of this population) and only 3% of individuals with Bachelors are living below poverty level.

Table Three: Poverty in New Jersey by Level of Education

(Source: U.S. Census, 2010)

Below Poverty Level	% of those with Less than HS	20%
	% of those with High School (or Equiv.)	10%
	% of those with some college / AA	7%
	% of those with Bachelor's or higher	3%

This disparity across levels of education is not experienced the same by both men and women (See Table Four). Data indicates that 22% of women with less than a high school diploma are living below poverty (in contrast to 17% of men without high school diplomas). This suggests an unequal impact of levels of education. Indeed, only 8% of men with a high school diploma are living below the poverty level (less than half of the level for men without high school educations) compared to 12% for women. The numbers also vary for "some college" (5% for men and 8% for women). It is only at the level of "Bachelor's or higher" that the rates become comparable. With regards to this study, it is more evidence that the system should remain committed to moving learners into postsecondary education. Additionally, larger questions need to be asked about education and economic status in the state. Why is there such a disparity between men and women when controlling for education level?

Table Four: Education Level and Poverty by Gender, New Jersey
(Source: U.S. Census, 2010)

Below Poverty Level

Male		Female	
Less than HS	17%	Less than HS	24%
High School (or Equiv.)	8%	High School (or Equiv.)	12%
Some College / AA	5%	Some College	8%
Bachelor's or higher	3%	Bachelor's or higher	3%

Adult Literacy and High School Completion

Because high school completion clearly matters, it is worth looking at relevant state-level data. According to the most recent census, 12% of New Jersey residents 18 and over did not complete high school (this contrasts with the national average of 11%). The numbers for a variety of age groups are listed in Table Five. As can be seen, 9% of the population in their prime earning years (25 – 44) has less than a high school education. As noted above, this is the population that needs to be reached if the workforce is to be competitive. Also worth noting is the discrepancy between men and women. Except in the "65 and older" range, a larger

percentage of men are non-completers than women. Between 18 – 44, the gap is consistently 3% or more.

Table Five: Non-completion by Age

(Source: U.S. Census, 2010)

Men		
—18 - 24	61,478	15%
—25 - 34	62,927	11%
—35 - 44	64,424	11%
—45 - 64	117,844	10%
—65 and over	104,791	21%
—Total	411,464	13%
Women		
—18 - 24	40,575	11%
—25 - 34	40,604	7%
—35 - 44	51,315	8%
—45 - 64	114,463	9%
—65 and over	157,366	23%
—Total	404,323	12%
Total		
—18 - 24	102,053	13%
—25 - 34	103,531	9%
—35 - 44	115,739	9%
—45 - 64	232,307	10%
—65 and over	262,157	22%
—Total	815,787	12%

In addition to looking at non-completion by age group, data is also available about non-completion per county (See Table Six). This table presents the number of individuals 18 and over in a given county, the raw number of those who have less than a high-school education, and what percentage of the county's population that represents. Although not every person who has not completed high school desires to enroll in a program that will allow them to receive a diploma or an equivalent degree, these numbers represent a rough measure of those who would most likely benefit from being in such a program. The final number is the percentage of the population in a county that had less than basic prose literacy (the knowledge and skills needed to search, comprehend, and use information from continuous text, e.g., editorials and news stories) on the National Assessment of Adult Literacy Survey (National Average: 14.5%).

There are several ways to look at this data. The first is to note raw numbers of high-school non-completers. From this perspective, some of the largest numbers are in the counties with the highest overall population figures – Essex (99,190 non-completers), Hudson (90,246 non-completers) and Middlesex (68,884 non-completers). These are large urban areas that struggle with some of the correlates to low-literacy noted above – lower levels of employment and higher levels of poverty. However, these raw numbers need to be understood in context. For example, although Passaic County is eight in total population (389,093) it is fifth in the number of non-completers (64,287 non-completers). On the other hand, Bergen County had the largest population (702,210) but only the sixth highest total of non-completers (59,626 non-completers).

Table Six: County by County Need for Adult Literacy Services

(Sources: U.S. Census, 2010 and National Assessment of Adult Literacy, 2003)

	Total Population 18+	**Number of NC 18+**	**% of 18+ Population**	**NAAL (2003)**
Atlantic	210,782	29,195	14%	18%
Bergen	702,210	59,626	8%	16%
Burlington	345,418	29,293	8%	9%
Camden	389,093	52,459	13%	13%
Cape May	79,117	8,130	10%	11%
Cumberland	119,494	26,981	23%	21%
Essex	589,093	99,190	17%	28%
Gloucester	218,290	21,409	10%	10%
Hudson	504,450	90,246	18%	37%
Hunterdon	98,204	8,228	8%	6%
Mercer	283,916	34,976	12%	14%
Middlesex	625,735	68,884	11%	17%
Monmouth	480,791	39,479	8%	9%
Morris	375,156	25,793	7%	10%
Ocean	442,736	43,835	10%	10%
Passaic	377,541	64,287	17%	26%
Salem	50,567	7,450	15%	12%
Somerset	243,271	22,202	9%	10%
Sussex	113,541	9,528	8%	8%
Union	406,264	66,292	16%	21%
Warren	83,143	8,304	10%	10%

When we look at the percentage of adults 18 and older in a given county who have not completed high school, a slightly different picture emerges. For example, although Cumberland County (at 26,981) has less than a third of the non-completers that Essex County has, 23% of the adult population in Cumberland County has not completed high school. In fact, this is the highest county-level percentage in the state. Similarly, Cape May only reports 8,130 non-completers, but this makes up 10% of the county's adult population. Taken together, the data suggests that while adult literacy and high-school non-completion is often associated with urban populations, this is in fact a state-wide issue. Additional analysis should be conducted to determine the distribution of educational status within these counties. Although not all non-completers in a given county attended K-12 education in that county, moving forward it will be essential for adult literacy providers to understand local circumstances that produce these higher numbers.

The results of the National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) also provide an interesting perspective on the situation. There is a general association between higher levels of high-school non-completion and the number of people scoring poorly on the NAAL (e.g., Essex, Union, Passaic, Cumberland). It is worth noting that the NAAL scores are worse than or equal to the non-completion rate in all but three counties, and in some cases the discrepancy is quite large. For example, Bergen reports only 8% non-completion but 16% below basic on the NAAL. In Hudson County (18% non-completion) an estimated 37% of the population scored below basic proficiency on prose literacy. This suggests that many of those with a high school education are still scoring below proficient. For this reason, it is appropriate for the state to consider expanding literacy instruction to those with low skills who have completed a high school education. Though they have a high school credential, they do not have the skills required to take more advanced classes (such as those at a community college).

English Language Learners

State and county level data is also available for people who indicated on the census that they speak English "Less than Very Well." State level data can be seen in Table Seven. As a whole, 14% of adults in the state over the age of 18 report speaking English less than very well. For those who speak a language in addition to, or other than, English, the number rises to 47%. English speaking ability can also be estimated within several linguistic communities. For example, 54% of Spanish speakers report speaking English less than very well. For speakers of

other Indo-European languages, it is 39%. For speakers of Asian/Pacific Island languages, it is 45%. These numbers cannot be taken to be a direct representation of the number of people in the state who would benefit from ESOL classes (due to the traditional underreporting of immigrant populations and due to the vagaries of self-assessment on language skills); however it can serve as a rough estimate. As with high school non-completers, not everybody who reports speaking English "less than very well" is interested in being in an ESOL program, but they represent a population that we can reasonably expect would benefit from being in such classes.

Within the selected linguistic groups, more older respondents self-assessed as speaking English less than very well (e.g., 78% of Spanish speakers 65 and older versus 51% of those between 18-64). Most ESOL programs are geared to the younger population, particularly because of the association between English speaking skills and employment. However, the older population requires English instruction, as well, particularly around issues such as health and community participation.

Table Seven: Self Reporting Speaking English Less Than "Very Well"
(Source: U.S. Census, 2010)

18 and over (952,352)

14% of whole state

47% of those who speak languages other than, or in addition to, English

—Spanish speakers	54%
—Other Indo-European Languages	39%
—Asian/Pacific Island Languages	45%
—Other Languages	42%

18 – 64 Years Old (787,629)

14% of whole state

44% of those who speak languages other than, or in addition to, English

—Spanish speakers	51%
—Other Indo-European Languages	36%
—Asian/Pacific Island Languages	42%
—Other Languages	29%

65 Years and over (164,723)

14% of whole state

59% of those who speak languages other than, or in addition to, English

—Spanish speakers	78%
—Other Indo-European Languages	53%
—Asian/Pacific Island Languages	66%
—Other Languages	52%

At the county level, the data is incomplete. The census did not capture data about English speaking skills for two different counties (Cape May and Salem). Table Eight contains data about the rest of the counties. As with non-completion, we can see raw numbers of those who report speaking English less than very well (e.g., Hudson – 146,964, Warren –2,340). From this

perspective, the larger counties not surprisingly have large numbers people reporting low levels of English speaking skills. These raw numbers can be compared to the general population of each county to get a sense of the demographics. For example, 29% of Hudson County reports speaking English less than very well, while only 3% in Warren County report doing so. Passaic (26%) and Union (24%) present similar numbers as Hudson. As will be discussed in the section devoted to Access, the current adult literacy system is not designed to take on these kind of numbers.

It is important here not to associate limited English speaking skills with education levels more generally. Although many immigrants do come to the United States with limited literacy or education in their own country, this is not true across the board. In New Jersey, there are 90,437 college-educated immigrants 25 years of age or older (21.5 percent of the college-educated immigrant labor force), who are either unemployed or underemployed, i.e. working in unskilled jobs such as dishwashers, security guards, and housemaids (Migration Policy Institute, 2012). However, rates of "brain waste," as this phenomenon is often called, are much higher among immigrants who attended colleges in their home countries. Although state-level data on country of education is unavailable, national data shows that 43.5 percent of Latin Americans and 32.9 percent of Africans educated abroad were working in unskilled occupations; unemployment rates for these populations were also twice as high as the native-born college-educated population (Batalova & Fix, 2008, 13-18). For this reason, organizations across the country are developing ESOL programs that meet the needs of particular immigrant cohorts. The needs of entry-level workers and those with professional degrees in their country of origin are not entirely the same. As the state moves forward in planning for adult literacy education, it should pay careful attention to variations within the population seeking ESOL programming.

Table Eight: Speaking English "Less Than Very Well" By County
(Sources: U.S. Census, 2010)

	Total Population 18+	**# Speak English Less than Very Well (18+)**	**% of 18+ Population**
Atlantic	210,782	26,073	12%
Bergen	702,210	118,710	17%
Burlington	345,418	14,604	4%
Camden	389,093	34,624	9%
Cape May		No data	
Cumberland	119,494	17,510	15%
Essex	589,093	98,790	17%
Gloucester	218,290	7,382	3%
Hudson	504,450	146,964	29%
Hunterdon	98,204	3,766	3%
Mercer	283,916	34,697	12%
Middlesex	625,735	118,288	19%
Monmouth	480,791	35,479	7%
Morris	375,156	39,113	10%
Ocean	442,736	20,925	5%
Passaic	377,541	97,461	26%
Salem		No data	
Somerset	243,271	27,676	11%
Sussex	113,541	3,405	3%
Union	406,264	98,927	24%
Warren	83,143	2,340	3%

Recommendations

* Given the significant need as outlined above, it is recommended that New Jersey, through the State Employment and Training Commission, adopt a vision for the adult education system which focuses on its foundation for workforce development, but outlines its broad scope. To this end, the following vision statement is offered as a model:

> In keeping with the Equipped for the Future model, the adult literacy system will provide adults learners with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in their roles as family members, citizens, and workers. As an integral part of the Workforce Investment System, the system will support skill development and credential attainment while providing a continuum of instructional services from basic adult education and beginning ESL through transitioning to postsecondary education and career/work readiness.

This statement is in alignment with the State's core value of Equipping the Workforce for Employment as articulated in New Jersey's Unified Workforce Investment Plan, but also consistent with the broad goals articulated in the Workforce Investment Act Title II (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act).

Access

One of the expressed reasons the current study was undertaken was a concern about the impact of budget cuts on the number of prospective learners receiving services. One key example of this was the elimination of state support for adult high schools in 2010. In some ways, the zeroing out of this line item represented the final step of a process that had seen the support reduced over the course of a decade. In 2002, 59 high schools provided education for 12,256 students. By 2011, only 1,882 students were enrolled in adult high school programs. The defunding of adult high schools is in keeping with a larger trend within the state, as a number of adult literacy related funding streams have been eliminated (e.g., aid for GED, aid for local adult literacy directors, Evening Schools for the Foreign Born, etc.). This reduction in state aid coincides with cuts in federal support for adult education. Thus, one of the driving questions

behind the study was what impacts these budget cuts had on access to education, understood as the number of learners enrolled in programs.

Additionally, in a previous SCALES study there had been some concern about the location of programs within counties. There was a suggestion that access to education was being limited by students' inability to physically get themselves to classes. From this perspective, it was not enough to count the number of funded slots or seats in a program – the ability of students to avail themselves of that opportunity to learn was just as important a consideration.

Analysis of the numbers of clients served and the physical location of programs was conducted using multiple sets of data. Each of these issues will be addressed below, followed by recommendations.

Numbers Served

The first part of this analysis focused on the number of students served by the state in PY 2010 (the most recent year with complete data). Performance data was collected from One Stops (WIA I programs), WIA II funded programs, Adult High Schools, Customized Training Programs and other state funded programs (e.g., support for ESOL from the New Jersey Department of State).

* The number of students enrolled in Adult Basic Education related courses was 19,432. This represents roughly 2% of residents in the state who have not completed their high school education. Services provided by Workforce Learning Links move the estimate closer to 3%.

* The number of students enrolled in ESOL related courses was 19,134. This represents roughly 2% of residents in the state who report speaking English less than very well.

As noted above, these two metrics (non-completion and self-reporting speaking English less than very well) cannot be understood to represent learners who are actively seeking spots in an adult literacy or ESOL classroom. However, since we can assume with some confidence that the vast majority of individuals in these cohorts would benefit from enrolling in such classes, they

represent a potential student base. Understood in this way, the state is currently providing service to only a small number (3%) of those individuals who need assistance in developing the kinds of skills that will help them enter the workforce, increase their earning power, support their families and participate in the life of their community. Additionally as the NAAL data previously mentioned shows, a portion of high school completers could benefit from adult literacy education, as well.

The state level data can be disaggregated, which allows us to look at what is happening at the county level. Table Nine contrasts the number of high school non-completers in a county with the number of individuals enrolled in ABE programs funded by the state or the federal government. For the purposes of this analysis, each of the four consortia that represent multiple counties is presented as one entity. Volunteer programs (such as libraries and community based organizations) who participate and who are funded within consortia are included, but those who operate outside of the state funding system are not (even if they take referrals from funded programs). It should be noted that these non-funded programs often act as a de facto part of the system and take on learners at the lowest level of literacy.

Table Nine: High School Non-Completers in ABE Programs

(Sources: U.S. Census, 2010; NJ Provision Data)

Four consortia (marked a, b, c, d) reported ABE as one unit

	Total Population 18+	**Number of HS NC 18+**	**Number in ABE**	**% of HS NC Pop.**
(a) Atlantic	210,782	29,195	973	3%
(a) Cape May	79,117	8,130		
(b) Cumberland	119,494	26,981	964	3%
(b) Salem	50,567	7,450		
(c) Hunterdon	98,204	8,228	483	2%
(c) Somerset	243,271	22,202		
(d) Morris	375,156	25,793	786	2%
(d)Sussex	113,541	9,528		
(d)Warren	83,143	8,304		
Bergen	702,210	59,626	743	1%
Burlington	345,418	29,293	720	2%
Camden	389,093	52,459	1,392	3%
Essex	589,093	99,190	2,732	3%
Gloucester	218,290	21,409	534	2%
Hudson	504,450	90,246	3,277	4%
Mercer	283,916	34,976	1,691	5%
Middlesex	625,735	68,884	1,353	2%
Monmouth	480,791	39,479	894	2%
Ocean	442,736	43,835	694	2%
Passaic	377,541	64,287	1,153	2%
Union	406,264	66,292	1,067	2%

The county level data do not vary much from the state level data. One county (Mercer) is providing services to 5% of their potential student base, another is at the 4% level (Hudson), four at 3% (Atlantic/Cape May; Cumberland/Salem; Camden; Essex) and the rest are at 2% or less. Given the small numbers of those served, it is quite possible that these slight variations do not represent major differences in program operation at the county level, but there is a potential for this to be the case. It is also possible that funding calculations at the state level help create this variation. Regardless, in no county is there a large percentage of the potential student base being served – access does appear to be a real issue for those who have not completed their high school education.

This case is very similar when looking at the number of potential ESOL students being served at the county level. Table Ten presents data for the number of people in a given county that report being able to speak English less than very well, the number enrolled in state or federal funded ESOL programs, and the percentage of the potential student cohort being served. Again, this does not include the many community based or volunteer organizations that provide English language education.

Table Ten: Speaker of English "Less than Very Well" vs. Learners in ESOL Programs

(Sources: U.S. Census, 2010; NJ Provision Data)

Four consortia (marked a, b, c, d) reported ABE as one unit.

	Total Population 18+	**# Speak English Less than Very Well (18+)**	**Number in ESOL**	**% of 18+ LTVW Pop.**
(a) Atlantic	210,782	26,073	882	<3%
(a) Cape May		No data		
(b) Cumberland	119,494	17,510	846	<5%
(b) Salem		No data		
(c) Hunterdon	98,204	3,766	387	1%
(c) Somerset	243,271	27,676		
(d) Morris	375,156	39,113	1194	3%
(d)Sussex	113,541	3,405		
(d)Warren	83,143	2,340		
Bergen	702,210	118,710	1400	1%
Burlington	345,418	14,604	352	2%
Camden	389,093	34,624	562	2%
Essex	589,093	98,790	3977	4%
Gloucester	218,290	7,382	191	3%
Hudson	504,450	146,964	3428	2%
Mercer	283,916	34,697	913	3%
Middlesex	625,735	118,288	2218	2%
Monmouth	480,791	35,479	805	2%
Ocean	442,736	20,925	607	3%
Passaic	377,541	97,461	2591	3%
Union	406,264	98,927	2310	2%

Here again, there are only slight variations. Essex is the only county providing service to 4% of the potential student base, and most of the other counties are serving 2 - 3%. Concern about access for those who need to improve their English would also appear to be well placed.

A separate strand of analysis was conducted looking at historic changes in the numbers served. From PY08 (the earliest year with a complete data set) until PY10, the following changes have taken place.

* Students served by adult high schools have decreased by ≈ 4,511
* Students in WIA II ABE have increased ≈700
* Students in WIA II ESL have decreased ≈2,000
* Students in Learning Links ABE/GED/PCB have increased ≈ 393
* Students in Learning Links ESL have decreased ≈ 51
* Students getting services at Literacy Volunteers NJ has remained steady at ≈ 2,000
  (This refers to LVNJ programs that do not receive funds as members of consortia)

Taken together, this is a net loss of 5,469 students. This suggests that students who were enrolled in adult high schools that were defunded did not enter the adult literacy system in other capacities or if they did, they took slots that would otherwise been available to other students. Rather than being a reorganization of services, it stands simply as a reduction in services.

