



## **Basic Skills Workforce Training Program**

**Enhance Your  
Workers'  
Basic Skills...**

Give Them the  
Training They  
Need to Succeed  
in Your Workplace

A PARTNERSHIP OF  
New Jersey Business & Industry Association  
New Jersey Community College Consortium for Workforce & Economic Development  
NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development

## **Consortium for Workforce & Economic Development NJCCC**

**To:** Members of the New Jersey Senate and New Jersey Assembly

**From:** NJ Community College Consortium for Workforce and Economic Development

**Date:** August 16, 2011

**Subject:** New Jersey Basic Skills Training Program for Economic Growth Act End of Year Report: FY'11

We are pleased to supply as required in P.L. 2009, Chapter 199 the New Jersey Community College Consortium for Workforce and Economic Development's report on activities of the New Jersey Basic Skills Training Program for Economic Growth Act (NJBIA Basic Skills Workforce Training Program) for the past fiscal year ending June 30, 2011. This is the second year of program operation as directed by the legislature.

This public-private partnership between the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD), the New Jersey Community College Consortium for Workforce and Economic Development (Consortium) and the New Jersey Business and Industry Association (NJBIA) continues to assist the state's business community in improving workers' skills. Because of its unique flexibility, the program is able to reach more workers and employers than any other state training program.

Much of the success of the program is due to the vision and leadership of the NJBIA. Under CEO Phil Kirschner's leadership, the NJBIA was

responsible for the original concept of the program. NJBIA leaders recognized that thousands of small businesses in New Jersey were having difficulty accessing LWD training funds due to existing grant policy restraints. Your legislation has corrected this problem. LWD Commissioner Hal Wirths is fully supportive of the program.

The program is managed by the Consortium, with instruction delivered by the state’s community colleges. Instructors are seasoned college adjunct professors with experience in providing instruction to the business community. The NJBIA provides outreach to its 22,000 members. LWD manages fiscal oversight, including payment of invoices prepared by the Consortium. In FY’ 11 the project provided \$1,119,563.75 in tuition training dollars for New Jersey businesses. This figure represents a 25% increase over FY’ 10 training funds expended.

667 New Jersey employers participated in the program in FY ’ 11 sending over 10,901 of their employees to training classes (Figures 1 & 2). See Attachment A for complete list of employers.

