

New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development
Adult Literacy Programs

Workforce Investment Act Title II

Narrative Report Program Year 2011
(July 1, 2011 - June 30, 2012)



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New Jersey Narrative Report 2011-2012

Introduction

New Jersey's unified workforce investment system and the Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) coordinate and plan literacy and basic skills in their continuum of jobseeker services, integrating the resources at the local One-Stop Career Center (OSCC). The Consolidated Adult Basic Skills (ABS) and Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) Grant Program integrate instructional programs under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title II - Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. Through a consolidated open competitive grant process, the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD) created a voluntary partnership with adult education providers; and focused adult education and literacy instruction on workplace, family and financial literacy.

A necessary component of the unified plan is the participation of an active and knowledgeable council of all adult literacy providers in the WIB area. The local planning process requires that each WIB area establish a consortia, which consists of partnering agencies (e.g. educational, community and faith-based) and that each consortia select a lead agency. The lead agency serves as the administrative point of contact in all operational and administrative matters. During the 2011-2012 contract period, there were 17 WIA Title II ABS/IELCE partnerships delivering core instructional programs and services throughout New Jersey.

New Jersey's Management Information System (MIS) contract is with LiteracyPro Systems, which provides for New Jersey's student record management and reporting system -- Literacy Adult and Community Education System (LACES). Consistent with National Reporting System (NRS) requirements, the LWD completed the fourth year of successful LACES implementation for ABS and IELCE. In addition, LiteracyPro Systems is contracted to provide training to all consortia partners over and above the state technical assistance provided through state personnel. Furthermore, LiteracyPro Systems has customized New Jersey's MIS system to meet our specific reporting needs, provided assistance with data entry, and enhancements as needed. For example, the LWD and LiteracyPro Systems designed a data matching system to capture data relevant to both General Education Development (GED) and employment-related core outcome measures.

As a state which leads the Nation in the diversity of cultures, there are 140 spoken languages and various dialects spoken in New Jersey. The IELCE investments support the immigrant community and other limited English proficient populations. In spite of diminishing resources, IELCE funded programs ensure that new residents acquire the skills and knowledge to become active and informed parents, workers and community members. During program year (PY) 2011, the English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) population represented more than 60 percent of all the students being served in the WIA Title II program, while 47 percent of these students were assessed at the Beginning ESL Literacy Educational Functioning Level (EFL) (ESL Beginning Literacy). This population may have minimal reading or writing skills in any language and may function minimally or not at all in English. These limitations directly affect a participant's ability to meet the goals of entering employment in a timely manner, even as 63 percent achieve at least one grade level during the year. In addition, this population is targeted for the integrated English literacy and civics education program, which emphasizes contextualized instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, naturalization procedures, civic participation, and U.S. history and government, in accordance with the *National Standards for Civics and Government* and *CIVITAS: A Framework for Civic Education*. This contextualized instruction is infused into all of our ABS/IELCE instructional programs, including those in correctional facilities and mental health state institutions/agency programs.

The LWD also dedicated state funding to enhance adult education alternatives directly to welfare registrants, dislocated workers and other jobseekers. Throughout the state, a network of more than 40 Workforce Learning Link (WLL) sites offer a combined training approach, utilizing teacher and computer-based instruction and services. Located primarily at OSCCs, WLLs offerings include basic computer literacy, financial literacy, job search and employability skills, and GED preparation and testing.

Professional Development – (2012)

The LWD's goal is to promote and provide adult literacy programs throughout the State of New Jersey. Professional development is a required component of the WIA Title II, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA). The professional development activities provided during the program year support the goals of the unit and the New Jersey Five Year State Plan for Adult Basic Education, and the requirements of the AEFLA.