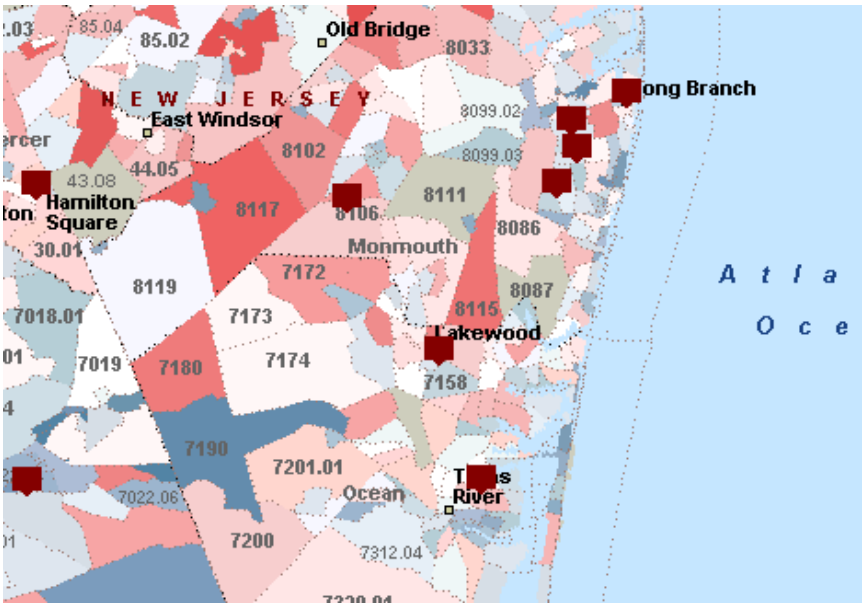
It should be noted that in PY10, federal funding covered services for 2,503 clients at the Learning Links. Without these funds, the net loss of students would be even more dramatic. This federal money is not likely to be continued, so the Learning Links will have to survive on state funding alone. However, current projections are for continued decreases in state-originated funding for adult literacy. The FY12 appropriation was $3.6 million. The initial FY13 appropriation is $1.6 million. Such drastic loss in funds will lead to the closing of Learning Links, just as the elimination of the funds for adult high schools led to the closure of those schools. This means that even more adult learners will be leaving the system. Additionally, the closure of some GED testing centers is being attributed to the reduction in state adult literacy dollars, which some local areas used to support these centers. These cuts represent a stepping back from a robust adult basic education system, even as federal policies stipulate participation in adult basic education as a criterion for eligibility in certain programs (e.g., undocumented

residents applying for deferred action on potential deportation need to have a high school diploma or be enrolled in a GED or diploma granting program).

Location

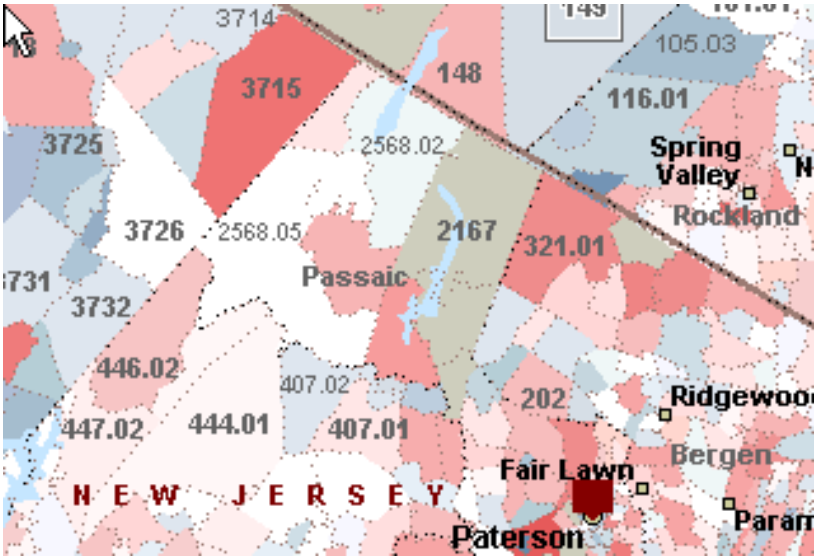
As noted above, in a previous SCALES report there had been questions about the location of programs within counties. To move beyond anecdotal accounts, a separate analysis was run to assess the validity of this concern. The first step in this process was the generation of two lists of programs – one ABE, one ESOL - from state reports and the survey distributed to WIA II funded programs. The zip codes for the locations of classes were then placed on a demographic map of the state that color-coded the population density of zip code areas. In Map One below, more densely populated areas of the county are shaded a dark red, and more sparsely populated areas of the county are shaded dark blue. These maps note population distribution without regards to level of education, and thus cannot be said to map actual demand for adult literacy services, but they do suggest areas that have the potential for a large number of students. ABE classes are marked with red squares and ESOL classes are marked with blue. The squares do not change shape or get larger to indicate multiple classes in the same zip code. Maps for each county are included in Appendix III.

Map One: Monmouth County



A comparison of the maps for each county does show variation around class location. For example, in Map One, one cluster of classes is near the geographic center of Monmouth County, which is adjacent to several densely populated areas. Six other clusters of classes are spread out along the eastern part of the county, each of them within or near more densely populated areas. These locations should provide relatively easy access to large numbers of students.

Map Two: Passaic and Sussex County



Map Two presents a different constellation of class clusters. Classes are clustered around the southeastern part of Passaic County, near the Bergen County border. There are no classes in the somewhat densely populated northwestern parts of the county. Additionally, since there are no classes in northeastern Sussex County, this leaves a large area with no services.

Although it is not the case that every county has such open areas, overall the analysis suggests that prior concern about the location of programs was warranted. Currently the state provides no guidelines where programs should be located within a county. Moreover, since program locations are determined on a county-by-county basis (as a result of local responses to the state's request for proposals), it is possible that adjacent areas of two counties could together constitute a large undeserved area.

Concerns about the locations of programs were also expressed during the stakeholder meetings that were held as part of the study. In particular, participants indicated that for many students access to classes was dependent upon the availability of public transportation. Although

this was an issue across all three stakeholder meetings, the point was made most forcefully during the meeting held in the southern part of the state. Here there was a concern about how reductions in bus lines were leading to students being unable to attend classes. Individual programs and consortia are mindful of such considerations when making decisions about where to locate programs, but they have little or no input into public transportation policy itself. This leaves programs and the students that use them at the mercy of decisions made outside of education circles.

Recommendations

* The state should articulate a governing philosophy on service provision and explain budget decisions in light of that philosophy.

> Given the cyclical nature of federal and state economies, it is natural that monies available for adult education will rise and fall. Even in best-case scenarios, budgets are usually small. Some states have dealt with this issue by explicitly limiting the number of students that receive services in order to provide a higher level of service to those in the system. Another approach is to cast as wide a net as possible, providing more limited services to more students. In New Jersey, the reduction in services of almost 7,000 students since 2008 does not appear to be part of a plan to provide a higher level of service to those still in the system. Budget lines (such as adult high schools) were cut independent of plans to address the needs of adult learners. For this reason, rather than a clear approach to what the adult literacy system should look like, the network of services evolves from a series of ad hoc funding decisions. Moving forward, these types of decisions should have to be articulated vis-à-vis a governing philosophy on service provision, not simply explained as part of a response to a budget crisis.

* There must be increased levels of state funding and the state should advocate for increased levels of federal funding. There must also be better integration and coordination between funding streams, improved accountability to ensure that enrollment outcomes are aligned with funding allocations and that program goals are met.

* Building on LWD's current professional development efforts, WIA Title II Leadership Funds, as well as other dollars earmarked for leadership or professional development should be targeted to spur innovation and facilitate leadership with a focus on expanding capacity and improving services to better meet learners' needs. Leadership and professional development activities should support system change that aligns with the Unified State Plan as well as the strategic vision for adult education as outlined in this report. Any assessments of program performance should include targeted feedback and opportunities for professional development and mentoring.

* The state should support the use of technology to expand access to educational services

Given the current reduction in seats and the difficulties some students have in getting to programs, the state should utilize technology to expand educational services. Options for this include the development of distance learning programs that allow learners to participate regardless of their location. This can take on different forms. For example, in California, their successful distance learning project was mostly self-directed and completed via materials distributed by the state. As another example, adults in Pennsylvania engaged in distance learning interact with a dedicated tutor who assigns work, reviews their materials, and provide tailored assistance. Such a distance learning initiative would not replicate the work being done in the Workforce Learning Links, and access should not be limited to attending particular centers or programs. This effort should be coordinated at the state-level to avoid the creation of duplicative services and to make best use of resources already available online.

For example, a LWD resource center should coordinate a website that provide access to online resources for adults who wish to enroll in a program, for current students who need additional materials to complement the work they doing in a program, and for those who are involved in self-study. The center should:

- Create a website that provides a directory of adult education programs.

- Contain a collection of online study resources for learners. These resources should be vetted by a group of teachers and learners and should include study materials and practice tests.
- Link to One-Stop online information/resources which will reinforce for the learner the connection between literacy and workforce development.

By necessity, this will require additional spending on the part of the state.

* Grant applications should present a rationale for program locations

Given the need to place programs where students have easy access to them, WIB Literacy Plans and WIA II Consortia proposals should explicitly address how program locations fit with local patterns of population density and public transportation resources. Plans that are submitted to the state without such information should be returned for revisions. The state should provide technical assistance to help committees and consortia develop this process. This will require additional funding for training. One potential source of such funds is WIA II money designed to be used for leadership and system development.

Intensity

Research into learner progress in adult literacy education indicates that it takes approximately 100 - 120 hours of instruction to make a level gain (Mikulecky, Henard & Lloyd, 1992). This number has come to be a rough standard that guides both curriculum development and assessment scheduling. However, research indicates that very few states achieve this as an average level of study intensity. Benseman and Comings (2008) found only four states with average length of stays higher than 100 hours (California, Florida, Massachusetts and North Carolina). More than half the states (36) reported average stays of less than 80 hours.

In addition, studies have found that more intensive, shorter duration programs were associated with higher completion and graduation rates (Comings, Sum & Uvin, 2000). From another perspective, "students who receive 100 hours of instruction in classes that meet for 12 hours per week are as likely to earn a high school credential as students who receive 225 hours of

instruction in classes that meet for 6 hours per week" (pg. 65-66). Here weekly intensity saves 125 hours of instructional hours, or at least four months of study. Given the priority placed on helping adult learners make progress and enter the workforce, intensity of services is a key strategy. Although not all learners can be in class that many hours a week, states do recognize the value of having those programs available. For example, in Massachusetts the range for programs for working adults is 7 to 9 hours per week, while it is 12 to 20 hours for those who are unemployed.

Given the need for an intense level of study to make progress, members of the working group and others in the field of adult literacy in New Jersey have been expressing a concern that budget cuts have reduced the weekly amount of instructional hours and limited the ability of student to stay in programs. Programs report having to cut their weekly hours of instruction from 20 to 12 or even lower, thus making it harder for students to approach the 100 – 120 hour mark.

To assess the level of intensity in the state, a survey was drafted and circulated to WIA II programs (see Appendix II). The survey asked for information about each class the program offers, including the days and hours of instruction. Additionally, programs were asked to indicate students' average length of stay. Although this survey did not make it possible to make historical comparisons about the nature of instructional hours, it does provide a snapshot of the current state of affairs. We received results from 67 of the 85 programs for a return rate of 79%. However, every survey was not complete, so there are some limitations to the data. The data collected was analyzed for two different dimensions of instructional intensity. First, information was collected about the number of instructional hours provided each week (see Appendix IV: Intensity of Services By County). Second, information was collected on the reported average length of stay (see Appendix V – Length of Stay by County).

Instructional Hours Per Week

Data was collected on 364 ESOL classes and 183 ABE classes across the state. Although there is variation within these categories (e.g., ESOL, Civics, Beginning Literacy, GED), for the sake of this analysis they were aggregated according the general content. Rather than calculating the average number of hours of instruction, the mode (or most common number of hours) was determined. The rationale for this choice was that it was felt that given the wide range of

potential hours of instruction (ranging from 2 to more than 20), an average would not provide a clear picture of what most classes look like.

In each case (ESOL and ABE) the mode across the state was 4 hours a week. A caveat is in order, however, about the mode for ABE. There does not appear to be uniform way of scheduling pre-GED and GED instruction. In some counties, discrete topics (e.g., math, writing) were reported as separate classes (often meeting for 4 hours a week). In other counties, these classes were grouped together and reported as one 20 hour a week class. For that reason, it is worth noting that the second most common level of instruction in ABE is 12 hours a week, and the third is 20 hours a week. See Table Eleven below for a breakdown by hours per week.

Taking into account the caveat about ABE, currently 40% of the instruction is for 6 hours or less (typically twice a week for 3 hours). Another 40% run between 7 to 12 hours a week. Finally, 19% meet between 13 and 20 hours a week. Given the fact that programs may have reported data differently, one reading of this is that there may be a fairly even distribution of average hours across the three time frames. ESOL is a different story, however, as 59% of programs report offering 6 or less instructional hours per week. At the next level, 30% of programs report offering between 7 to 12 hours ESOL instruction per week. Only 11% of programs offer 13 hours or more ESOL per week (See Table Eleven).

Table Eleven: Number of Hours of Instruction

	#	Mode	Total Hrs.
ESOL	364	4	2090+
ABE	183	4* (12/20)	1649+

Hours of provision per week

(Classes reporting at a given level / % of all classes reported)

	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*	*10*
ESOL	3	25	23	90	28	46	18	15	29	7
		7%	6%	25%	8%	13%			8%	
ABE	0	6	8	32	10	18	6	18	16	14
				17%		10%		10%	9%	

	11	*12*	*13*	*14*	*15*	*16*	*17*	*18*	*19*	*20+*
ESOL	12	29	2	0	9	12	0	12	0	4
		8%								
ABE	0	20	2	1	8	3	1	4	0	16
		11%								9%

Although it is true that not every student has the same capacity or interest in pursuing a large number of hours of weekly instruction, concerns expressed by program staff appear to be corroborated. There are limited opportunities for such study for students, and the situation is more pronounced for English language learners. There is notable variability across counties (see

Table Twelve: Mode (Hours of Instruction Per Week) Per County).

Table Twelve: Mode (Hours of Instruction Per Week) Per County

Bergen		
	#	*Mode*
ESL	40	5
ABE	12	7

Burlington		
	#	*Mode*
ESL	5	12
ABE	7	6

Camden		
	#	*Mode*
ESL	2	15
ABE	4	20

Cmbrlnd/Salem		
	#	*Mode*
ESL	11*	12
ABE	12*	12

Essex		
	#	*Mode*
ESL	57	12
ABE	40*	4

Gloucester		
	#	*Mode*
ESL	6	6
ABE	6	12

Hudson		
	#	*Mode*
ESL	44	6
ABE	31	10

Hnterdon/Somerset		
	#	*Mode*
ESL	27	4
ABE	8	4

Mercer		
	#	*Mode*
ESL	48	4
ABE	9	8

Monmouth		
	#	*Mode*
ESL	39	3
ABE	5	15

Morris / Warren		
	#	*Mode*
ESL	5	6
ABE	15	4

Ocean		
	#	*Mode*
ESL	7	6
ABE	4	6

Passaic		
	#	*Mode*
ESL	42	4
ABE	18	4

Union		
	#	*Mode*
ESL	29	9
ABE	12	18

In only two consortia are the modes for both ESOL and ABE above 10. One is Camden (ESOL = 15 / ABE = 20) and the other is Cumberland/Salem (ESOL = 12 / ABE = 12). These numbers contrast with Hunterdon/Somerset (a mode of 4 for each) and Ocean (a mode of 6 for each). Passaic's mode of 4 hours per week for ABE is most likely a result of their listing GED classes individually. A key question here is the reason for such discrepancies. Is it a result of consultation with potential students (who indicate a preference for a particular number of hours per week), or is it a result of difficult decisions being made about resource management? The need is present across the state, so it is unlikely that consumer demand for particular types of hours varies a great deal between counties. The picture that emerges is that students in different counties encounter different systems of service provision. This may or may not be beneficial, but it should first be determined if this situation arises through planning or through ad hoc decision making.

Length of Stay

The number of hours of instruction that are offered per week are important to note because weekly intensity increases the likelihood that students will be able to reach the 100 – 120 hours of instruction that are typically needed for level gain. As noted above, in most states learners do not remain in programs for that long. To assess the situation in New Jersey, additional data was gleamed from the WIA II surveys (Appendix II), which contained a question about students' average lengths of stays.

Much of the data in the survey was not useful for this analysis. Of the 364 ESOL classes reported on the surveys, only 225 (62%) provided specific information about the number of hours students stay in the program on average. Many noted large ranges (3 – 6 months) or more subjective descriptions ("They stay as long as they need to"). This situation was more pronounced regarding the ABE programs, as only 92 of 183 classes (50%) had specific data. Statewide results are presented in Table Thirteen below. County level data is presented in Appendix V – Length of Stay by County. Longer average stays were reported in four counties (Bergen, Essex, Hunterdon/ Somerset, Mercer and Passaic), but this may only be result of variations in reporting noted above.

Table Thirteen: Reported Length of Stay in Programs

State	*Less than 40*	*41 - 60*	*61 - 80*	*81 - 100*	*101 - 120*	*121 and over*	*Total*
ESL	21 (9%)	49 (22%)	50 (22%)	43 (19%)	25 (10%)	37 (17%)	225
ABE	12 (13%)	22 (24%)	25 (27%)	3 (3%)	4 (4%)	26 (28%)	92

Given the limited number of responses, the numbers above cannot be considered to represent an accurate picture of what is happening in the state. However, they do raise some questions. With regards to ESOL classes, 53% report an average stay for 80 hours or less. (Note that this is not the same as saying that 53% of students in the state stay for 80 hours or less, because class and reporting size varies). Almost a third (31%) of classes report an average stay of 60 hours or less. Potentially a large number of ESOL students are not approaching the length of time in a class that they need to make real progress. The same is true in the ABE classes we have data for. Here 64% of classes report average stays of 80 hours or less. This means that large numbers of students who enroll in ABE courses are at risk of not staying long enough to improve their skills. The actual percentage may be somewhat lower (a function of classes with longer averages not reporting), but it is unlikely that the average stay is over 100 hours.

During the stakeholder meetings and in the WIA II surveys some programs provided insight into why some students might leave prior to 100 hours. Several programs noted that because of the way reimbursements for services are structured, it is fiscally impossible for them to retain students for that long. They suggested that at a certain point a program is compelled to ask a student to leave (or go back on the waiting list) so that they can enroll a new student and encumber new funds. Although this is not an intended State outcome, at least for some programs reimbursement policy and budget issues determine learner tenure rather than their progress or commitment to study. Along these same lines, these programs noted that it is difficult or impossible to receive new students who are referrals from other agencies within their consortium, since no new money follows that student. This means that referrals can be made and logged, but that they may not lead to students actually enrolling in another program. Here again, a student's

tenure in a program of study may be determined by financial considerations, rather than educational ones.

Recommendations

* Students should have the opportunity to stay in programs long enough to make progress.

> Given the fact that on average a learner needs 100 to 120 hours of instruction to make a level gain, there should be no barriers put in the way of students that limit their ability to make progress. As a first step, the state should adjust the reimbursement system so that programs do not feel compelled to ask students to leave. Some of this will require added funds to be put into the adult literacy education system. However, it is also possible that current federal reporting and accountability mandates compel this behavior. If this is the case, then the state should explore waivers regarding funding stream accountability in order to create more flexibility in program provision.

* Each local system should have a learner referral transition plan that identifies the process for learners to move between programs when appropriate without interruption in study. Once in place, this plan needs to be evaluated to ensure that on the ground policy and practice do not run counter to its realization. This may require directly addressing the ways programs are reimbursed for services.

* Within each county or WIB area, there should be at least one program that provides a highly intensive instructional option (defined as at least 20 instructional hours per week) for learners. There should also be a number of programs that offer at least 12 hours of instruction per week. Learners who cannot make these kinds of commitments should have flexible options for study.