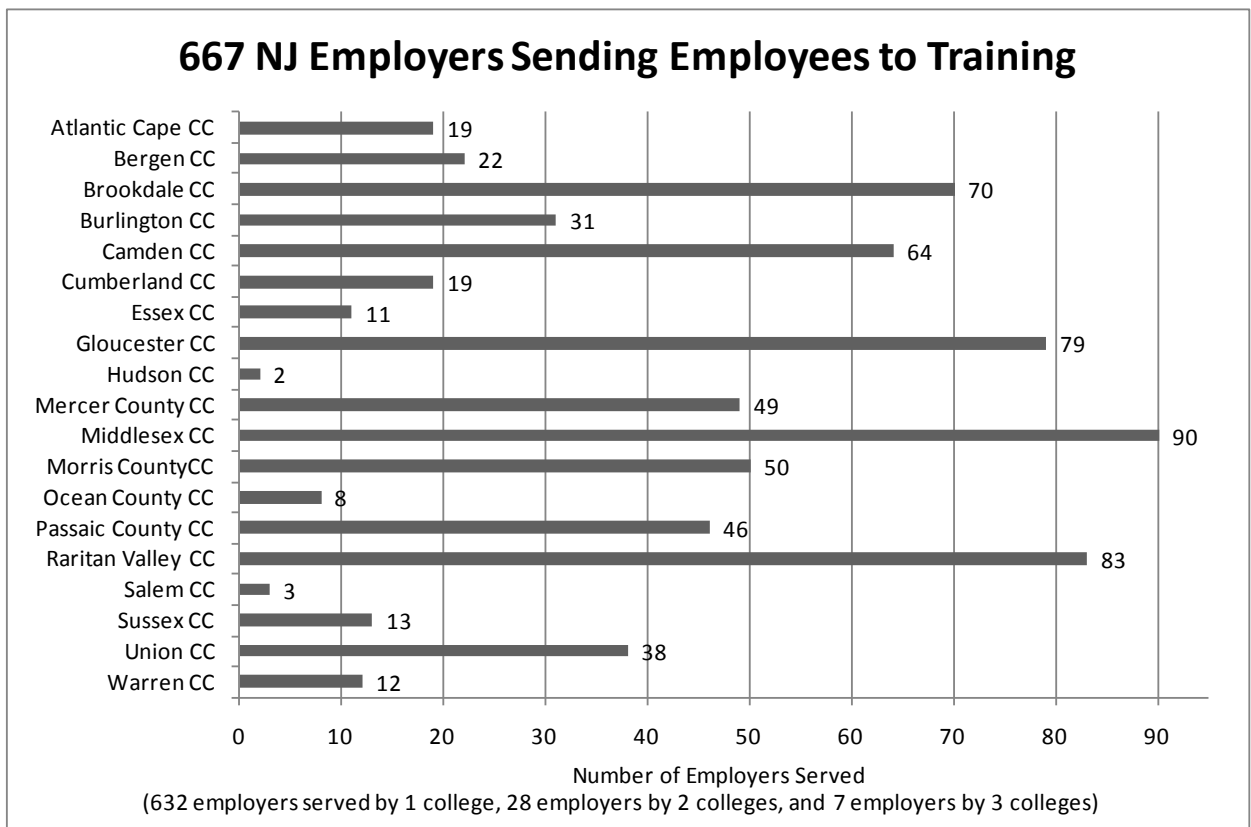


Figure 1

The training classes served employers in all 21 of New Jersey’s counties. The majority of classes were delivered at employer locations and at scheduled delivery times that allowed each employer to focus on productivity. Classes were delivered as early as 6 AM in the morning and as late as 11 PM at night.

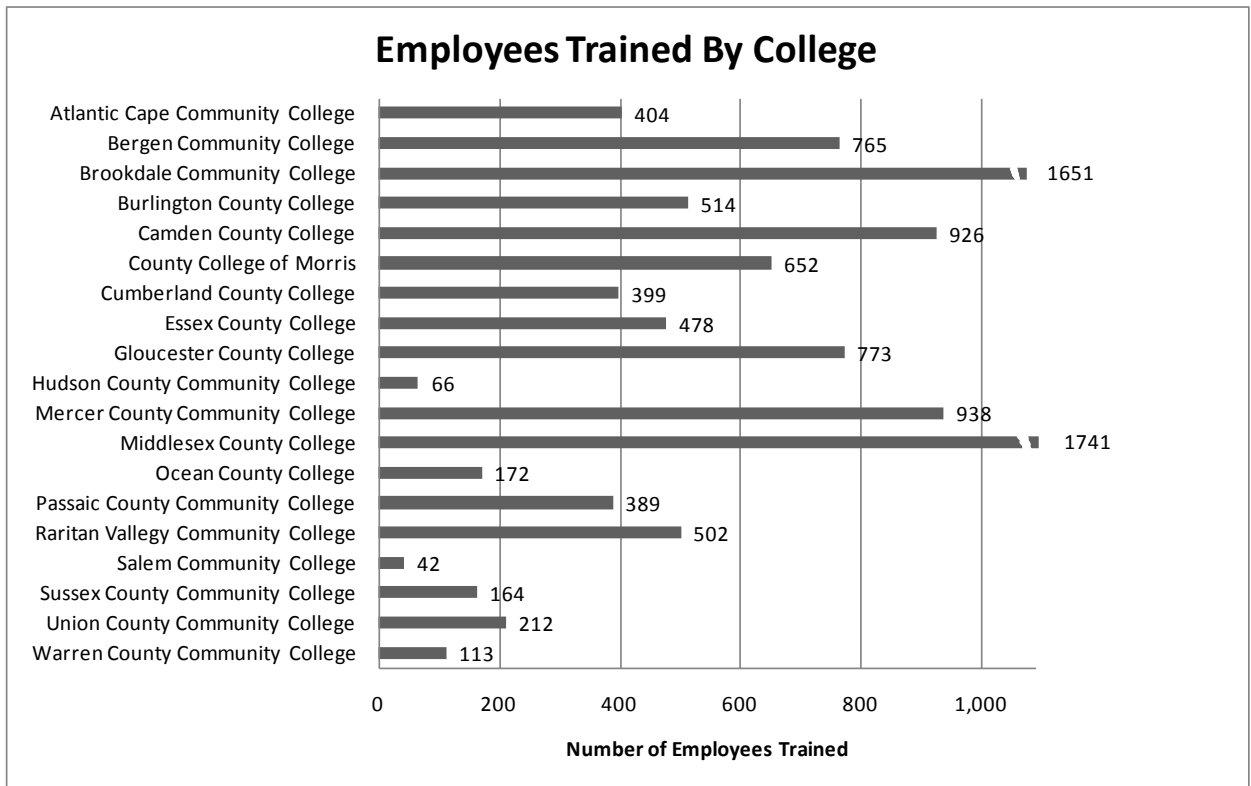


Figure 2

A total of 970 training classes were delivered by all of the 19 community colleges. The following is a listing of each college and the number of classes the college delivered. For a comparison with FY’10 activity see Figure 3.