The key to ensuring quality adult education programs is to provide professional development opportunities for program practitioners. In an effort to uphold and maintain the excellence of instructional programs in adult literacy, WIA Title II grant recipients must submit yearly professional development plans which identify their specific professional development needs. These plans are then utilized by the LWD Literacy Services Unit to create a needs assessment plan, which is then facilitated by the Literacy Services Professional Development Coordinator. During PY 2011-2012, the following professional development initiatives were undertaken:

- The data management software, LACES, continued to be a major professional development initiative for adult education administrators and practitioners. LACES' training was provided to WIA Title II grantees on a regional basis, individual agency basis as needed, and online through LiteracyPro's helpdesk. Generally the LACES' trainings are not mandatory, however, some sessions, such as those provided this past summer to address the upcoming changes to the NRS, were mandatory.
- A series of adult basic skills activities were conducted by experienced trainers from the Literacy Volunteers of New Jersey (LVNJ) and the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL). The training sessions included relevant information on the following topics: train the trainer, tutor training, ESL, civics, technology training, reading and writing skills, cultural diversity, financial literacy/numeracy and transition to work. Additionally, the trainers integrated the State adopted adult content standards "Equipped for the Future" framework and methodologies into their workshops.
- Sponsorship and support for a number of seminars and panels at statewide conferences with literacy organizations such as the New Jersey Association for Lifelong Learning Annual Conference (NJALL); LVNJ-Literacy for Life Seminar; Garden State Employment and Training Association's (GSETA) Annual Conference; and support for volunteer literacy tutor training.
- Program directors' seminars on policy and program topics including federal and state requirements; and grant preparation and development (Intake, Goal Setting, Assessment, Evaluation, Follow-Up Survey and Professional Development policies).
- Particular emphasis was placed on the NRS reporting changes which went into effect July 1, 2012. The trainings identified and explained changes to follow-up, outcomes and data reporting and were provided to ensure programs had current information on the changes and why they were implemented. In addition, because the changes would affect the manner in which data

would be entered into the LACES data reporting system, training was provided by LiteracyPro staff to address the data entry changes for WIA Title II grant recipients.

- Other professional development activities focused on assessment topics that included TABE, TABE CLAS-E and Best Plus. These training sessions were conducted to ensure that local programs understood and had the skills necessary to accurately administer assessment tests according to test publisher guidelines, NRS guidelines and New Jersey's assessment policy.
- Each WIA Title II consortium was provided a professional development award to address the individual training needs of the consortium. These "consortium professional development trainings" specifically targeted staff training activities, which were not provided by the LWD. As part of the application process, each grantee provided a professional development plan identifying the training and activities funded by the professional development award.

In summary, 48 separate professional development activities were provided by the LWD serving a total of 1,970 participants.

Leadership Activities

Tutor Training Initiative – Based on the positive data results from our data in 2010-2011's Tutor Training Initiative, the LWD awarded another tutor training grant to the LVNJ for the preparation of additional tutors to serve lower level literacy clients. The purpose of this grant was to support a major training initiative that included the certification of new volunteer tutors for NJ's Literacy Volunteers network. As a result of this year's initiative, 945 new volunteer tutors were trained statewide.

State funding was also made available to the OSCCs to supplement and expand existing basic skills and literacy programs and services. The WLLs provided opportunities in the OSCCs for clients to work with computer software programs to enhance their basic skill performance leading to employment, post-secondary education or training, or credential attainment, and in some cases, prepared for taking the GED examination. In an effort to improve the quality of literacy instruction provided in the WLLs and the OSCCs, professional development training opportunities continued to be developed to include these LWD programs. Specific trainings included instruction incorporating phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension, and instruction provided by volunteer tutors.

The LWD participated as a member of the State Employment and Training Commission's (SETC) State Council for Adult Literacy Education Services (SCALES); the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) Policy Committee; and the National Association of State Directors Policy Committee.

In PY 2010 the state implemented the test of TABE CLAS-E language assessment tool. Based on our initial field test result from 2009, the LWD officially added the TABE CLAS-E, as an approved test, to be used in WIA Title II programs for language assessment along with the BEST Plus and BEST Literacy. Programs continued to utilize the TABE and BEST tests for language assessment, which works well in identifying the student's needs and accurately demonstrating performance levels.

Significant efforts were also undertaken regarding the implementation of the LACES data system for reporting into the NRS. Most notably these efforts included:

- data quality assurance and quality control efforts;
- export of data files from LACES into the LWD's NJ Consumer Report Card;
- data matching from the wage record system to LACES to capture more accurate data for core indicators dealing with attainment of employment and job retention;

- data matching from the GED testing record system to LACES to capture more accurate results for core indicators dealing with GED attainment; and
- efforts to improve the data entry for outcomes reported on NRS Table 5.