> Given the variability within the state in terms of typical hours of instruction per week, the state should work with counties to ensure that there is *at least one* program in every county that provides ESOL and ABE classes at a highly intensive level. Not every student is in the position of being able to commit to multiple hours every day, but some

are. Moreover, programs that are focused on moving students from ABE or ESOL into postsecondary education have found that limited hours of instruction per week decrease student motivation, as the student feels like the process is taking too long. This in turn leads to decreases in likelihood that the student will complete the program. The state has already set the goal of ABE as at least one year of postsecondary education and industry certification, and structured, highly intensive programs are one way to make progress toward that goal. Less intensive classes should still provide services to students who are not currently on that same trajectory. This may require additional funds, and the state should explore targeted grant writing - many states across the country have taken on restructuring projects with help of external funders.

* Funding should be provided to support at least one district diploma program for adult learners in designated geographic area. Options for funding should be explored at the State and district level.

* Technology-based resources that complement and extend learning taking place in existing programs should be made available.

Given the need to increase the number hours of instruction per week, the state should work with counties and programs to develop hybrid classes for various areas of study. As noted in the recommendation regarding access, the use of technology should be organized rather than approached piece-meal. For example, Learning Labs could be set up within each county. Student work at these learning labs should be coordinated and part of coherent programs of study. The learning labs need to be staffed with teachers who understand best practices in the use of technology for adult learning.

Articulation

As ratified by SCALES, the goal of adult literacy education in the state is for students to complete at least one year of postsecondary education and/or receive industry certification. For this to take place, several things have to happen. First, students must be able to identify this objective as a long-term goal and they must have a clear path to follow. Second, because students who enter college via developmental programs are less likely to complete their programs and take longer to do so, their adult secondary education must prepare them to enter college via traditional credit-bearing classes. With limited resources, it is crucial for all the programs in a county to collaborate in order to maximize results.

The extent of articulation in the state was analyzed through the use of several data sources. The primary resource was information gathered at three stakeholder meetings and a conference call of One Stop Operators. Data was also collected via surveys distributed to WIB Literacy Committees (Appendix I) and through a review of selected WIA II grant proposals submitted by consortia. Additional information was gathered through discussions with members of the study's working group. Two key themes emerged from this analysis. First, there is a concern about the lack of clear transition structures at the county level. Second, there is a concern about the ways that funding requirements determine a students' path through the system.

Lack of Clear Structures at the County Level

As part of the national trend towards helping adult learners transition between ABE programs and/or advanced career training, several models have been developed. As Strawn (2010) notes, what have been called 'career pathways' approaches include "Multiple entry and exit points, with marketable postsecondary credentials at each step of the pathway" (pg. 15). For example, in Wisconsin, the RISE Initiative works to integrate modular programs offered at technical colleges with existing adult basic education and ESOL programming. In Washington State, the influential iBest program integrates ABE and ESOL content with college level workforce development. To succeed, these types of programs require "Close partnerships between education and training sectors, and with employers, unions, community-based organizations, and social service agencies" (pg. 18).

There is justifiable concern about the degree to which this kind of close planning is taking place in New Jersey. Studies commissioned by the state in the last decade noted the system was fragmented, with multiple state departments dealing with dozens of funding streams. The re-organization of services that placed adult literacy under the Department of Labor and Workforce Development was an effort to make coordination easier and more efficient. Despite gains along those lines, when it comes to the issue of transitions, the state still appears to be suffering from fragmentation. Responses regarding the transition of learners from Workforce Learning Links to postsecondary education or certification varied. In some locales, the One Stop was housed in a community college, making the transition much smoother. In other locations, the system was based on referrals and depended on the skill and knowledge of the counselor. There was little sense of the close partnerships between multiple sectors noted above.

From another perspective, some One Stop operators reported having materials that were contextualized within particular fields (thus preparing learners for specific certification programs), while other reported high number of students entering community college via non-credit programs. During the stakeholder meetings, some WIA II funded programs noted that they had a system in place to ease transitions, while other felt like they were not aware of all the options and resources that exist. Taken together, it paints a portrait of individual programs who are working hard to help their students, but who may or may not be able to get their students on clear career or educational pathways. None of the consortia grant proposals had clear or explicit structures detailing how a student would move from one level of education to the next.

In earlier SETC reports, there has been some concern about how well the WIB Literacy Committees have been functioning as a means to coordinate resources at the county level. As explained in the WIB Handbook, among other responsibilities, these committees are expected to:

* Work with stakeholders to establish a comprehensive vision for literacy services to effectively prepare local residents for career pathways.
* Develop a comprehensive Literacy Strategic Plan that describes how the local area will develop a literacy system that spans multiple funding streams and multiple literacy providers and how Workforce Learning Links located in each comprehensive One-Stop Career Center will be utilized as part of the overall system of literacy.

* Foster collaborative community relationships that expand services and support the local and State strategic vision for literacy services. Asset and resource mapping, relationship-building and ongoing engagement of employers and service providers are important strategies for ensuring implementation of the literacy services vision.

What was striking in the survey responses was the variation in how that coordination was described. Several committees noted specific ways that various institutions or organization were consulted, while others simply explained that other partners were invited to be at the meetings. This may be in keeping with regulations that require consultation and participation, but not actual collaboration. Additionally, the WIB Literacy Committees varied with regards to the partners they were working with. Especially notable is how some reports indicated no relationship to local library literacy programs (even though that is mandated in the handbook). Given the role libraries have traditionally played in working with the lowest levels learners, it is important that they be connected to a larger transition system.

Funding Stream Driving Education

In addition to concerns about how well the system as a whole is articulated (or whether it constitutes a system), a common theme that arose in the stakeholder meetings and conversation with the One Stop operators was the ways that access to services is driven by the funding streams supporting the client, rather than their actual literacy or educational needs. The data collection methods used in this study did not allow for any quantitative analysis of this issue, nor was there enough qualitative data to suggest the specifics of the problem. However, multiple times program administrators noted that rather than the system having multiple entries, exits and transition points, many learners were locked into the requirements of whatever funding mechanism they entered the system under. As one example of this, some WIA I programs expressed a concern that TANF and other clients need to do 15 community service hours a week, which limits the amount of instruction they can receive around basic skills.

Recommendations

* State level coordination of adult literacy should be strengthened to build a coherent system rather than a collection of loosely coupled programs. Policy should facilitate integration of

literacy programs through the workforce system; and to improve system accountability, a statewide information sharing process should be instituted semiannually. Likewise on a semi-annual basis representatives from all state agencies that are responsible for adult literacy initiatives should meet to share information and discuss coordination and integration of programs and services.

* The SETC should issue guidance that outlines the role of local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) in oversight of the literacy system. Guidance should include instructions on development of local/regional adult literacy plans that align local systems with a statewide system vision and the literacy design elements and instructional delivery options delineated in these recommendations. Planning and implementing a reconfigured system is an ambitious endeavor and will require significant work on both the part of the State and local areas. As such the SETC (recommendations developed through SCALES but approved by the SETC) should identify major state-level issues that need to be addressed. The SETC should draft planning guidelines in concert with the Unified State Plan guidelines to ensure comprehensive planning endeavors. A phase-in approach to planning and implementation is recommended with July 2015 as the target date.

* The SETC should work with each WIB Literacy Committee to ensure that all required participants are active members of that committee. The SETC should also provide for technical assistance and opportunities for committees across the state to share best practices. In addition, the SETC should ensure that WIB Literacy Plans are up to date and accessible to the public.

* The reconfigured state-based, locally delivered adult literacy system should include the following design elements and instructional components:

- Adult Basic Education (ABE), English as a Second Language (ESL) and Civics education leading to skill advancement as measured by approved tests and other relevant measures;

- High School Completion leading to a district diploma (as in an adult high school) or a state issued diploma granted as a result of completing equivalency exams (currently GED) or 30 college credit option;
- Postsecondary Readiness/Transitions leading to college credit or 24-30 credit certificate and/or industry-focused training leading to industry-recognized certificate, e.g. apprenticeship, ASE, etc.;
- Workforce Literacy leading to improved workplace literacy skills and if appropriate, the Work Readiness Credential. (The Work Readiness Profile should be adopted as the skill standard for basic work readiness and the Work Readiness Credential should be metric for meeting this basic standard).
- Basic Computer Readiness based on an agreed upon standard

The State should direct local areas to provide a variety of instructional delivery options such as:

- Teacher facilitated
- Tutoring (especially for learners with low literacy levels)
- Learner directed (instructor supported)
- Online learning (hybrid option)
- Computer-driven/self-paced with instructor supports available

* As part of the guidance from the SETC, WIBs, working through their literacy councils, should be charged with determining appropriate strategies to coordinate the operational functions of the reconfigured local adult education system; develop a process for shared governance to facilitate collaboration; and identify performance metrics to ensure uniform and timely reporting to funders and the SETC.

* To facilitate articulation between programs and tracking progress and performance, a system-wide uniform student and program data management system should be available to all literacy programs. WIA Title II programs are successfully using the Literacy Adult and Community Education System (LACES) to manage their data. The feasibility of using this system for data management of Workforce Learning Link programs and other adult literacy programs as appropriate should be explored.

Additional Recommendations

In addition to recommendations noted above, the following aspects of state leadership will be key in moving forward.

* SCALES should be the forum for facilitating adult literacy policy development, planning and oversight as noted in the legislation that established this Council. As such, State agencies, boards, and councils should engage SCALES in broad policy and planning discussions and as appropriate, share program data with SCALES. This in no way should be construed to abrogate the responsibilities or authorities of agencies, boards, or councils, but to provide them with a vehicle for greater stakeholder input.

* A unit with a focus on professional development and which serves as an information resource center for adult educators should be established. The center should support innovation and capacity-building within the system. It is also recommended that at a minimum, the center should:

- Link practitioners to resources that identify best practices for postsecondary transitions, use of technology in instruction, integrating basic skills instruction with occupational training, etc.
- Sponsor professional development offerings.
- Provide a calendar of US Department of Education sponsored professional development activities. To the extent possible and appropriate, the adult education office should participate in these professional development activities and then disseminate information back to the field.

* The State Council for Adult Literacy Education Services (SCALES), working with Stakeholder state agencies, adult literacy practitioners, and experts in designated fields, should prepare a series of information briefs to facilitate planning and policy development in the following areas:

- technology-based resources that can be used to complement and extend learning taking place in existing literacy programs;
- components of a clear career and educational pathway that begins at the adult literacy level and continues to postsecondary education and/or industry certification; and
- contextualized learning principles.

* To address the particular needs of highly skilled immigrants and potential entrepreneurs, efforts to support the blending of public and private funds with the goal of targeting resources and training to this population should be explored.

One Option Moving Forward

The working group has proposed this as a possible timeline for acting on the recommendations of the report.

Year One

◦The state identifies what will be required within each county and how it will be funded

◦The state explores waivers to provide added flexibility for provision

◦Technology options are identified and requirements for their implementation are assessed

—Year Two

◦New curriculum guidelines and resources are developed for each level in the sequence

◦Technical support is provided to counties for developing plans and resources

◦WIB Literacy Plans are drafted that address the larger goals

—Year Three

◦ Rolling out of new resources and requirements

—Year Four

◦Assessment of initial implementation completed

Appendices

Appendix I – Survey of WIB Literacy Boards

Appendix II – Survey of WIA II Funded Programs

Appendix III – Maps of Class Locations By County

Appendix IV – Intensity of Services by County

Appendix V – Length of Stay by County

Appendix I: Survey of WIB Literacy Boards

State Council for Adult Literacy Education Services

WIB Adult Literacy Program Questionnaire

Please respond to the items below regarding the adult literacy education system in your WIB area. Your responses are very important. They will help SCALES better understand the local literacy delivery system and the level of integration with the workforce investment system.

Thank you in advance for your responses. Please email completed questionnaire to Diane Evans at diane.evans@dol.state.nj.us by December 22, 2011

1. Please indicate which WIB area: _____

2. Staff person completing this questionnaire: _____

   _____

3. The WIB ensures that all potential adult education and literacy providers, including the New Jersey public library system and literacy volunteer programs, have an opportunity to participate in and/or on the Literacy Planning Committee.

   ____ Yes _____ No

   If "Yes," how is this formally organized? _____

   _____

   If "No," what is preventing this from taking place? _____

   _____

4. The WIA Title II lead agency actively participates on the WIB Literacy Planning Committee.

   ___ Yes _____ No

   If "Yes," what has made this possible? _____

   _____

   If "No," what is preventing this from taking place? _____

   _____

5. WIA Title II programs are well integrated with One-Stop system.

_____ Yes _____ No

If "Yes," how is this formally organized? _____

_____

In "No," what is preventing this from taking place? _____

_____

6. There is a formal referral process between the WIA Title II consortium and the Workforce Learning Link.

___ Yes _____ No

If "Yes," how is this formally organized? _____

_____

In "No," what is preventing this from taking place? _____

_____

7. There is a process in place to help learners transition from Workforce Learning Links to postsecondary programs such as the county college, technical schools, apprenticeship.

_____ Yes _____ No

If "Yes," how is this formally organized? _____

_____

In "No," what is preventing this from taking place? _____

_____

8. Please complete the chart below for locally available adult literacy programs beyond WIA Title II and Workforce Learning Links.

   a. Name of program?

   b. Does your local workforce system provide any funding to these programs to support learner participation?

   c. Does your local workforce system have a process in place for referrals with these programs

d. What types of literacy services (e.g., Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education, ESL, Work Readiness, Computer literacy) are provided?

Name of program	**Provide funding**		**Formal referral process**		**Types of literacy services**	**Other**
	Yes	No	Yes	No		

Thank you again for completing the questionnaire.

Appendix II: Survey of WIA II Funded Programs

1. Program Name _____

   A. Location(s) _____ _____

   B. Name of lead agency _____

   C. Contact person _____

   D. Telephone number _____

   E. Email _____

2. List each adult literacy class offered by your program and then provide the following additional information for each class:

   A. Location

   B. Days of the week and time of instruction

   C. Range of enrollment for Fall 2011 (minimum number and maximum number)

   D. Maximum hours a learner can be enrolled in the class for the program year (2011-2012)

   E. Average length of learners' enrollment in the class.

3. Is there a limit to the number of weeks/months a student can remain in your WIA Title II funded program? _____

   _____

4. What do you tell students when you no longer have a slot in the classroom for them?

   _____

   _____

5. Can the learner be referred to another program, agency or One-Stop for additional literacy services?

   ____ Yes ____ No

6. Is there a formal process in place to refer/move learners to other programs?

____ Yes ____ No

If "Yes," describe: _____

_____

_____

If "yes," which programs do you most frequently refer learners to?

____ Another program in the Title II consortium?

____ Literacy volunteer program?

____ Workforce Learning Link?

____ Other, please specify. _____

If "No," what is preventing referrals from taking place? _____

_____

_____

7. Do you have a waiting list of potential learners?

____ Yes ____ No

If "Yes," approximately how many people are on it? _____

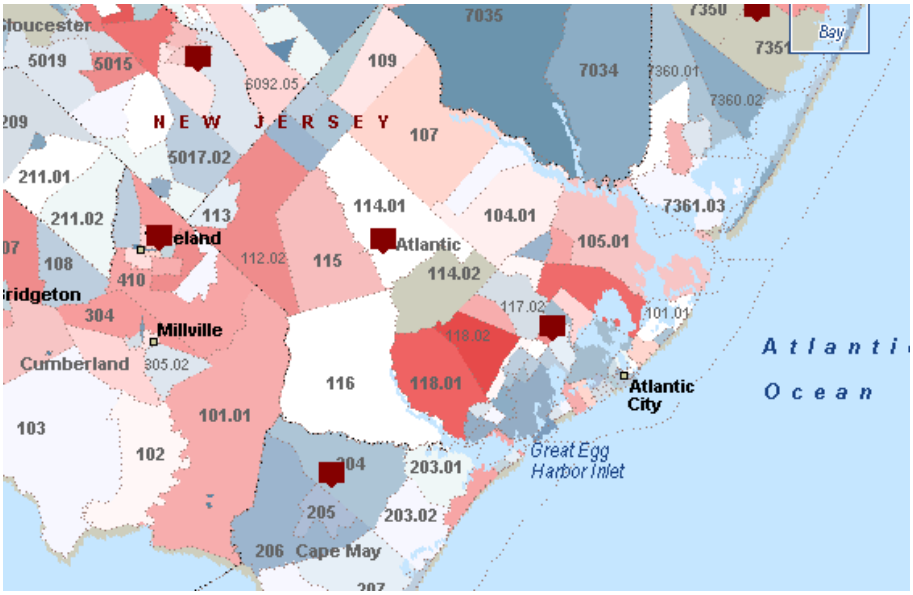
Appendix III: Maps of Class Locations By County

Notes: The data set used did not represent all classes in the state. Some programs had not returned their surveys at the time the analysis was run, which creates gaps that are not representative actual service distribution (e.g., Middlesex County).

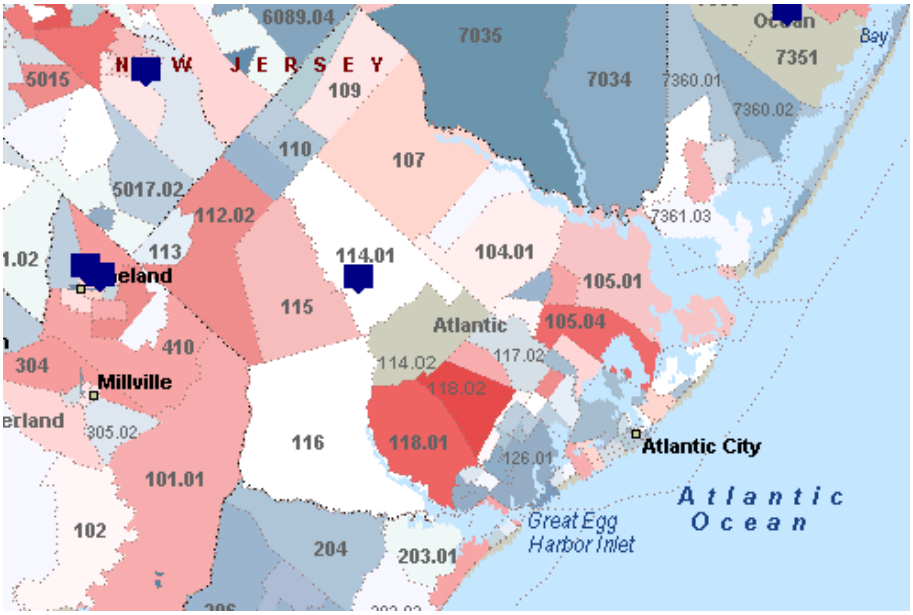
Each map is not exclusive to the county in question. It may have data from surrounding counties.