- Atlantic Cape Community College (Atlantic & Cape May Counties) – 41 classes
- Bergen Community College – 60 classes
- Brookdale Community College (Monmouth County) – 125 classes
- Burlington County College – 45 classes
- Camden County College – 81 classes

Cumberland County College – 34 classes  
 Essex County College – 42 classes  
 Gloucester County College – 79 classes  
 Hudson County Community College – 6 classes  
 Mercer County Community College – 78 classes  
 Middlesex County College -174 classes  
 County College of Morris – 48 classes  
 Ocean County College – 14 classes  
 Passaic County Community College – 39 classes  
 Raritan Valley Community College (Somerset & Hunterdon Counties) – 46 classes  
 Salem County Community College – 4 classes  
 Sussex County Community College – 16 classes  
 Union County Community College – 24 classes  
 Warren County Community College – 14 classes

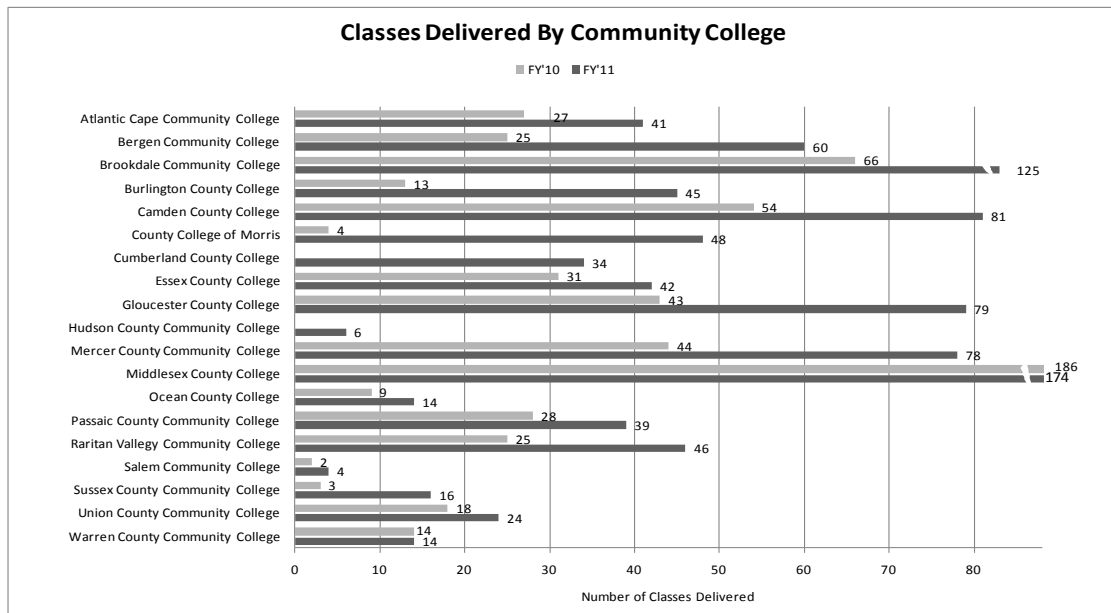


Figure 3

There was an increase in the number of classes delivered in every subject category in FY'01 over FY'11. In keeping with the ever increasing pressure on employees for improved technology skills, computer training led the demand by a wide margin. 678 classes, or 70% of the 970 classes offered were in basic computer skills (Windows, Word, Excel or Outlook).