Youth Programs and Initiatives

New Jersey Youth Corps (NJYC) - The New Jersey Youth Corps is a state-administered, locally operated service Corps which serves youth ages 16 through 25 who left school before earning a high school diploma. The NJYC program combines five essential elements: community service; academics; employability and life skills; career and personal counseling; and transition services to employment, further education or training.

The following provides a breakdown of NJYC performance for PY 2011.

Enrollment	770	Outcomes	
Average growth in reading after 100 hours of instruction	1.5 grade levels	Part-time Job	284
Average growth in math after 100 hours of instruction	1.7 grade levels	Full-time Job	137
Passed General Education Development (GED) test	358	Better Job	47
Cumulative Academic Hours	81,055	Returned to High School	17
Cumulative Community Service Hours	100,871	Vocational Technical School	76
		Two Year College	103
		Four Year College	6
		AmeriCorps	5
		Apprenticeship	33

PY 2011 served as a pilot year for the NJYC Program to use LACES for student record management and reporting of student performance. As a result of this pilot, usage of LACES several customizations were needed to accommodate NJYC’s data needs. The LWD is currently working with LiteracyPro Systems to complete these customizations. The use of LACES for the NJYC program provides the LWD with a comprehensive data management system from which the LWD can monitor program data on a regular basis to ensure the operation of quality programs and services to youth in New Jersey.

Program staff from the NJYC, as appropriate, took advantage of the professional development training and workshop opportunities offered through the WIA Title II program.

WIA Youth (Title 1) – Local OSCCs offer a variety of youth services through the WIA Youth program. The WIA Youth program is a federally funded program that provides services to economically disadvantaged youth between the ages of 14 and 21. WIA Youth services are available to in-school youth (ISY) and out-of school youth (OSY) who fall within one or more of the following categories: deficient in basic literacy skills; school dropout; homeless, runaway or foster child; pregnant or parenting; offender; or individual, including a youth with a disability, who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment. Males age 18 and over are required to register with the Selective Service. The main objectives of the program are to increase basic skills; improve occupational skills; attain employment and/or educational credentials; build self-esteem; and ultimately enrich lives through career advancement and life-long learning.

In PY 2011, a comprehensive technical assistance plan was implemented statewide for youth programming. This comprehensive plan included providing technical assistance through a variety of guides and tools including directives on WIA youth eligibility determination and WIA youth performance accountability; a “Youth Tool Box” for resource sharing; a standardized youth worksite agreement; and a WIA youth question and answer log.

In addition, a total of 18 regional workshops were offered to date with 694 local WIB area, provider and partner agency participants in attendance. PY 2011 workshops included Crystal Reports: Beginner; Crystal Reports: Intermediate; Occupational Trends and Tools; Assessments: Work Readiness Credential and TABE; Drug and Gang Awareness; and AOSOS: Follow-Up, Supportive Services and Case Management.

As a result of the comprehensive technical assistance plan, the number of youth “served” increased from 5,007 to 5,277 (3,482 ISY/1,795 OSY); the number of youth “exited” increased from 1,507 to 1,989 and the number of non-low income youth (<5 percent) is on target at 1.0 percent. The following provides a breakdown of WIA Youth performance in PY 2011:

Common Measure	Target Goal	Actual % Goal Met
Placement	59.0%	66.6%
Degree Attainment	59.0%	75.6%
Literacy/Numeracy	45.0%	67.8%

In PY 2012, the Youth Programs Unit will be utilizing workshop evaluations and an online survey to evaluate the training needs of the local WIBs and assist with planning the fall/winter workshop series.

Program Performance

The United States Department of Education (USDOE) requires its grantees to submit an annual narrative report, which describes successful activities, programs and projects. In addition to these activities and programs, the report should include significant findings from the agency’s evaluation of the effectiveness of the adult education and literacy activities based on the core indicators of performance. Chart 1 provides a breakdown of New Jersey’s performance targets for PY 2011-2012 and actual performance toward meeting the targets.