Atlantic

ABE Programs

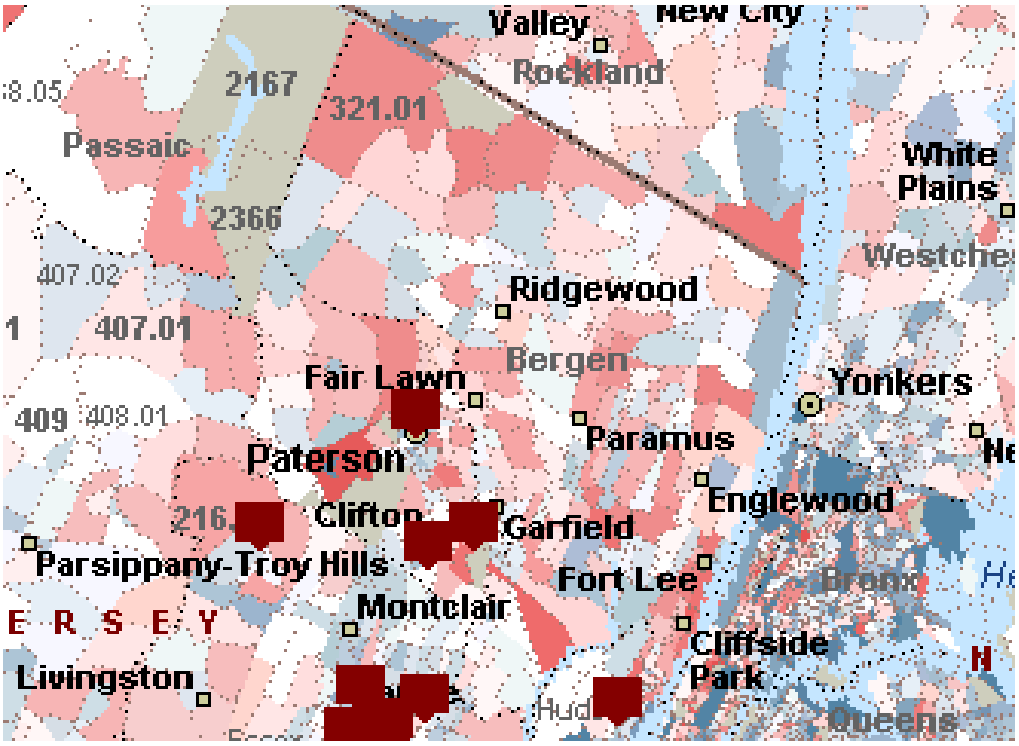


ESL Programs

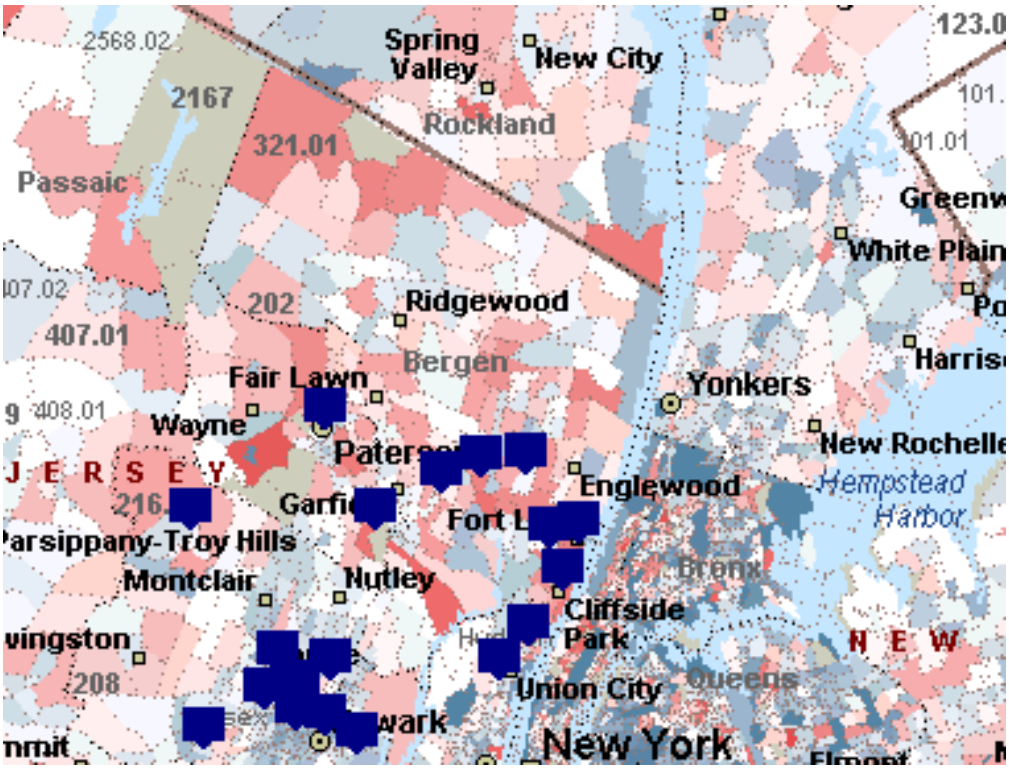


Bergen

ABE Programs

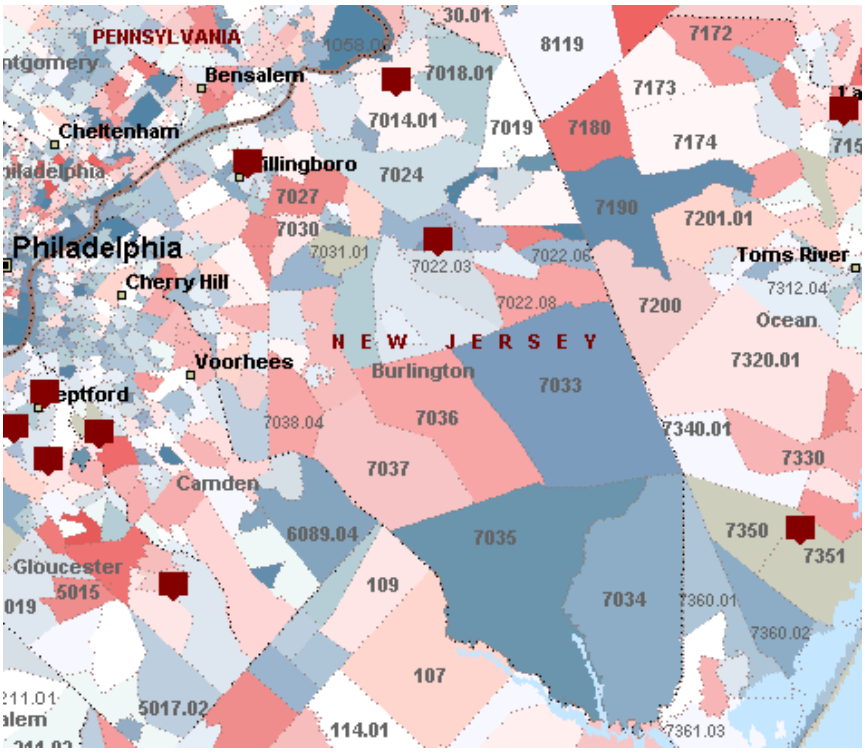


ESL Programs

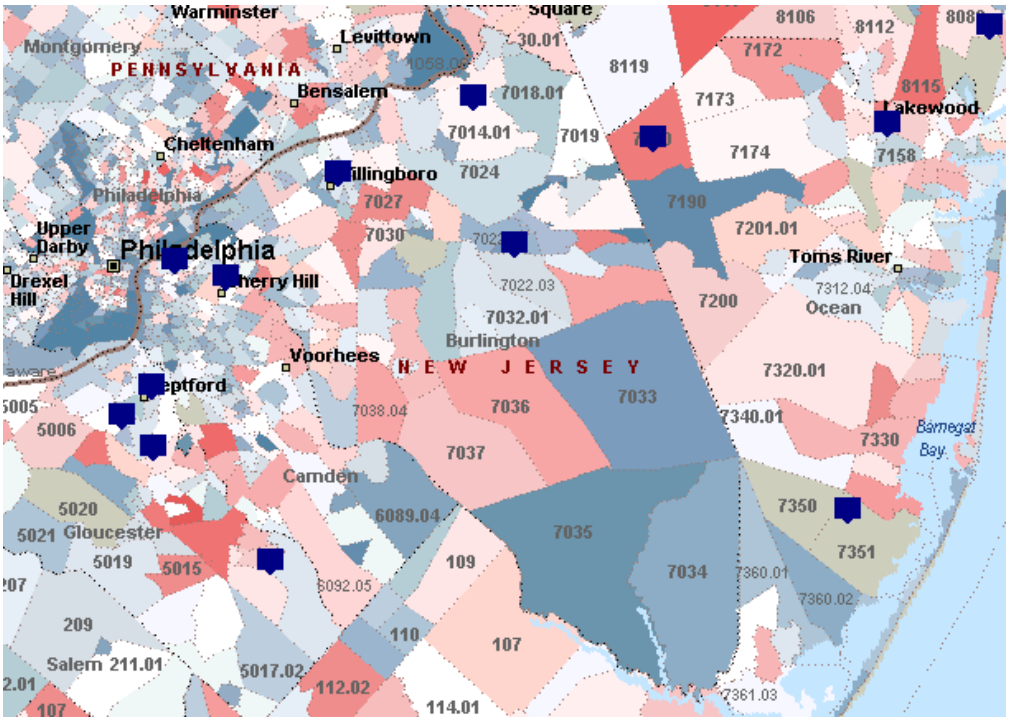


Burlington

ABE Programs

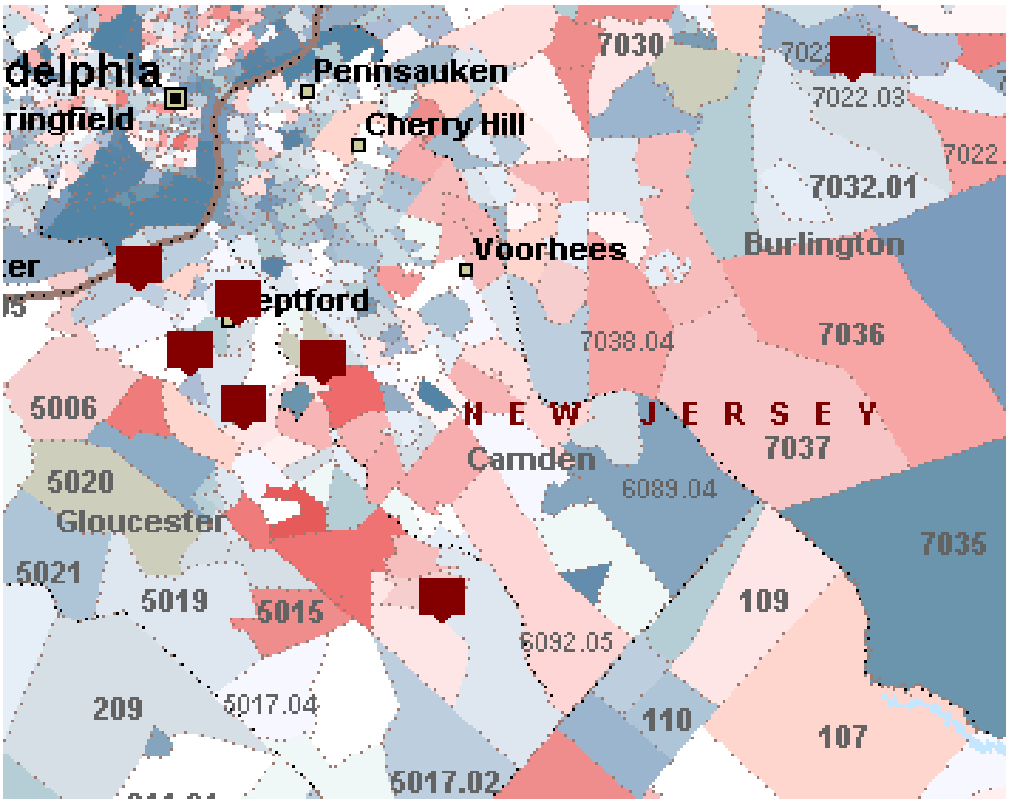


ESL Programs

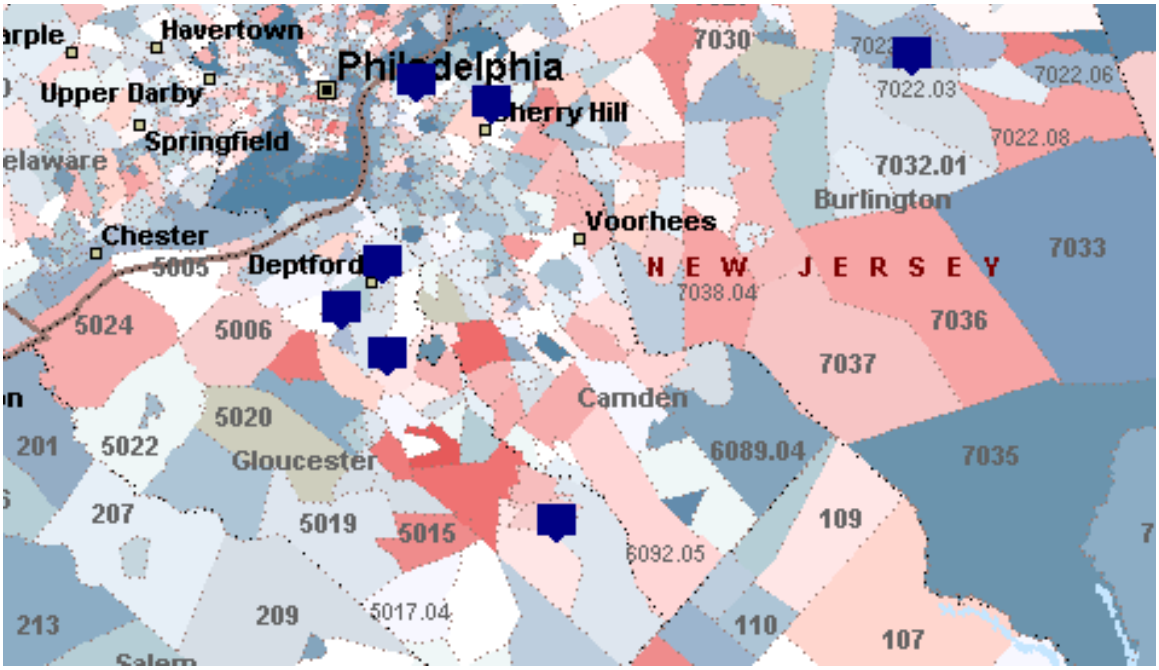


Camden

ABE Programs

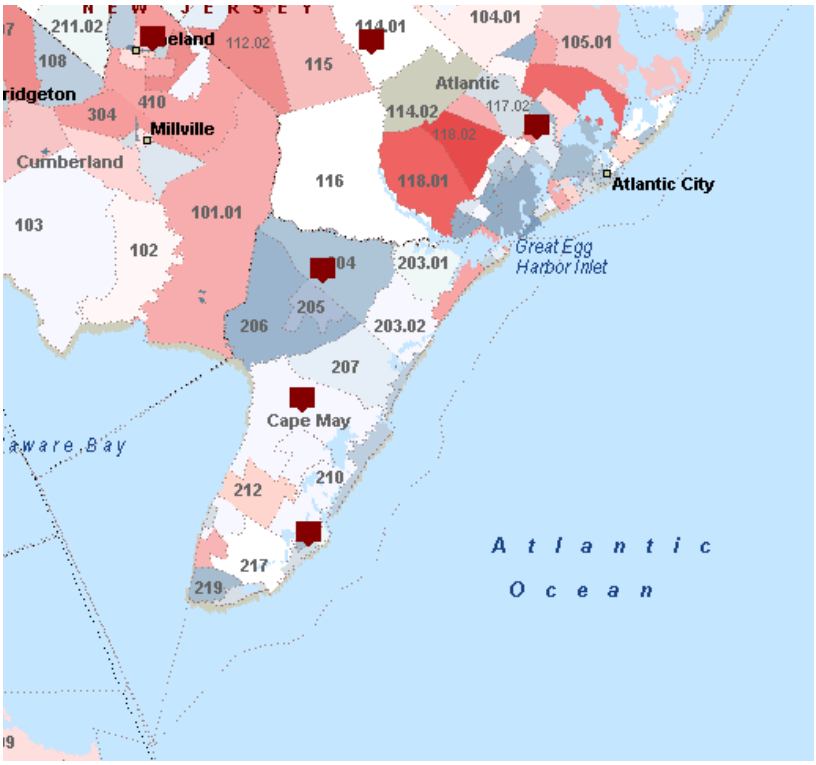


ESL Programs



Cape May

ABE Programs



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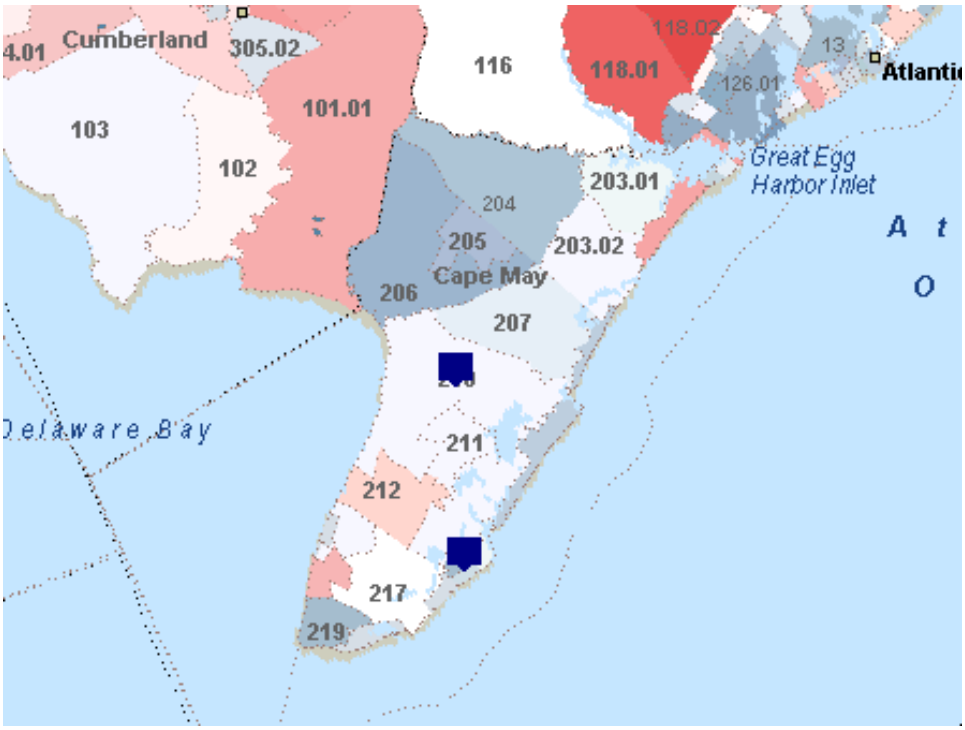
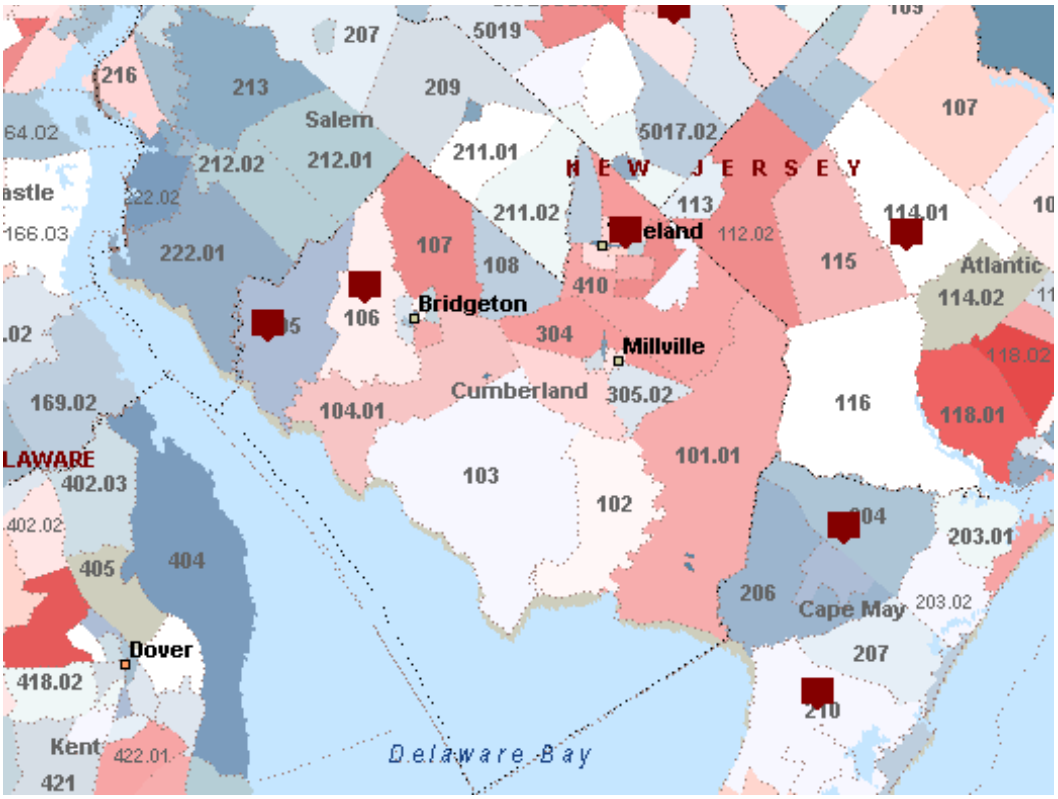