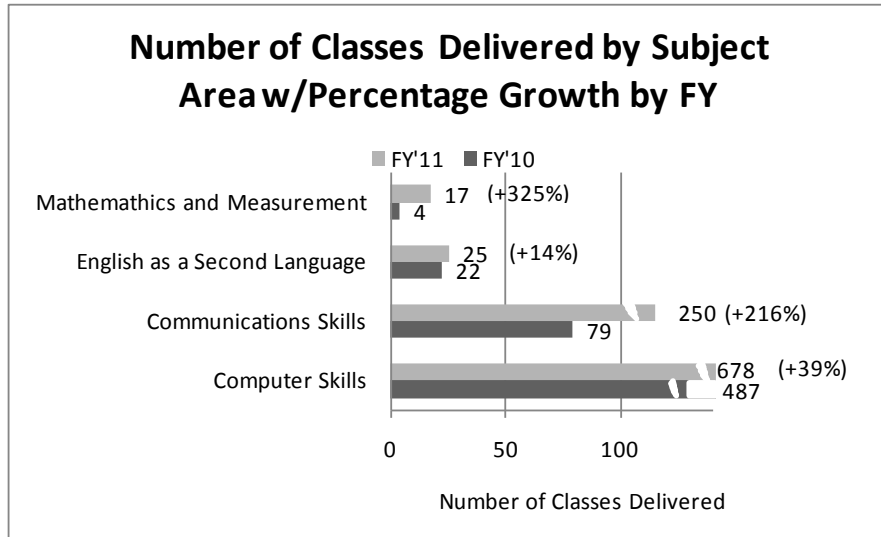


Figure 4

7,125 employees completed computer skills classes. Another 250 classes, with 3,296 employees were delivered in Basic Communication Skills, including Verbal Communication, Written Communication and Basic Communication for Improved Customer Service. This represents a 216% increase in communication classes delivered over FY' 10. Clearly, employers are placing increasing importance on improved communications skills for their employees. 25 classes with 287 employees were delivered in English as a second language and 17 classes for 193 employees were delivered in Basic Mathematics and Measurements.

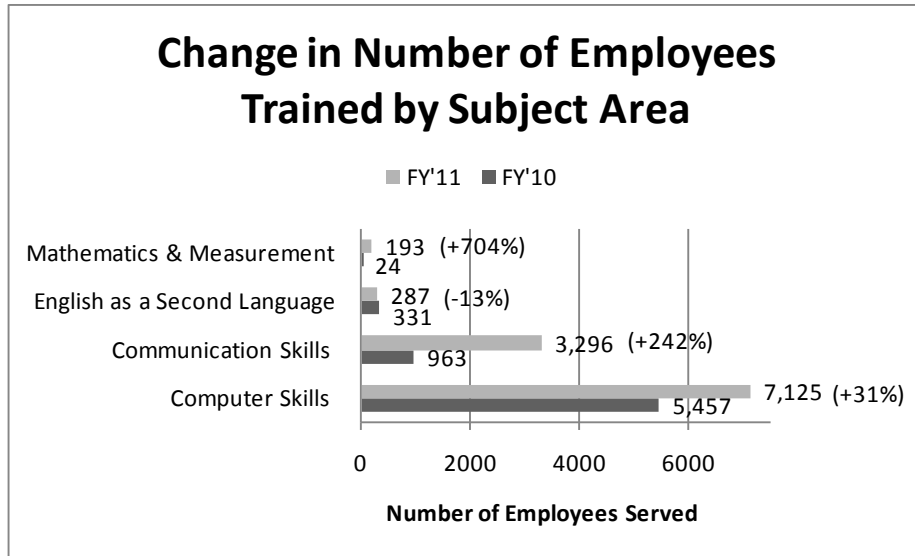


Figure 5

New Jersey's economy is driven by small business, with over 90% of employers having that designation from the LWD. This project is targeted to those employers and is reaching them in significant numbers. Of the 667 employers sending employees to training 523, or 78%, took advantage of the open enrollment formatted classes which were specifically targeted to small employers. These employers would not have been able to meet the minimum headcount requirement under normal conditions and would have been unable to access this valuable business resource without open enrollment classes.

Employees improved their skills as demonstrated on LWD's approved assessment instruments. Improvement in Basic Computer Skills was uniformly impressive with an overall improvement of 149%. English as a second language participants had an improved score of 19%. Assessment scores in the Basic Communications areas increased 36%.

Low to medium wage employees are those most often enrolled by their businesses. Over 56% of employees who participated in training reported hourly wages of less than \$20 per hour. The 10,901 workers report an astounding 2,853 different job titles (see Attachment B for a complete list of job titles reported).