Chart 1: New Jersey Adult Education Performance

Performance Objectives	2011 Target	2011 Performance	+/- %
ABE Beginning Literacy	30%	27%	-3%
ABE Beginning Basic Education	31%	31%	0%
ABE Intermediate Low	31%	28%	-3%
ABE Intermediate High	22%	20%	-2%
ASE Low	26%	20%	-6%
ASE High	0	37%	0%
ESL Beginning Literacy	31%	33%	2%
ESL Beginning Low	42%	38%	-4%
ESL Beginning High	40%	39%	1%
ESL Intermediate Low	38%	39%	1%
ESL Intermediate High	26%	29%	3%
ESL Advanced	20%	22%	2%
Entered Employment	48%	30%	-18%
Retained Employment	59%	63%	4%
GED or Diploma	52%	37%	-15%
Entered Postsecondary	59%	96%	37%

Performance targets for PY 2011 were established and agreed upon by the LWD literacy staff in collaboration with the USDOE. The NRS tables provide the structure for reporting outcomes for clients who participate in the WIA Title II Adult Education Programs. The report shows data on educational gains, which demonstrate improvements in literacy skill levels in the following areas: reading, writing,

and speaking the English language, numeracy, computing, problem-solving, perception and comprehension for English language communication and other literacy skills. The NRS data also includes the following core measure categories: entered employment, retained employment, receipt of a secondary diploma or New Jersey State Issued Diploma, and entry into post-secondary education or training. New Jersey has demonstrated improvement in eight of the 11 EFL gain areas.

As a direct result of the detailed analysis of the wage data match, New Jersey was able to increase performance to 953 individuals meeting the entered employment goals this year, up from 349 last year. For retained employment, 878 met the retained employment goals this year, up from 105 last year, resulting in meeting the State’s PY 2011 performance benchmark with a 52 percent increase over last year’s performance. In addition, as a result of the data match for all core outcome measures with the exception of post-secondary education or training, New Jersey has achieved a valid response rate of at least 50 percent for all its core outcome measures. New Jersey has begun discussions to move toward data matching for post-secondary education or training beginning in PY 2012.

The Five-Year State Plan for Adult Education and Family Literacy (FY 2000-2004) and its subsequent extensions, support the intent of the Federal legislation by providing funds to deliver programs, opportunities and services to adult learners to prepare them to succeed as responsible and productive citizens in a global society.

Goal I: To Enable Adults to Acquire the Basic Educational Skills Necessary for Literate Functioning

During PY 2011, educational services and instruction to adults were provided through a wide variety of program offerings including: ABE, ESL, volunteer literacy programs, adult high school programs, GED test preparation, and programs at correctional institutions and at other state institutions.

In PY 2011 a total of \$12,668,900 (\$9,793,400 in ABE/ESL funds and \$2,875,500 in IELCE funds), in WIA Title II program grant funds was awarded to eligible literacy agencies, and 27,263 adult participants were served. The populations served included 9,819 ABE participants, 1,015 Adult Secondary Education (ASE) participants and 16,429 ESL participants. See Chart 2 for a breakdown of participants by EFL.

Chart 2: New Jersey Adult Education Participants

Educational Functioning Level	PY 2010 Total Enrollment	PY 2011 Total Enrollment
ABE Beginning Literacy	851	791
ABE Beginning Basic Education	2,714	2,517
ABE Intermediate Low	4,699	3,636
ABE Intermediate High	3,888	2,875
ASE Low	973	728
ASE High	352	287
ESL Beginning Literacy	7,333	7,704
ESL Beginning Low	3,156	2,667
ESL Beginning High	2,094	1,958
ESL Intermediate Low	2,025	1,786
ESL Intermediate High	1,856	1,539
ESL Advanced	1,035	775
Total	30,976	27,263