Cumberland

ABE Programs



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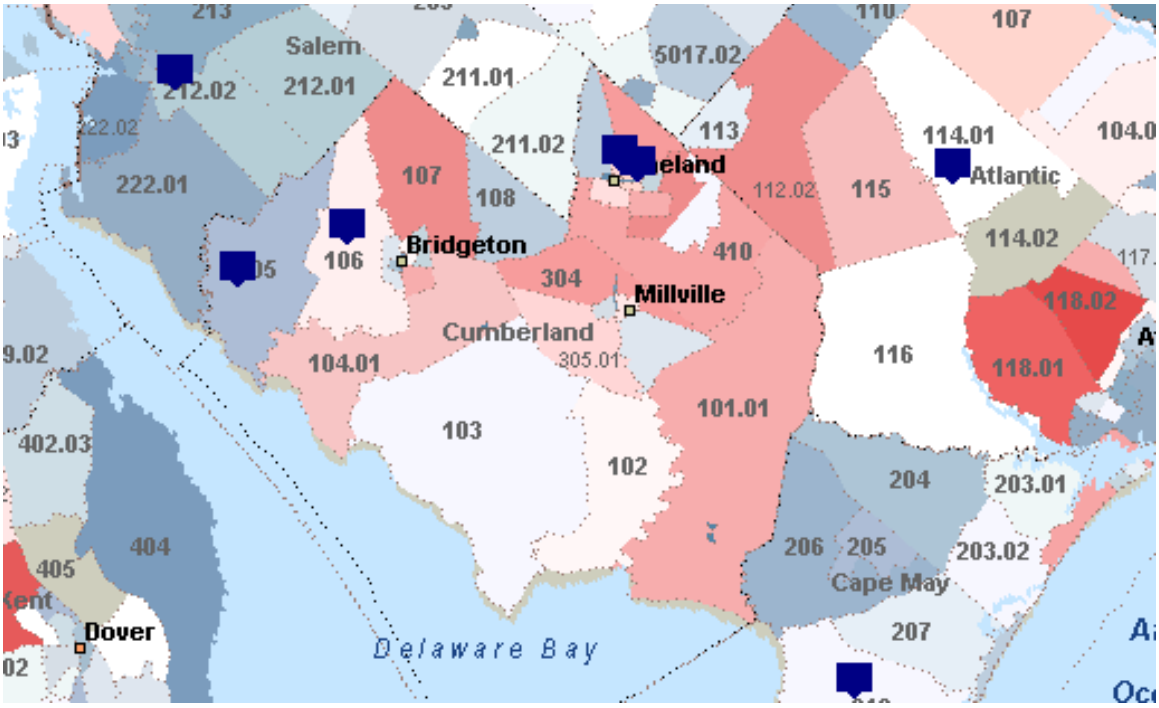
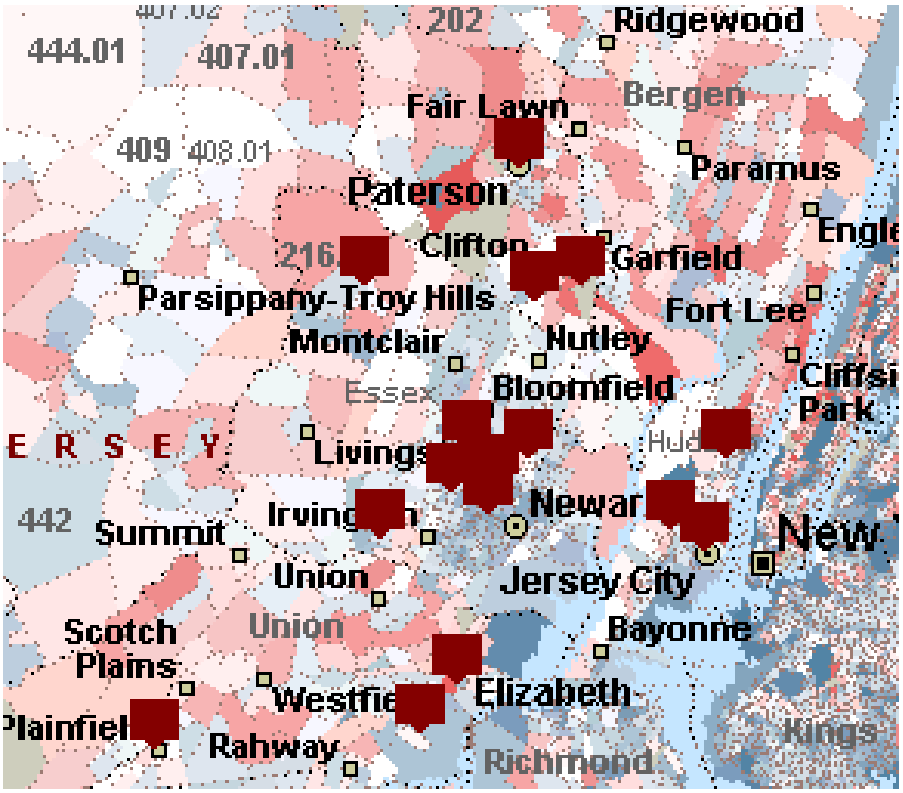


Essex

ABE Programs



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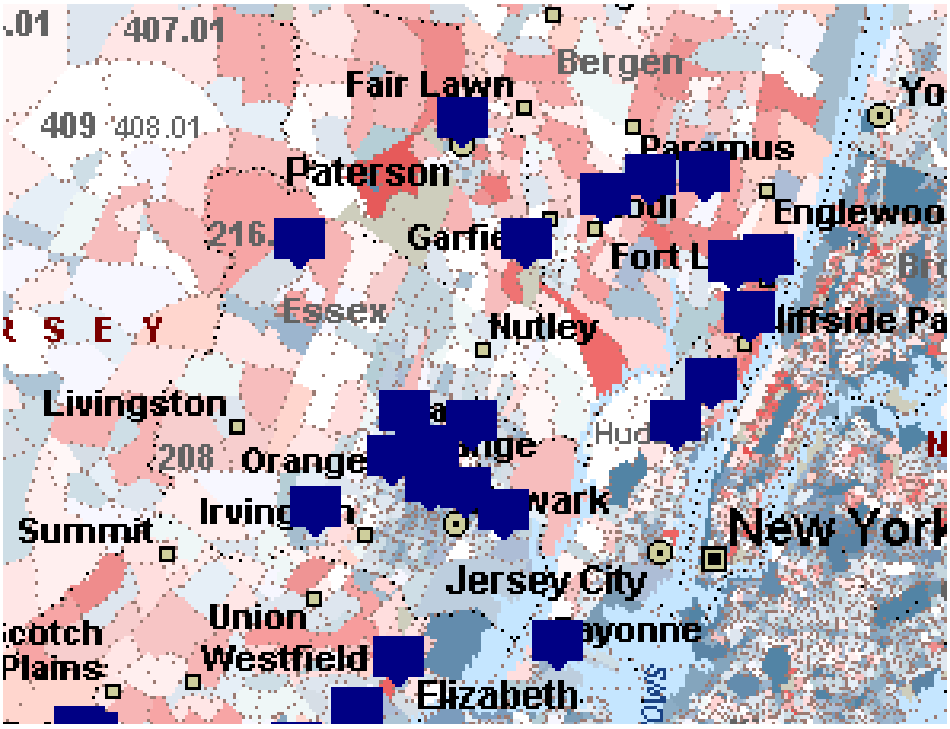
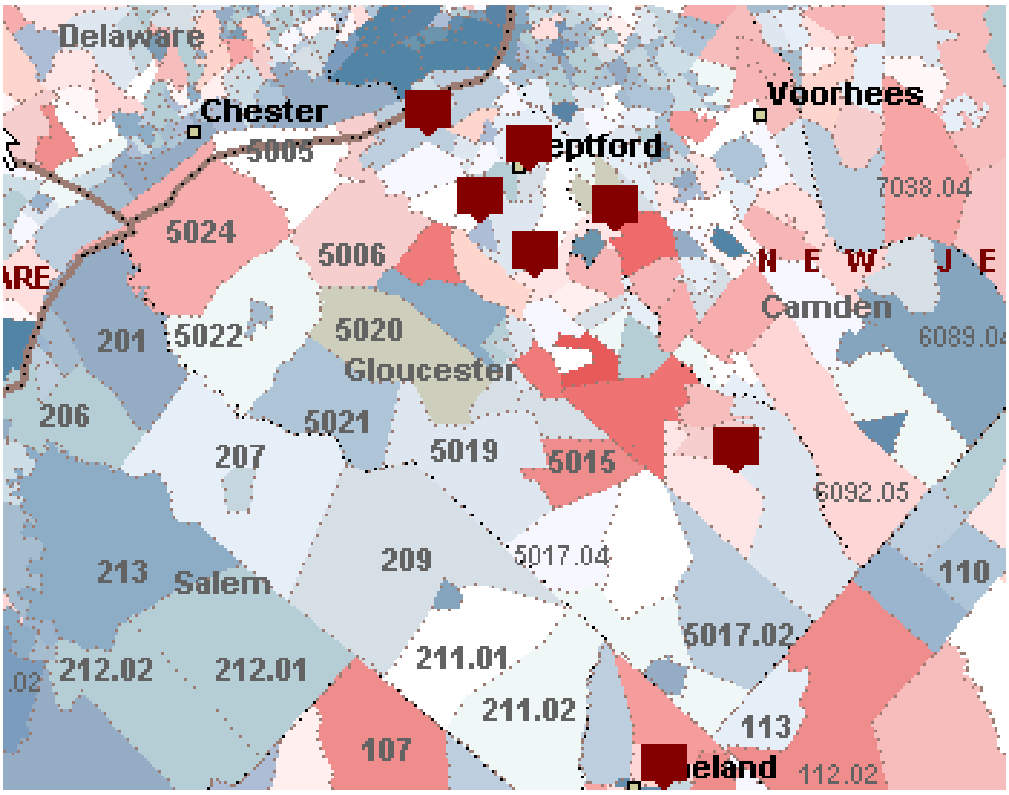


Gloucester

ABE Programs



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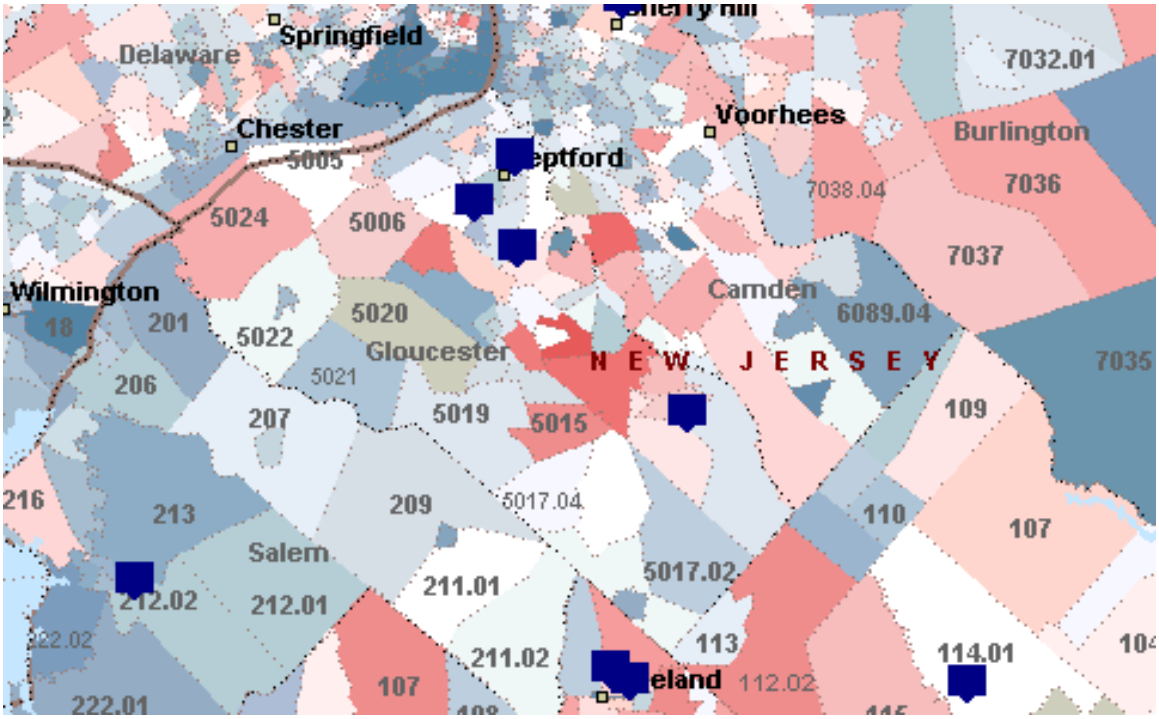
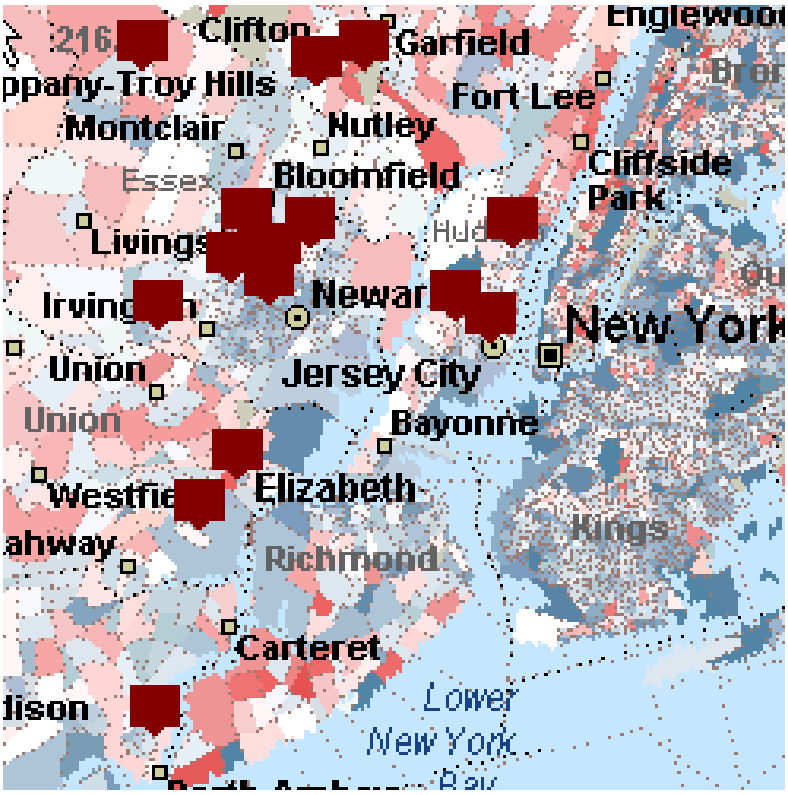


Hudson

ABE Programs



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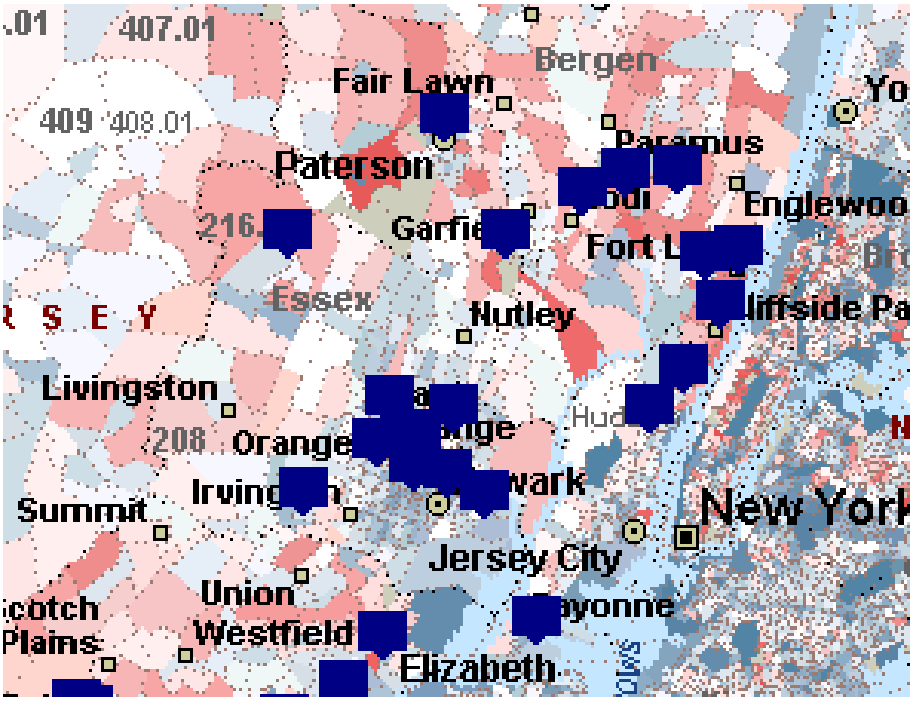
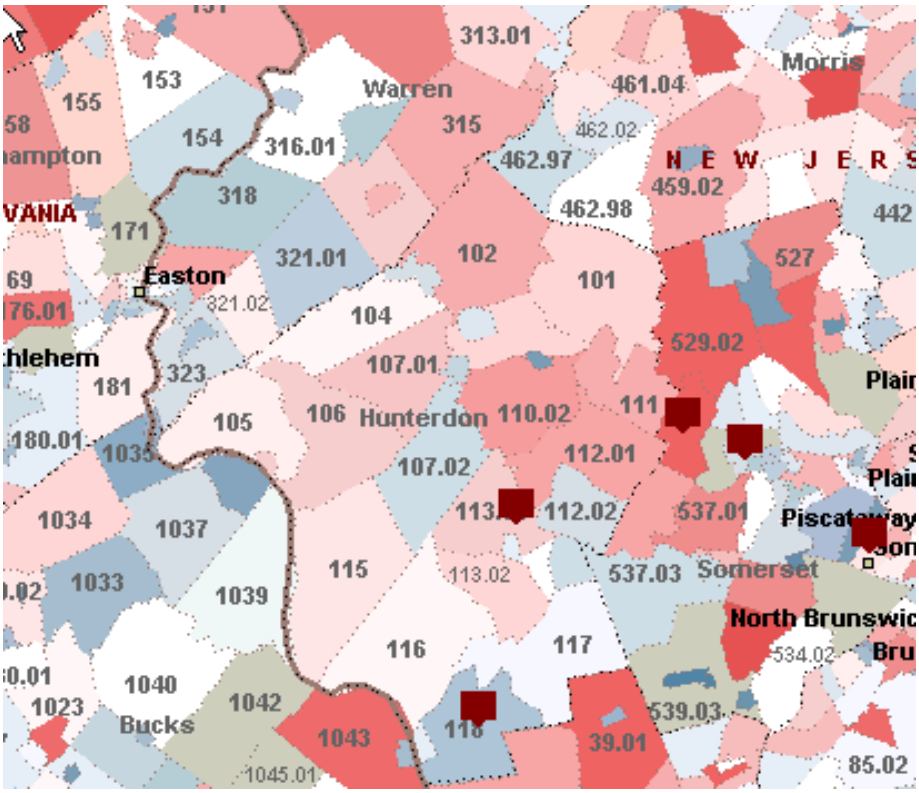