## Program Analysis

### Strengths

- Freeing the program to work in cooperation with the Grants Operations Office at the LWD, while not bound by some of the rigid parameters of LWD's on line invoicing system, allows the project to be truly "demand driven".
- Class lengths are no longer driven by a rigid formula but are demand driven allowing employers to select the best match between class length and that employer's needs.
- Funding allows for immediate ramp up and outreach to the business community.
- Consortium's management allows faster turnaround and delivery for all businesses because those businesses do not have to go through a lengthy application process.
- Consortium's central administration allows for a single point of contact for all New Jersey businesses.
- State's community colleges provide a deep pool for instructors.
- State's community colleges provide access to 65 campus locations within 25 minutes of every resident and worker in New Jersey.
- Many of the community colleges have invested in mobile laptop computer labs allowing for technology based classes to be brought directly to company locations.
- There is a willingness to provide instruction any hour of the day or night on the company site. Customization of all classes means targeted training to better meet each business' needs.
- Cooperation between Consortium, LWD and NJ Office of Taxation has led to improved tax compliance on the part of participating businesses.
- Seamless collaboration between the three partners – Consortium, NJBIA and LWD, allows for smooth project fiscal management and precise record keeping.

### Weaknesses

- There continues to be some difficulty organizing classes of 10 or more for very small businesses. They have trimmed their workforces to the bare bones in an attempt to remain competitive. Taking workers out of production, or office operations, is a challenge to many of these small

- employers. Over 50% of the scheduled classes targeting small employers had to be cancelled due to the need to hit this threshold.
- Concerns over identity theft continue to put pressure on securing the mandated social security number. Almost 6% or 626 employees completed classes but refused to supply their social security number. These employees were not included in invoicing to LWD for tuition reimbursement.

### Improvements

The consortium is especially pleased to note that weaknesses identified early in the program year have been addressed at the highest levels of the Department. A new Memorandum of Understanding between the Department (LWD) and the Consortium eliminates each of the weaknesses listed below.

- Weakness - The poor economic climate made it difficult for many small businesses to meet the requirement to pay workers while in training.
  - Solution – The NJLWD Commissioner has waived the requirement that employees be paid their normal wage while in training for employers with fewer than 250 employees.
- Weakness - Invoicing into LWD’s CTTS on line system is not cost effective or efficient for both the LWD and the Consortium.
  - Solution – The Consortium will begin invoicing NJLWD with a direct monthly invoice process. All required data will be maintained by the Consortium as per legislative mandate.

### Testimonials

Brian Kaufmann, Vice President, Renaissance Marble & Granite:  
“We are extremely satisfied with the results of the program and how our employees have improved and gained useful and insight and valuable skills that will follow then through all stages of their career development...”

Jerri Haas, Plant Accountant ,Advanced Drainage Systems Inc:

“Before taking the classes, employees were compiling reports manually,” said Haas. “Now we are saving a great deal of time and are better equipped to access information stored on Excel. We are extremely satisfied with the results and would recommend the program to other businesses.”

Ms. Dotti Frye, Owner, Miracle Ear (2 store locations):

“The courses helped my employees build self esteem and become more comfortable with the computer applications.” “When our corporate office required us to stop using our appointment books, all of my employees were comfortable with the new databases and were able to provide the best quality customer service at our locations.”

Nancyanne Fama, Assistant Vice President, Human Resources, Food Circus Stores :

“...this could never be replicated by a small family-owned business.”

Ms. Chuni Li, Director of HR & Organizational Development, Monmouth Cares:

The community college “...put together a customized communication program that covered topics needed for our employees” and that the course “was delivered on our premises, ... with an interactive format.”

Stephen Van Houten, Director of Human Resources, Nisivoccia LLP: complemented the community college staff who were “diligent in meeting the company’s needs.” He further commented that the training in communications skills “allows our staff to be more proficient in job tasks and more comfortable in dealing with our clients.”

Ms. Pat Carroll, Director of Benefits and Staff Development, Solix Inc.: the college’s trainer was “on target with what we needed to know within our company’s environment.”

Ms. Alberta George, Practice Manager, The Neurosciencecenter of Northern NJ: says that the training helped staff “...understand our patients. We are still using the techniques we learned in this training.”

Dian Condie, Director of Sales, Hampton Inn in Mount Laurel:

“These face-to-face classes were a much better way to train our employees rather than an online course or simply handing them a booklet. Hampton Inn

is always on the lookout for ways to improve our operations and provide guests with the best possible experience at the Hampton Inn.”

Mr. Imram Rauf, Project Engineer, W H Industries Inc.:

Basic Mathematics training, directed to production supervisors, key shipping/receiving and quality control served as “a morale booster and refresher of important math skills.” Mr. Rauf added that new training in English as a second language is planned for the summer.