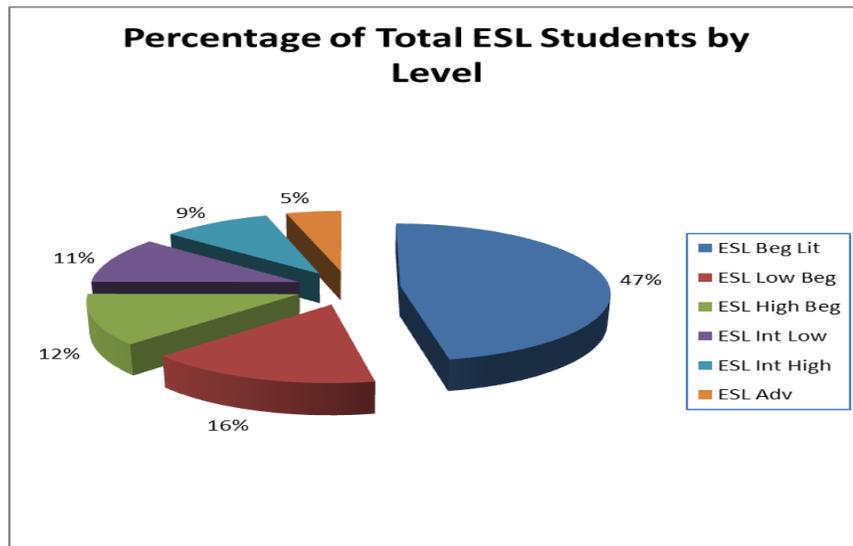
The ABE program services were delivered through 17 consortia and lead agency arrangements, usually with multiple delivery sites in the community, coordinated by the individual consortium, community/technical colleges or public and private non-profit agencies. Adult education programs were also

offered at New Jersey correctional institutions. Together, 89 agencies participated in delivering services in PY 2011 compared to the 90 agencies that participated in delivering services in PY 2010.

Fifteen adult high schools operate in various school districts throughout the state. These adult schools provide adults the opportunity, accessibility and flexibility of obtaining a high school diploma while maintaining established standards inherent in the awarding of a high school diploma. Adult high schools provide the infrastructure upon which the initial WIA Title II programs were infused.

There are currently 29 GED testing centers operating in the state, these sites most often are affiliated with an adult education consortium, adult high school or OSCC. One GED testing center is offered through the New Jersey Department of Corrections (DOC); all others are provided through the arrangement discussed above.

Goal II: To Provide English Literacy Instruction for Adults with Limited English Proficiency



The ESL programs are offered at many different venues from literacy-based volunteer programs to adult education programs. The programs provide services from ESL Beginning Literacy (Beg Lit), which could more accurately be termed English for Speakers of Other Languages to Advanced Level ESL. For the volunteer-based programs, services are provided through the use of tutor-learner matches to sponsor volunteer one-on-one or small group tutorial services.

The majority of the ESL students served (47 percent) were assessed at the Beginning ESL Literacy EFL (ESL Beg Lit). This population may only understand isolated words or phrases, may have no or minimal reading or writing skills in any language and functions minimally or not at all in English. The percentages for each of the other 5 EFLs ranged from 5 percent to 16 percent. A total of 27,263 students were served in the WIA Title II program for FY 2011; 16,429 of them were ESL students.

Chart 3: New Jersey Adult Education Participants in Programs for Adults with Limited English Proficiency

Educational Functioning Level	Total Number of ESL Students - PY 2011	Total Percentage of ESL Students - PY 2011
ESL Beginning Literacy	7,704	47%
ESL Beginning Low	2,667	16%
ESL Beginning High	1,958	12%

ESL Intermediate Low	1,786	11%
ESL Intermediate High	1,539	9%
ESL Advanced	775	5%
Total	16,429	100%

Goal III: To Provide Adults with Sufficient Basic Education to Enable them to Obtain and Retain Productive Employment and to Benefit from Job Training and Retraining Programs

Provider agencies were required to provide a system of support services, either on-site or through community referral to allow adults the opportunity to participate in programs that would assist them in obtaining and retaining employment, and benefit from job training and retraining programs.

The LWD will continue its close coordination with the New Jersey Department of Human Services (DHS) and the SETC to provide coordinated services, in order to build on the successes noted this program year in terms of economic achievements for the target population.

In PY 2010 the LWD developed a data matching plan that allows those participants with the main or secondary goal of either enter employment or retain employment who also provide a social security number to be matched against wage records. In PY 2011 significant discrepancies were found in the process followed for data match which lead to lost positive outcomes in the prior program year. The LWD has worked closely with program providers and LiteracyPro to eliminate any errors in the process and to ensure that program providers are doing their best to capture participant’s social security numbers allowing for a much larger number of captured positive outcomes.