Hunterdon

ABE Programs



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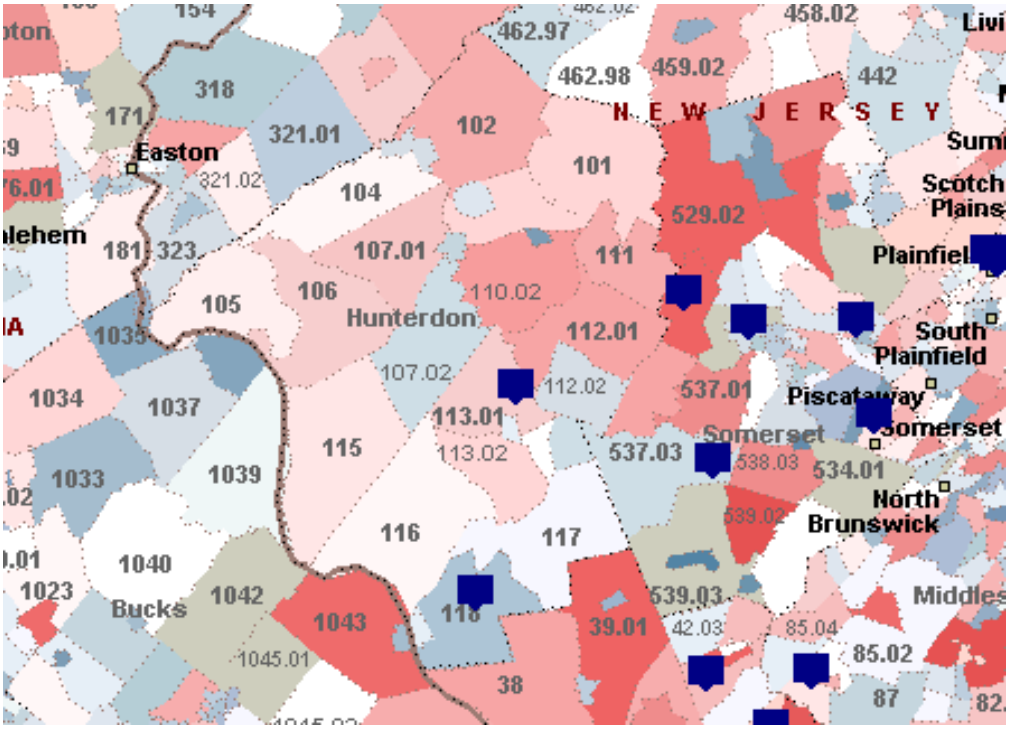
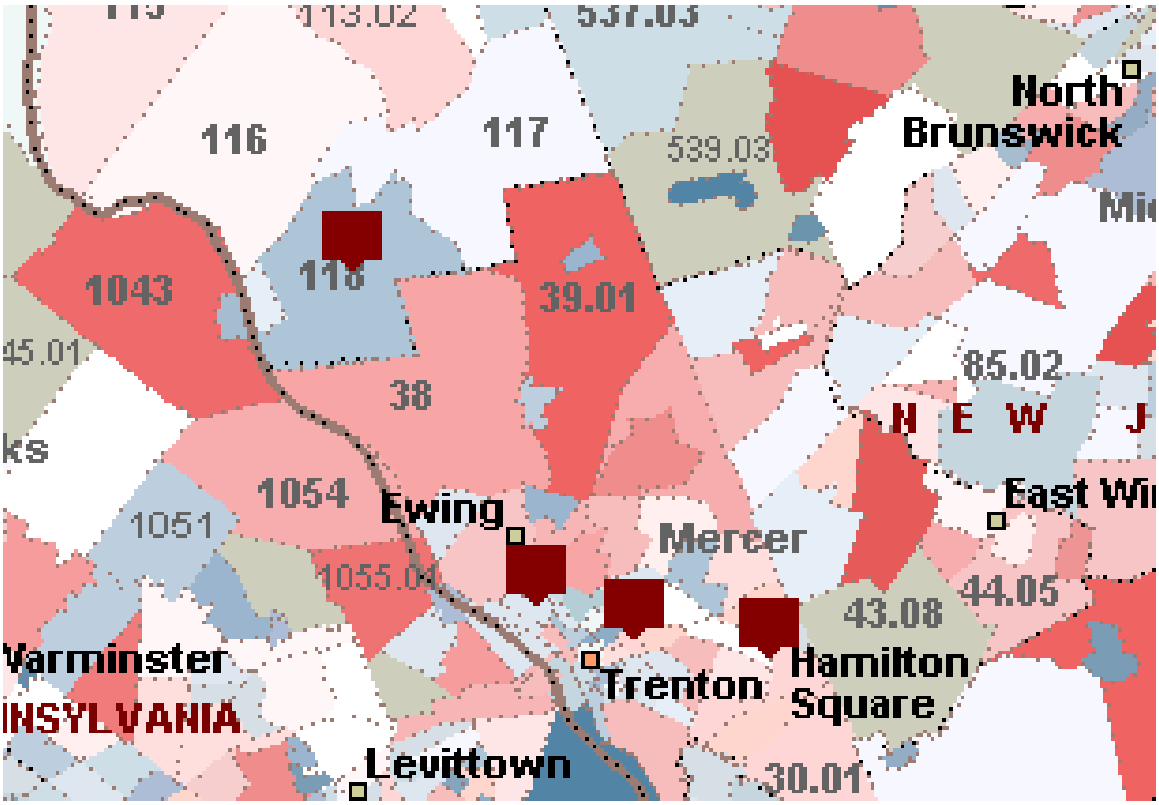


Mercer

ABE Programs



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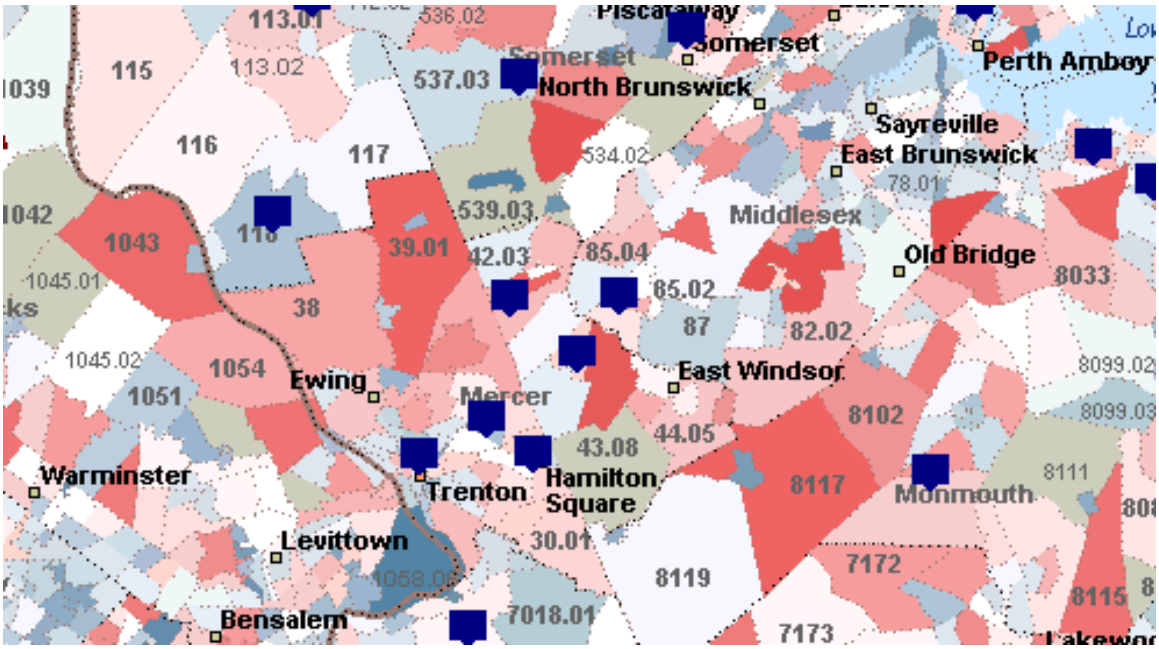
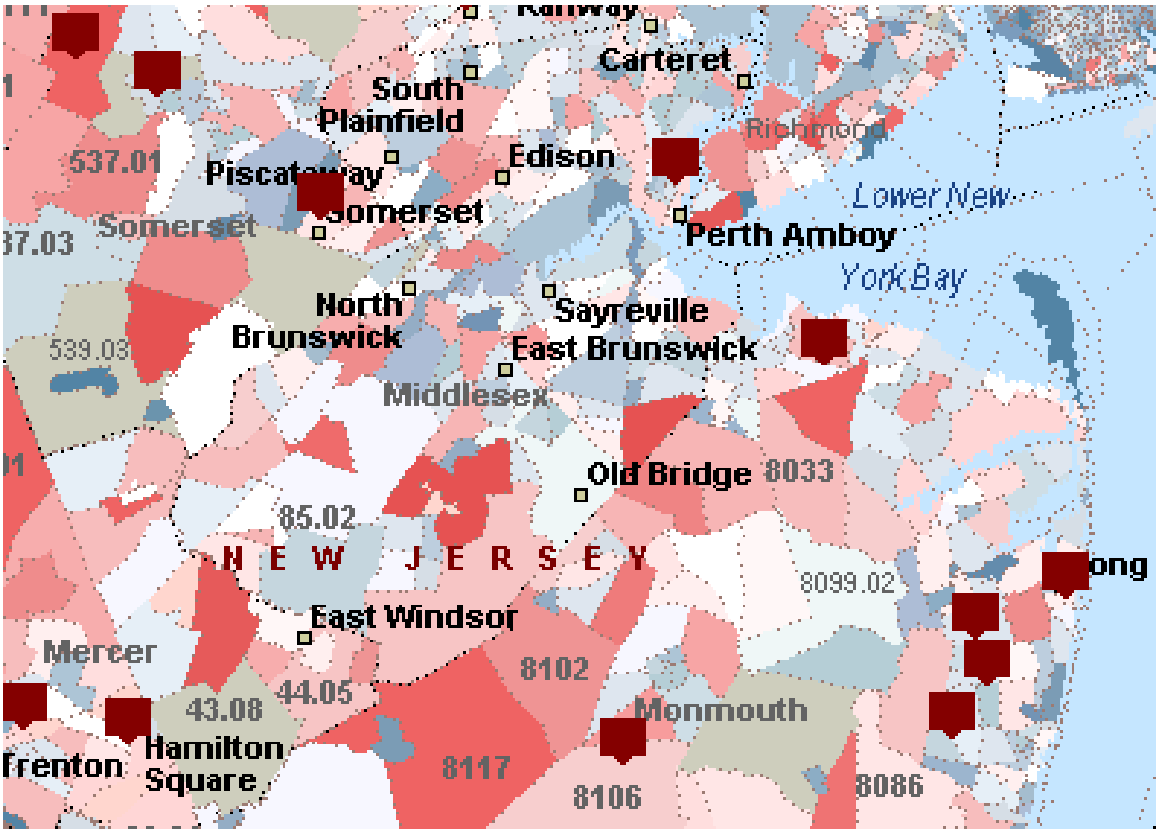


Middlesex

ABE Programs



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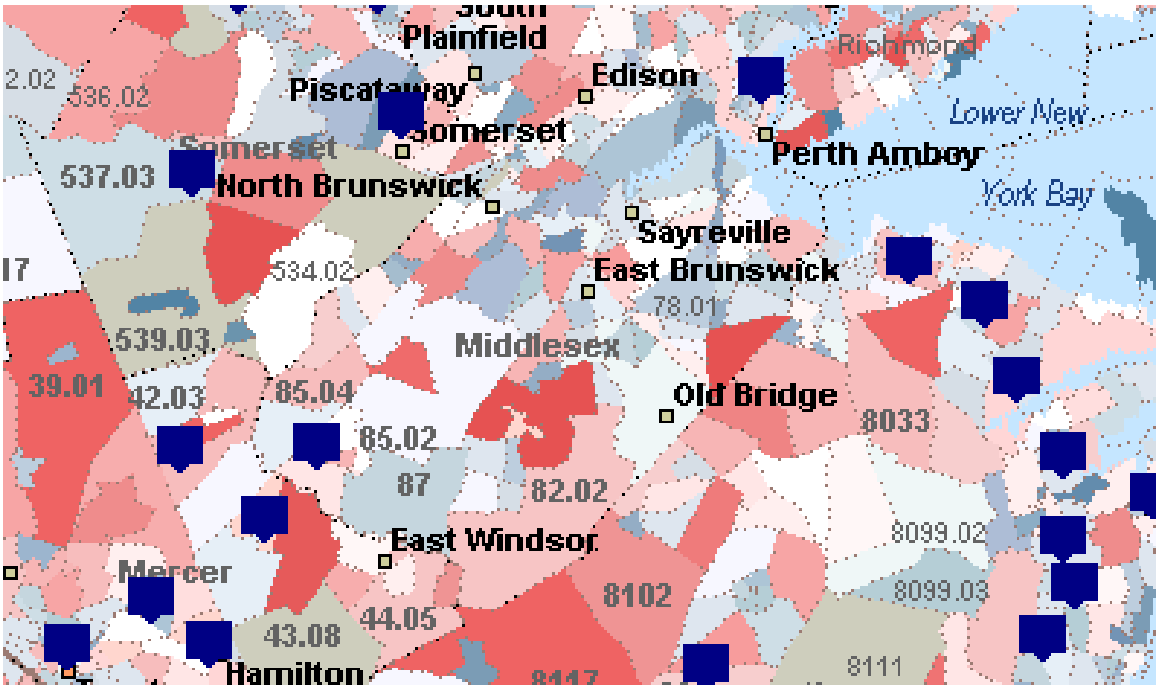
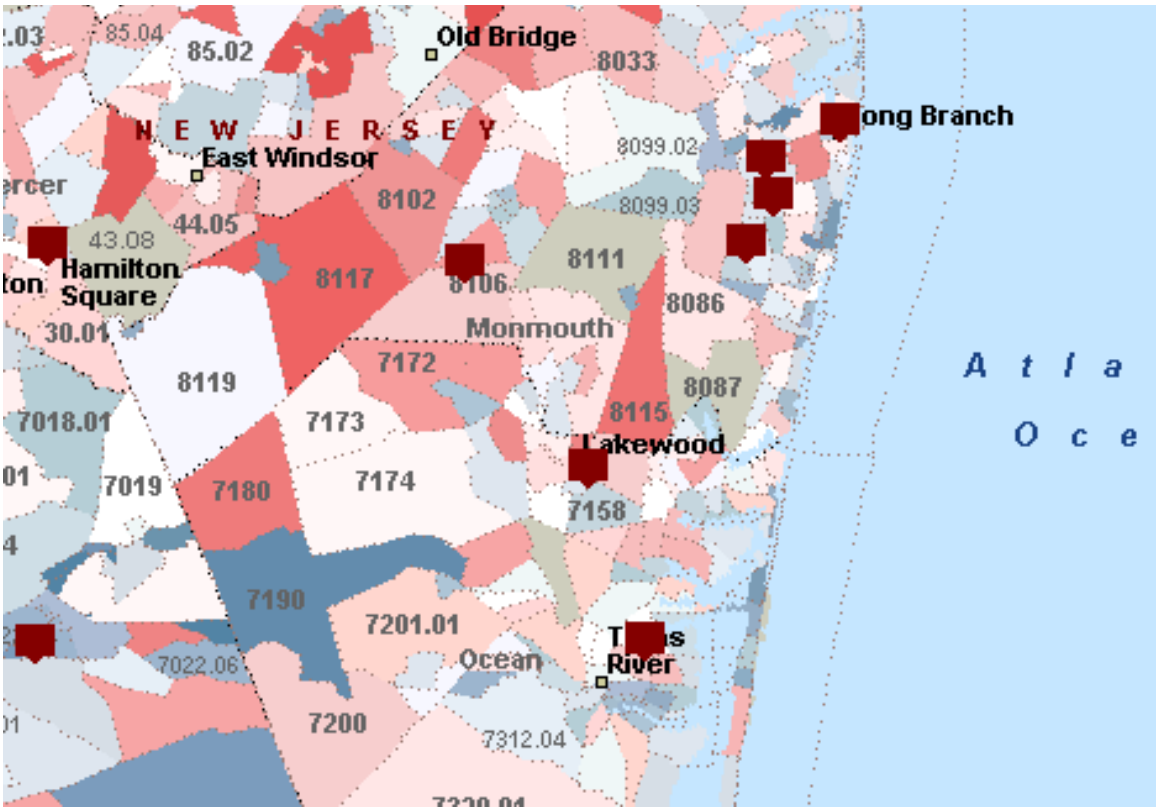


Monmouth

ABE Programs



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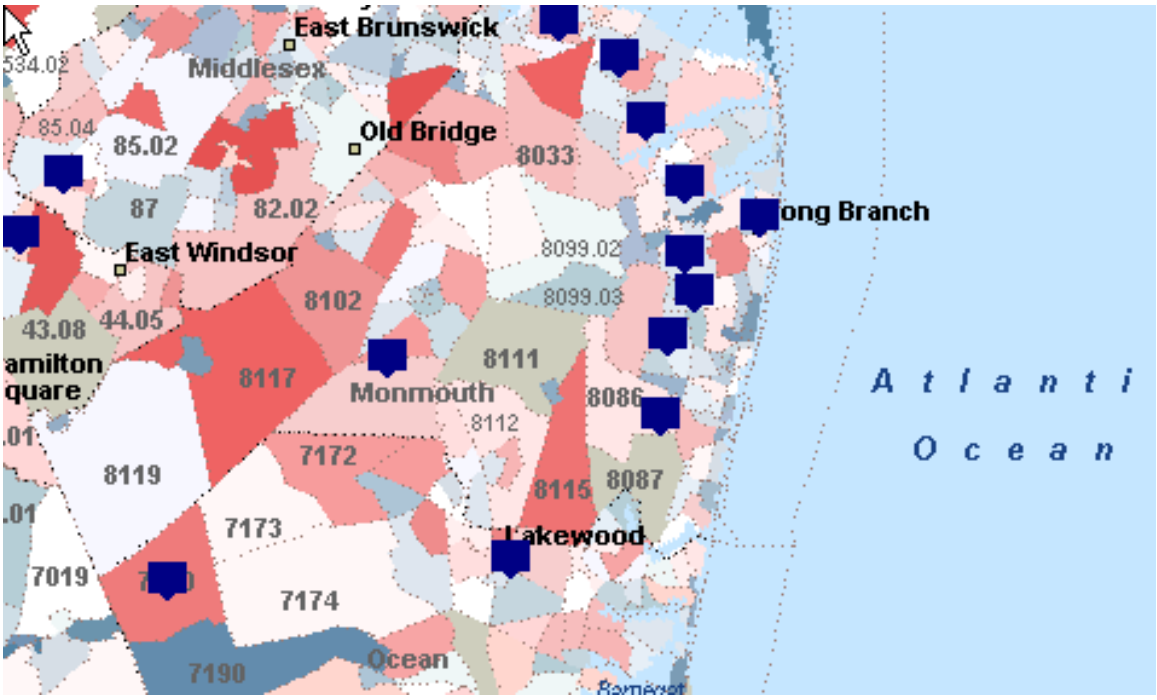
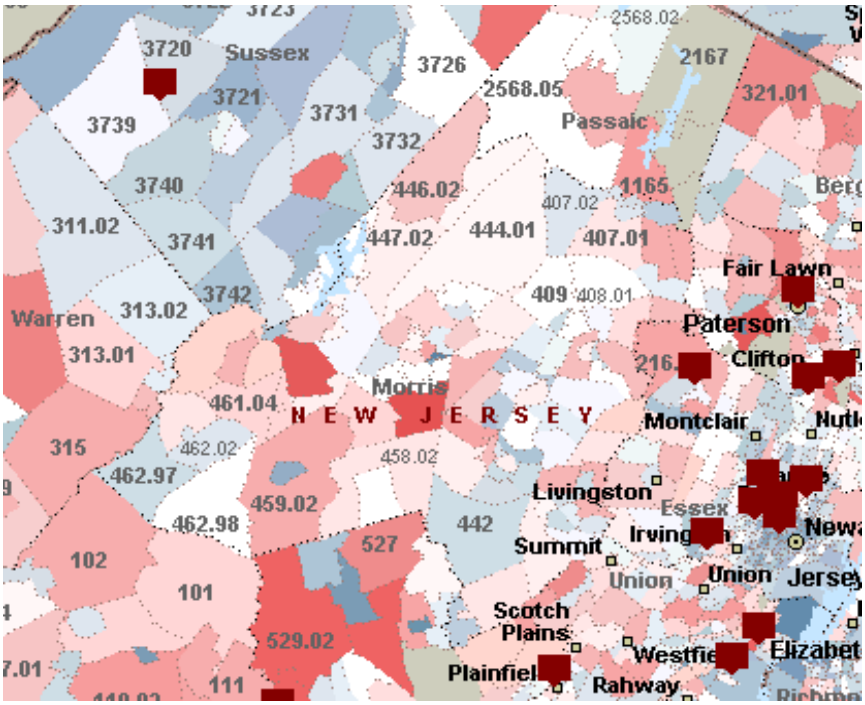


Morris

ABE Programs



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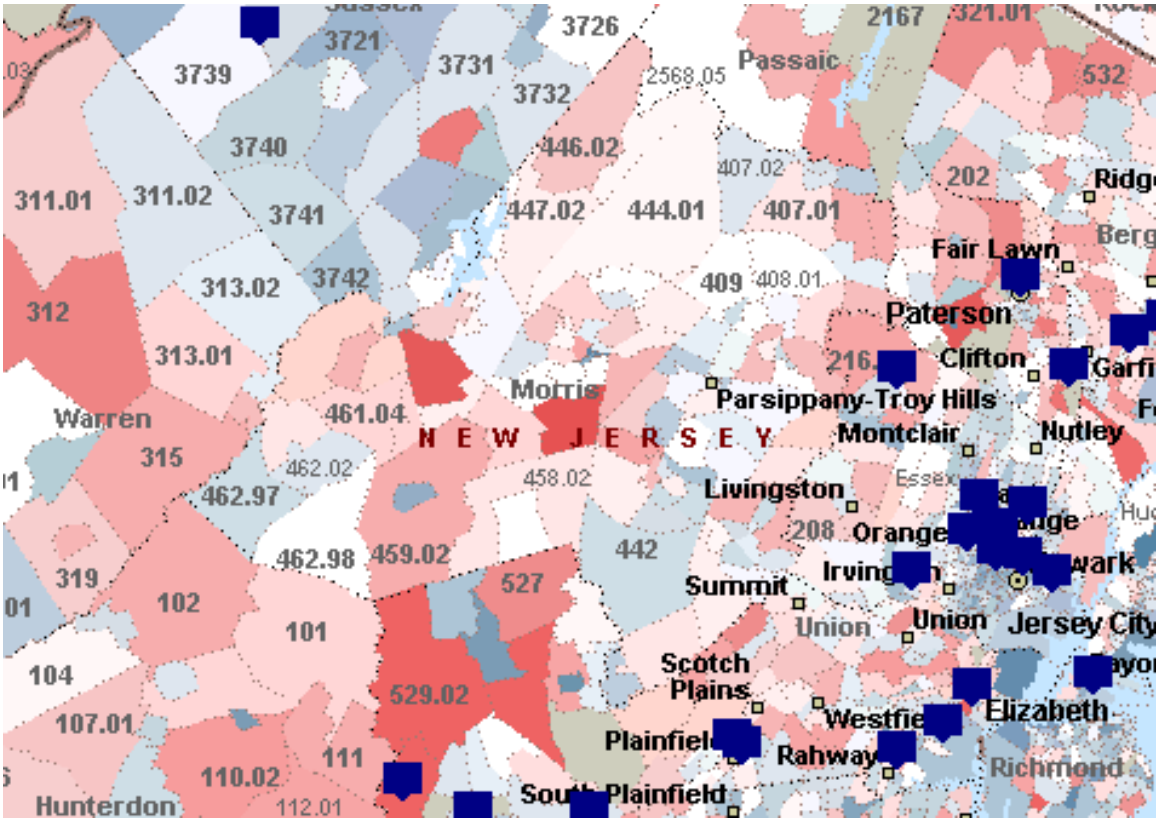
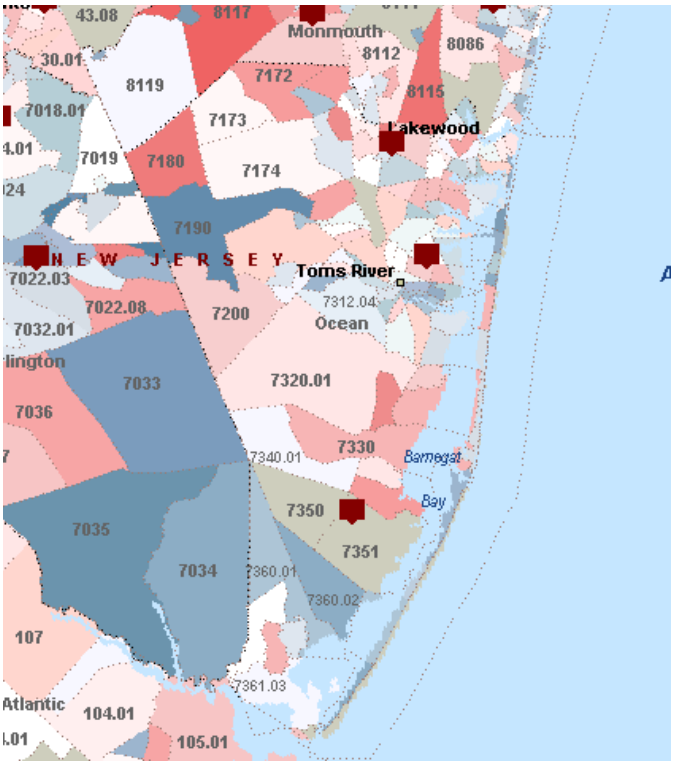


Ocean

ABE Programs



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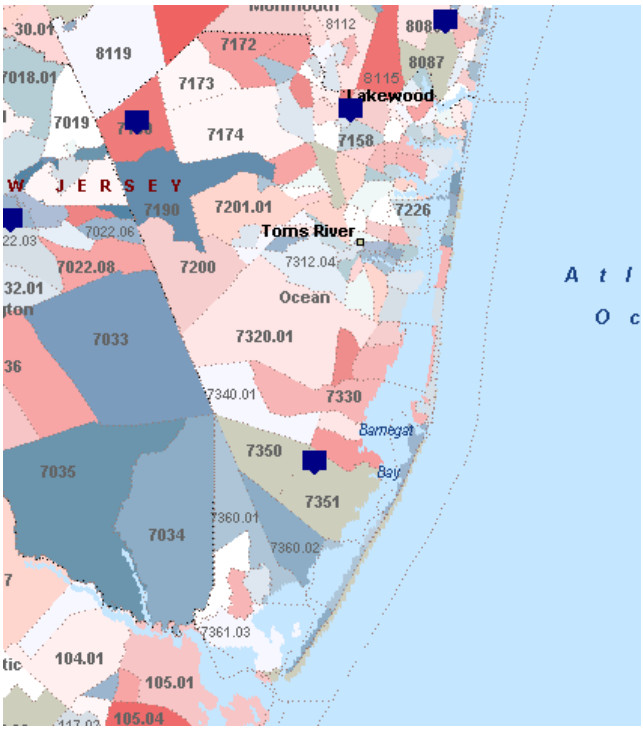
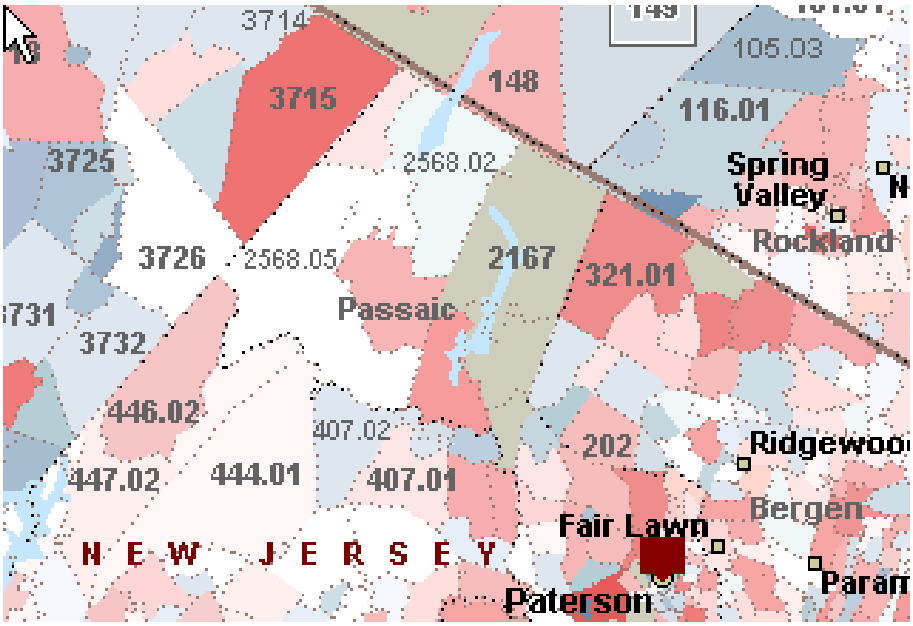


Passaic

ABE Programs



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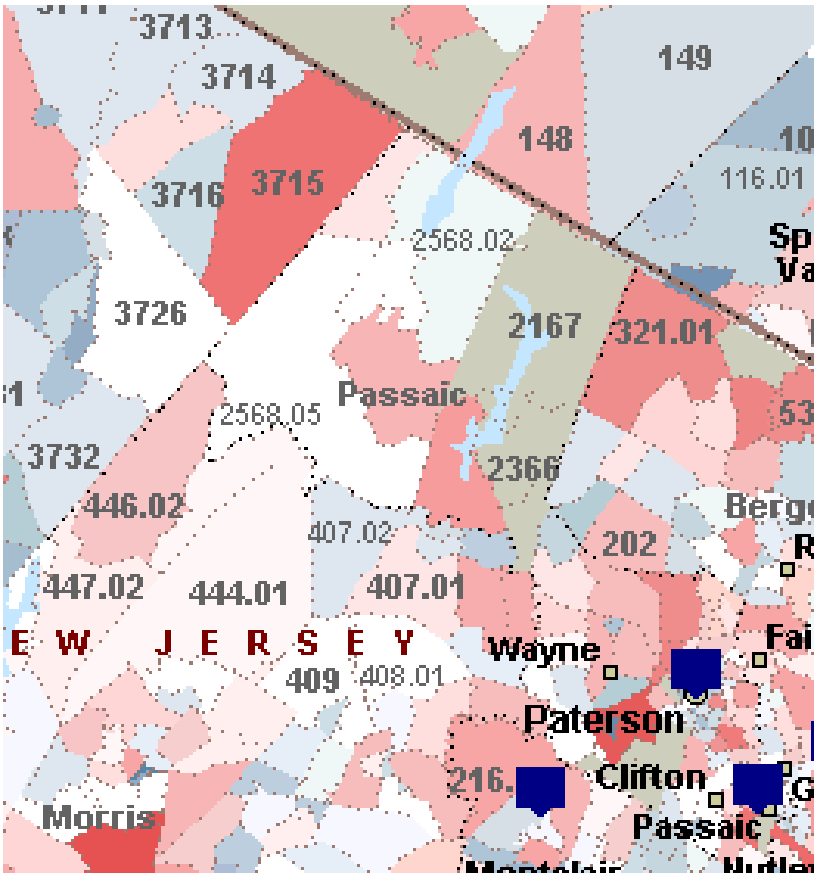
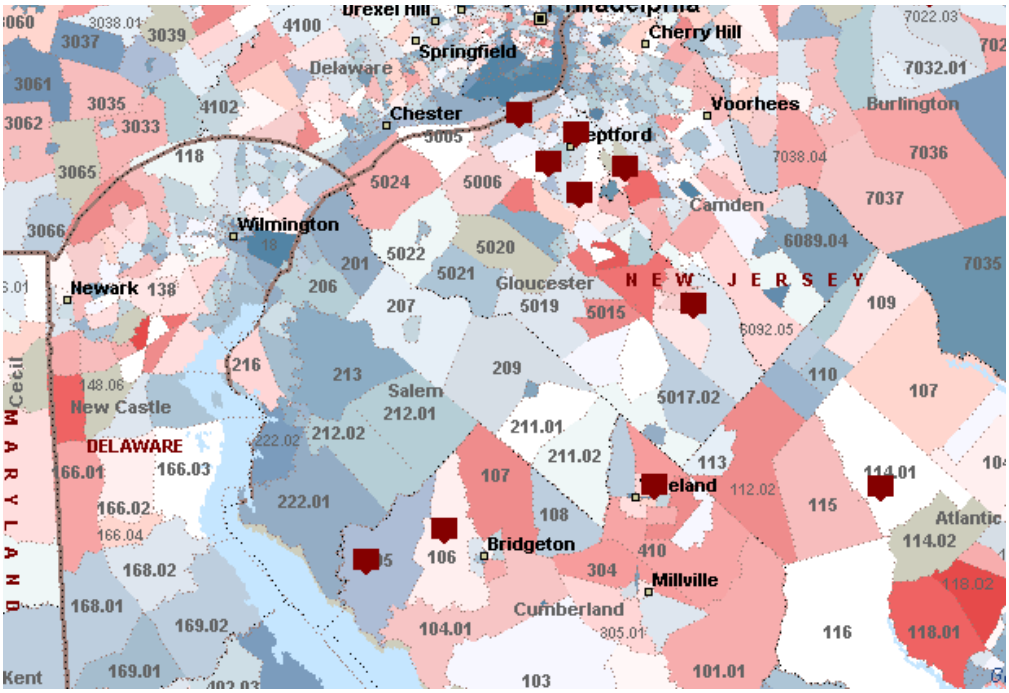


Salem

ABE Programs



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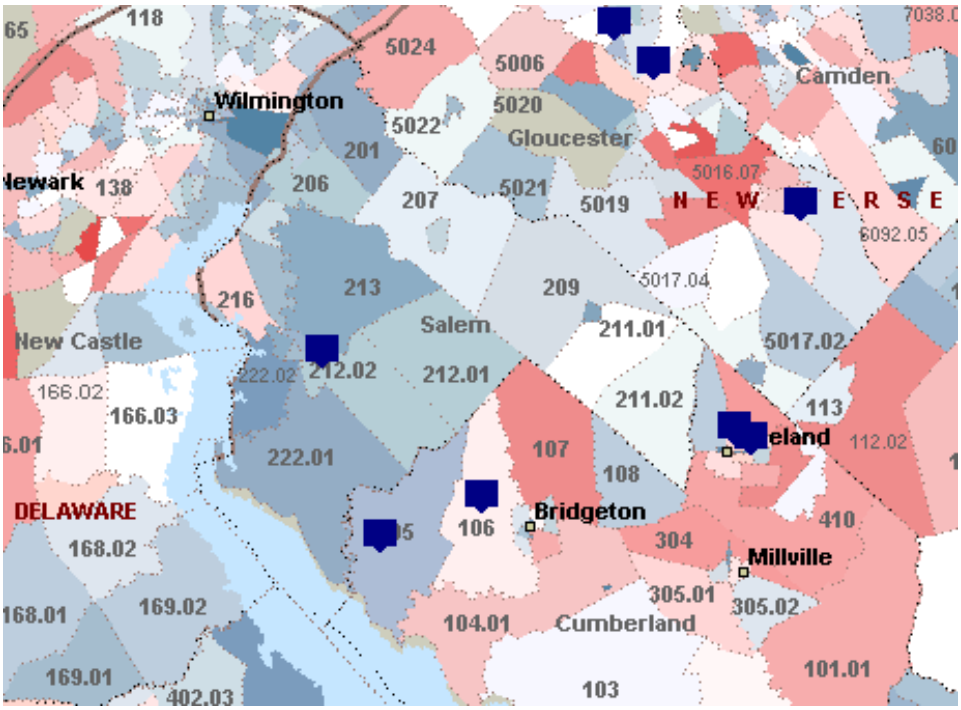
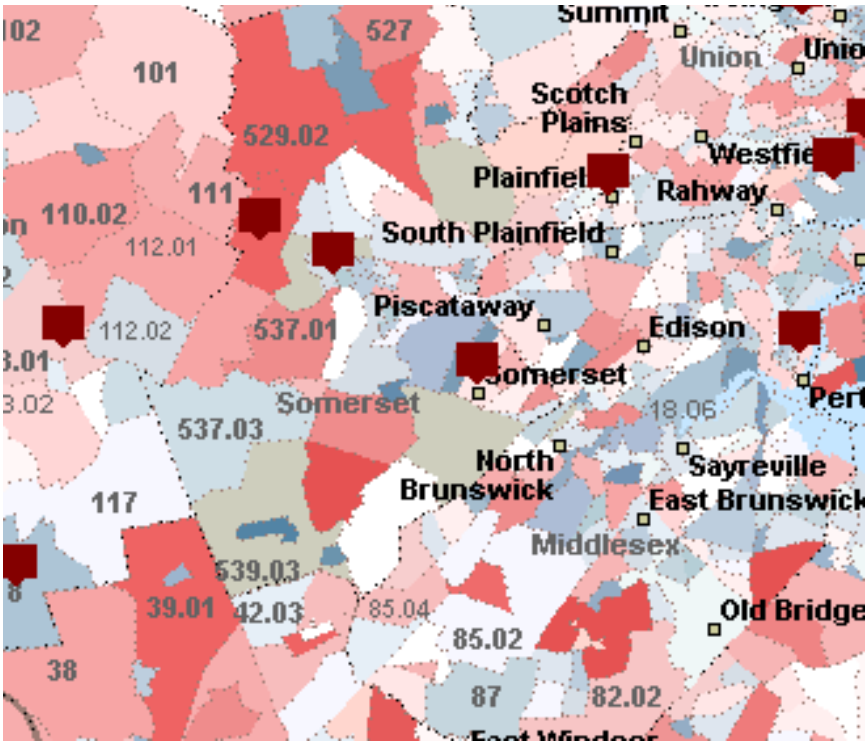