Chart 4: Core Follow-up Outcome Data: New Jersey Adult Education Participant Employment and Postsecondary Achievements

Indicator	No. of Participants Achieving Outcome PY 2010	No. of Participants Achieving Outcome PY 2011
Enter Employment	349	953
Retain Employment	105	878
Entered Postsecondary Education/Training	625	407

Goal IV: To Enable Adults to Continue their Education to at least the Level of Completion of Secondary School

Educational opportunities were provided to adults via programs ranging from the ABE Beginning Literacy to the ASE High, provided via grants to consortia and lead agencies and through the provision of adult high schools in New Jersey school districts to prepare adults to:

- enroll and participate in the appropriate level of an adult education program and receive ancillary support services if necessary;
- move to the next level based on program performance;
- sit for the GED test and, if successful, receive a New Jersey State Issued Diploma; or
- graduate from an adult high school.

In PY 2011 LWD developed a data matching plan that allows those participants with the main or secondary goal of obtaining a GED/Secondary School Diploma who also provide a social security number to be matched against NRSpro’s Adult Education Data Management system.

Chart 5: Core Follow-up Outcome Data: New Jersey Adult Education Participant Educational Achievements

Indicator	No. of Participants Achieving Outcome PY 2010	No. of Participants Achieving Outcome PY 2011
Obtained GED/Secondary School Diploma	1461	1216

These statistics point to the continual efforts that must be made in programs in order to provide the support necessary for clients to achieve their own individual goals. Those adults who obtained an adult high school diploma or GED now have a credential that allows them to compete for jobs on an equal footing, which will help to enhance their personal economic base. Likewise, for the adults who entered other academic or vocational programs, they will have an opportunity to pursue studies which will lead to their personal as well as economic enhancement. These adults were served through the individually funded programs, the adult high schools and through the GED testing centers in the state.

During the performance period, grantees were required to integrate an English language/civics education component. The goal of this program is to create voluntary partnerships among federal, state and local agencies to develop, implement and improve English literacy and civics education services, in order to help immigrants and others with limited English proficiency develop the skills and knowledge necessary to become active and informed parents, workers and community members.

Types of activities supported by these funds included:

- tutor support training for LVNJ;
- language proficiency assessment;
- provision of experiential learning opportunities including completing employment forms, completing the voter registration process, engaging participants in volunteer opportunities and linkages with community resources;
- provision of computers and software for instruction;
- citizen preparation including visiting of polling places and government buildings in the State capital;
- field trips to promote American cultural awareness and skills; and
- preparation of curricula focusing on issues of importance to non-citizens such as preparation for becoming a U.S. citizen, job training and placement, housing, parenting and civics preparation.

Program outcomes across the board indicate that most eligible enrollees have either started or completed the process of becoming naturalized U.S. citizens and those students who are eligible have either registered to vote or have voted in a U.S. election for the first time. Enrollees also have increased their involvement in community activities as documented by attending parent meetings or parent-teacher conferences at their children’s schools. Many students continue to volunteer to serve in other capacities in their communities, including, setting up a voter registration table; assisting students in filling out voter registration forms; reading to the pre-school age children of beginning level ESL students enrolled in a family literacy program; donating and collecting food for the hungry; providing support at a community health fair; and attending language and culture classes at a local university.

Future Expectations of Literacy Services in New Jersey

Literacy Services are and always have been a large concentration of New Jersey and the Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Over the past year, an emphasis has been made to enhance and

streamline the overall strategy for literacy services to ensure that all program gaps are being filled, therefore, providing jobseekers with the skills necessary to reenter the job market. New Jersey is working towards filling these gaps by utilizing the following strategies:

- New Jersey has developed, marketed and is currently utilizing for the needs of literacy program participants Jobs4Jersey.com an innovative job search tool that connects jobseekers and employers in a more interactive and customized way;
- New Jersey's State Council for Adult Literacy Education Services (SCALES) is currently finalizing a needs analysis and recommendation report on the state of adult literacy education in New Jersey in which a concentration of addressing those findings will be made;
- Ensuring a proper connection between literacy service providers and the One-Stop Career Centers; and
- Working to shore up any deficiencies that exist in affecting New Jersey's ability to meet and exceed the WIA Title II Core Follow-Up goals.