Somerset

ABE Programs



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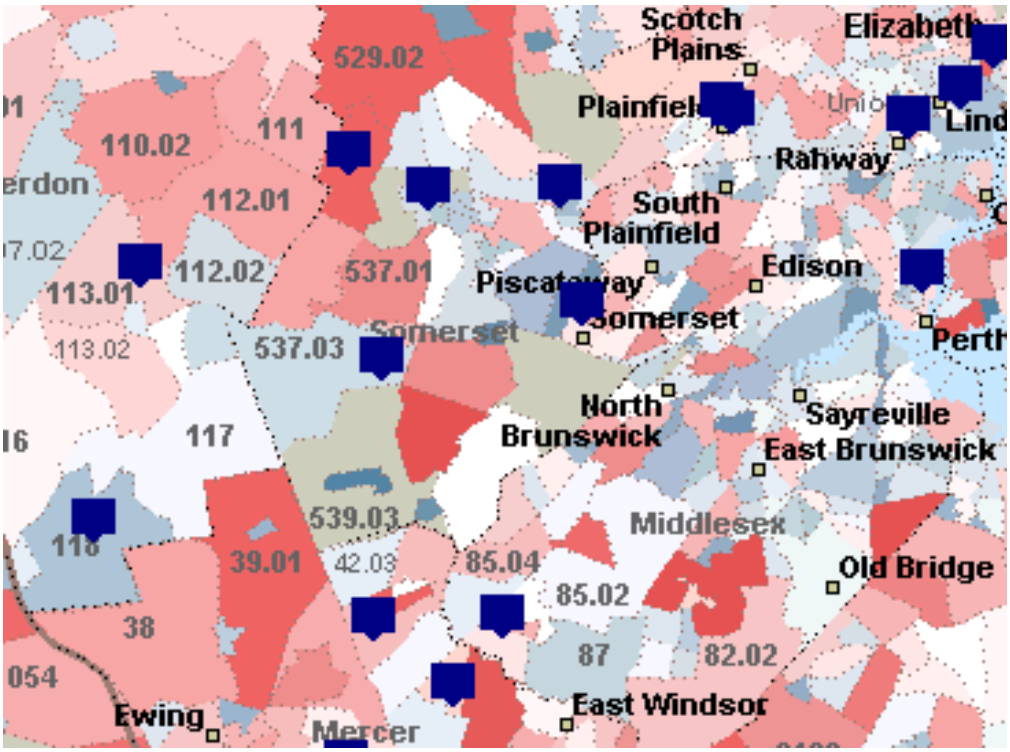
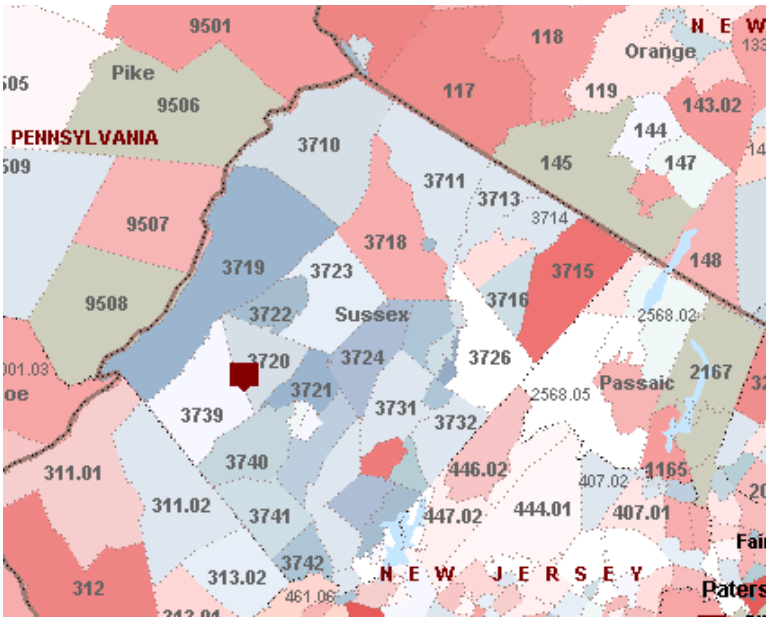
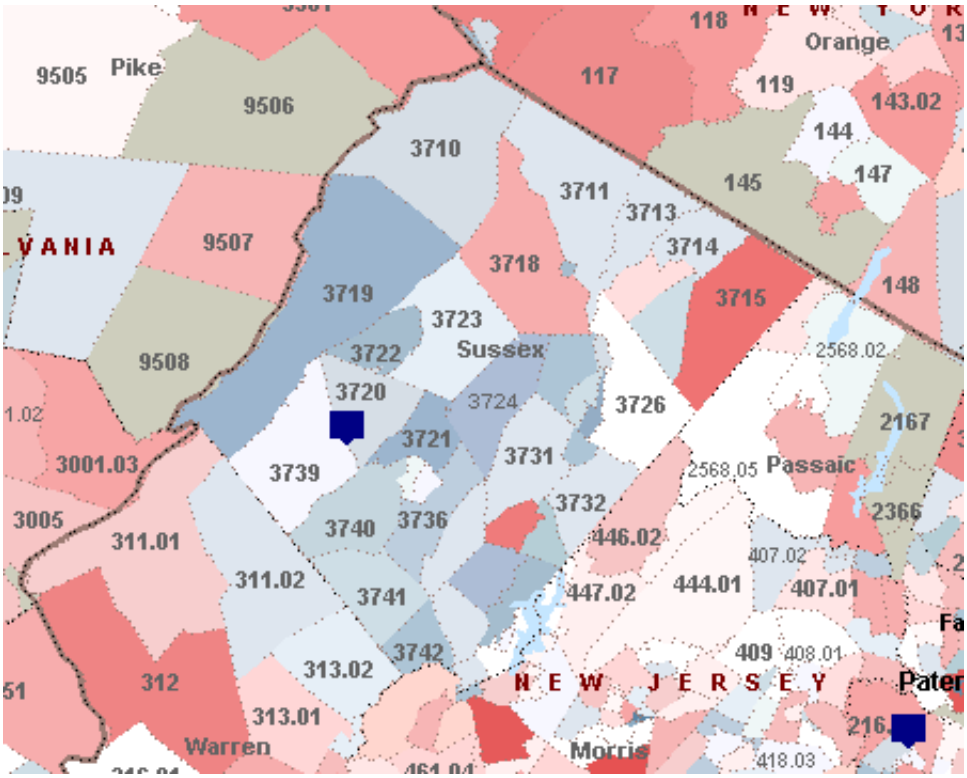


Sussex

ABE Programs

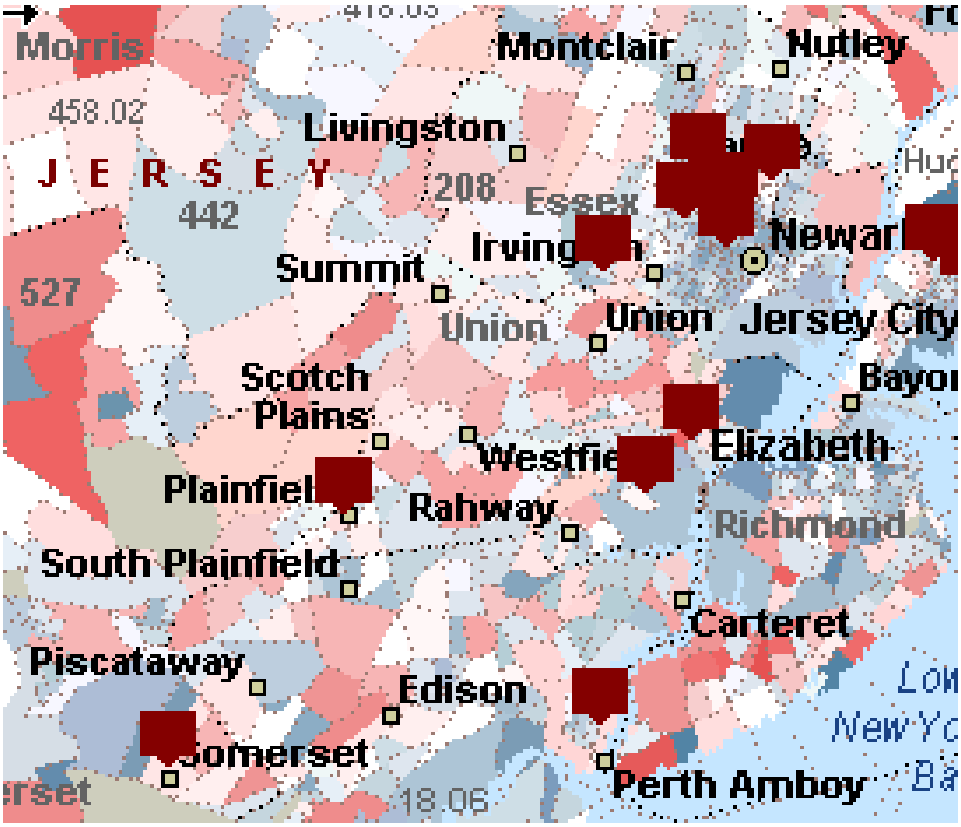


ESL Programs

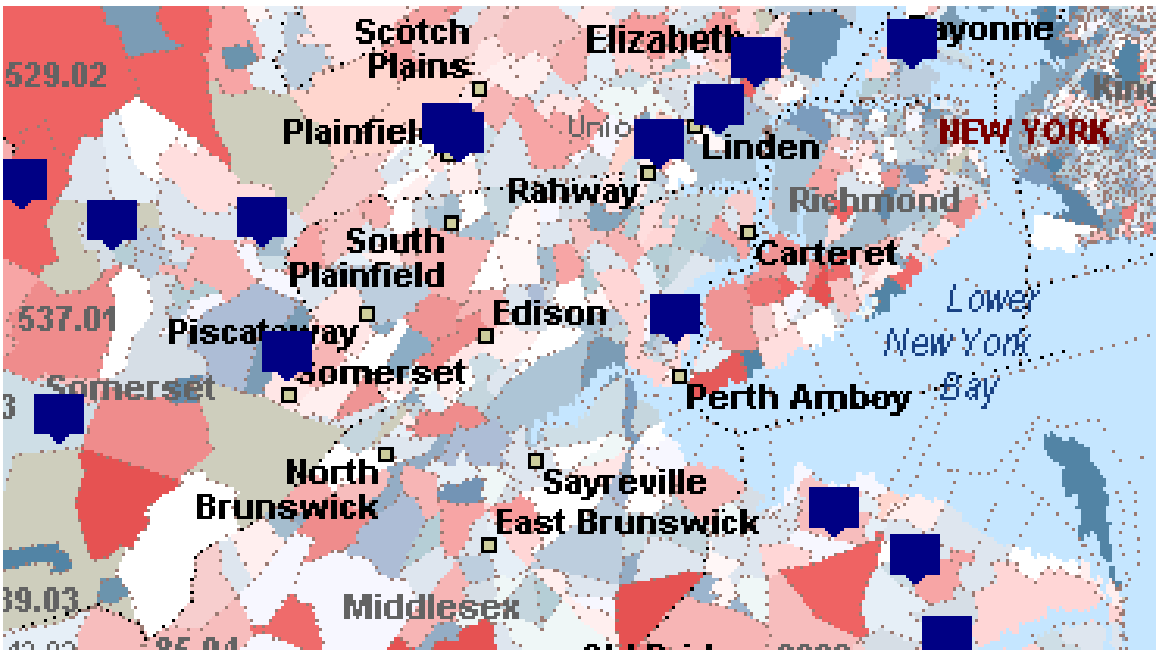


Union

ABE Programs

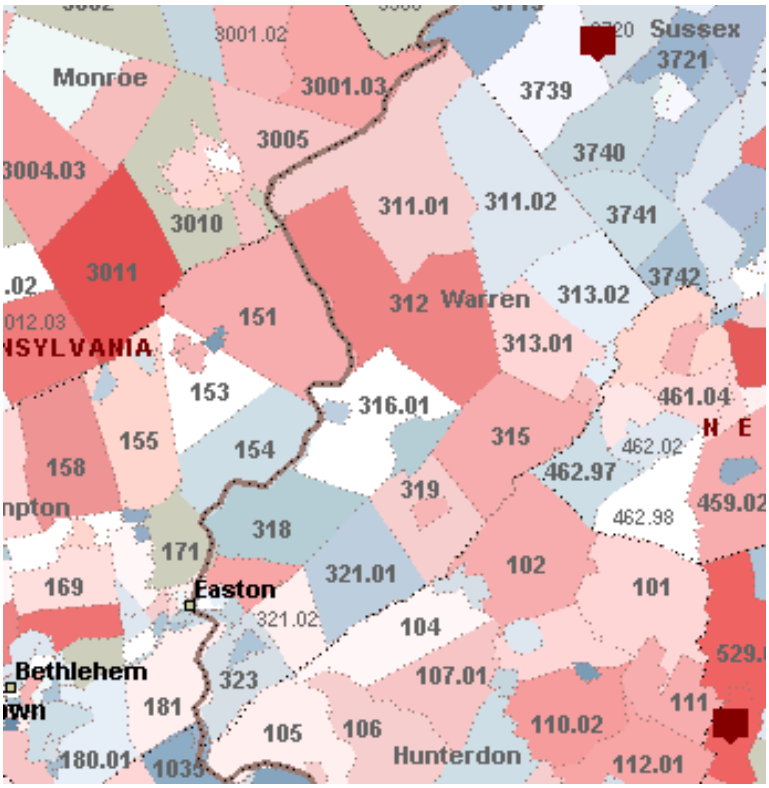


ESL Programs

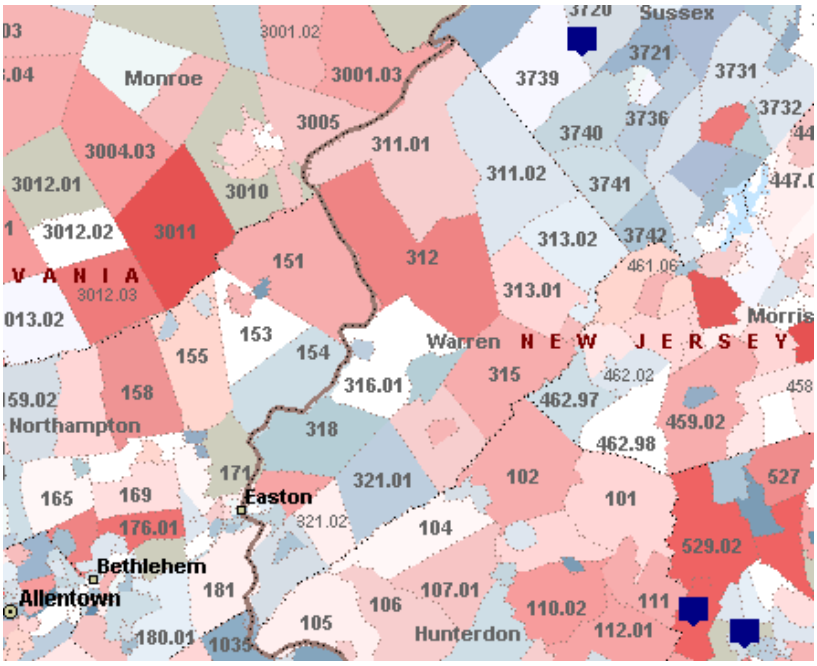


Warren

ABE Programs



ESL Programs



Appendix IV: Intensity of Services By County

Note: Note all programs returned surveys. Pink indicate a lack of data.

STATE

	#	Mode	Total Hrs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20+
ESL	364	4	2090+	3	25	23	90	28	46	18	15	29	7	12	29	2	0	9	12	0	12	0	4
					7%	6%	25%	8%	13%			8%			8%								
ABE	183	4* (12/20)	1649+	0	6	8	32	10	18	6	18	16	14	0	20	2	1	8	3	1	4	0	16
							17%		10%		10%	9%			11%								9%

COUNTY: Atlantic

	#	Mode	Total Hrs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20+
ESL																							
ABE																							

COUNTY: Bergen

	#	Mode	Total Hrs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20+
ESL	40	5	236					22		18													
ABE	12	7	81					3		6	3												

COUNTY: Burlington

	#	Mode	Total Hrs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20+
ESL	5	12	43				1		1			1			2								
ABE	7	6	71						3			1			2								1

COUNTY: Camden

	#	Mode	Total Hrs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20+
ESL	2	15	30															2					
ABE	4	20	69+												1					1			2

COUNTY: Cumberland/Salem

	#	Mode	Total Hrs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20+
ESL	11*	12	156+												6				4				1
ABE	12*	12	161+									1			8				1				2

COUNTY: Essex

	#	Mode	Total Hrs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20+
ESL	57	12	486+	2	1	2	11		11		1	8			12				8				1
ABE	40*	4	261+		4	7	14	2	5						3								5

* Many sub-divided

COUNTY: Gloucester

	#	Mode	Total Hrs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20+
ESL	6	6	42						4			2											
ABE	6	12	69+						1			1			2								2

COUNTY: Hudson

	#	Mode	Total Hrs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20+
ESL	44	6	354			4	2		14		2	6	2	11	2			1					
ABE	31	10	308+					2	2		4	6	13					2					2

COUNTY: Hunterdon/Somerset

	#	Mode	Total Hrs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20+
ESL	27	4	129			1	16	6			4												
ABE	8	4	73+			1	2	1			1						1	1					1

COUNTY: Mercer

	#	Mode	Total Hrs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20+
ESL	48	4	192		11		32		3			1						1					1
ABE	9	8	69						2		6	1											

COUNTY: Middlesex

	#	Mode	Total Hrs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20+
ESL																							
ABE																							

COUNTY: Monmouth

	#	Mode	Total Hrs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20+
ESL	39	3	230	1	9	15	3		2						1			5			3		
ABE	5	15	75*															5					

Drop in Hours

COUNTY: Morris / Warren

	#	Mode	Total Hrs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20+
ESL	5	6	46+				2		3														1
ABE	15	4	107		1		7		2			1			2				2				

COUNTY: Ocean

	#	Mode	Total Hrs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20+
ESL	7	6	42			1			5			1											
ABE	4	6	38+						3														1

COUNTY: Passaic

	#	Mode	Total Hrs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20+
ESL	42	4	229		4		21		1		8		5	1		2							
ABE	18	4	116		1		7	2			4	2				2							

COUNTY: Union

	#	Mode	Total Hrs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20+
ESL	29	9	344				2		2			10			6						9		
ABE	12	18	141				2					3	1		2						4		

Appendix V: Length of Stay By County

Reported Length of Stay in Class

State	*Less than 40*	*41 - 60*	*61 - 80*	*81 - 100*	*101 - 120*	*121 and over*
ESL	21 (9%)	49 (22%)	50 (22%)	43 (19%)	25 (10%)	37 (17%)
ABE	12 (13%)	22 (24%)	25 (27%)	3 (3%)	4 (4%)	26 (28%)
Bergen						
	Less than 40	*41 - 60*	*61 - 80*	*81 - 100*	*101 - 120*	*121 and over*
ESL	1	6	20	9	1	2
ABE	1	6	1		2	
Burlington						
	Less than 40	*41 - 60*	*61 - 80*	*81 - 100*	*101 - 120*	*121 and over*
ESL	1		1			
ABE			3	1		1
Camden						
	Less than 40	*41 - 60*	*61 - 80*	*81 - 100*	*101 - 120*	*121 and over*
ESL						1
ABE						3
Cumberland / Salem						
	Less than 40	*41 - 60*	*61 - 80*	*81 - 100*	*101 - 120*	*121 and over*
ESL						
ABE			1			

Essex						
	Less than 40	*41 - 60*	*61 - 80*	*81 - 100*	*101 - 120*	*121 and over*
ESL	12	1	5	9	8	15
ABE	9		2			8
Hudson						
	Less than 40	41 - 60	61 - 80	81 - 100	101 - 120	121 and over
ESL					2	
ABE						
Hunterdon/ Somerset						
	Less than 40	41 - 60	61 - 80	81 - 100	101 - 120	121 and over
ESL		14		13		
ABE		3	1		2	2
Mercer						
	Less than 40	41 - 60	61 - 80	81 - 100	101 - 120	121 and over
ESL		4			14	
ABE		3				4
Monmouth						
	Less than 40	41 - 60	61 - 80	81 - 100	101 - 120	121 and over
ESL		16				
ABE		7				
Morris						
	Less than 40	41 - 60	61 - 80	81 - 100	101 - 120	121 and over
ESL		1	1			
ABE		2	1			

Ocean						
	Less than 40	41 - 60	61 - 80	81 - 100	101 - 120	121 and over
ESL	4	2		1		
ABE	2	1				
Passaic						
	Less than 40	41 - 60	61 - 80	81 - 100	101 - 120	121 and over
ESL	3	5	23	11		
ABE			16	2		
Union						
	Less than 40	41 - 60	61 - 80	81 - 100	101 - 120	121 and over
ESL						19
ABE						8

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State Council for Adult Literacy Education Services

Members

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