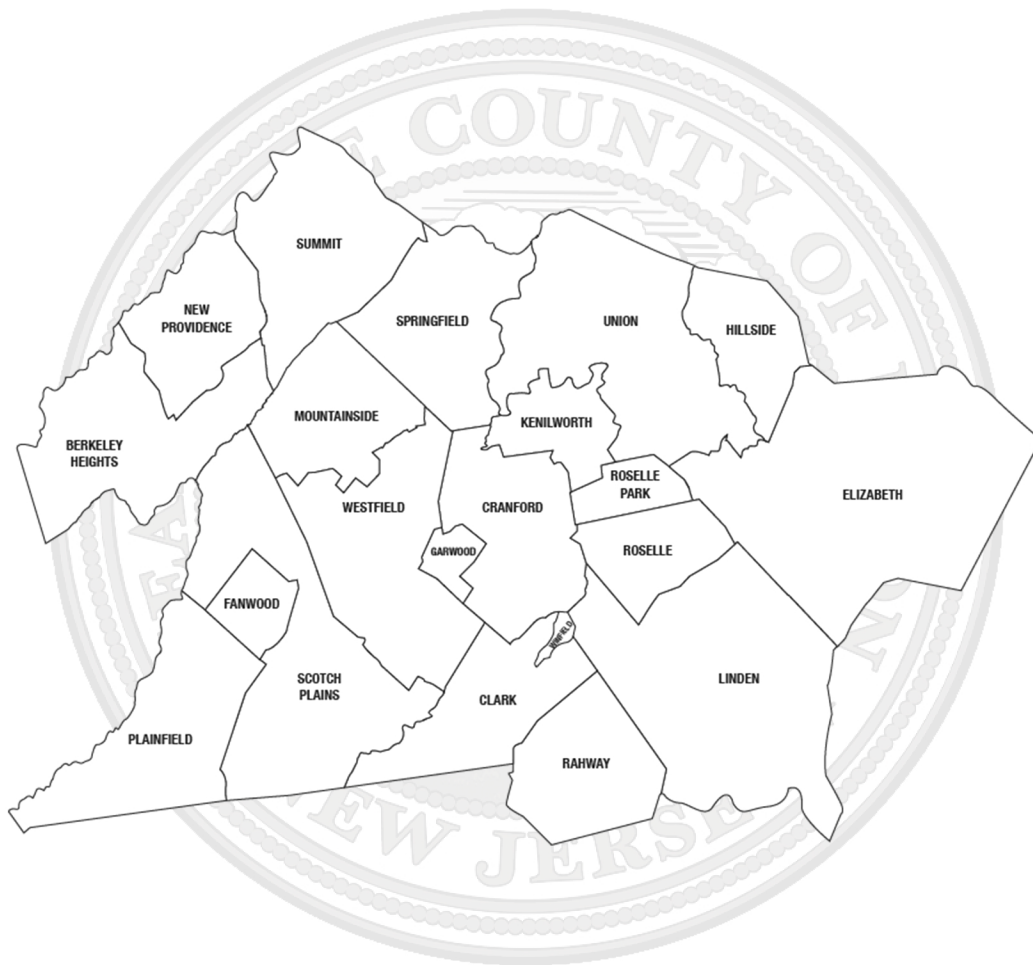


UNION COUNTY GOVERNMENT

2025 Executive Budget



Edward T. Oatman
County Manager

Table of Contents

COUNTY OF UNION

2025 Executive Budget

Table of Contents

County Manager Letter to Union County Board of County Commissioners	
Organizational Chart	
Financial Overview	
Overview of County Government	
Clerk of the Board.....	1
Office of Communication and	
Public Information.....	8
Office of Open Space, Recreation, and	
Historic Preservation Trust Fund.....	12
County Counsel.....	17
Department of Administrative Services.....	23
Department of Economic Development.....	35
Department of Engineering, Public Works & Facilities Mgt.....	70
Department of Finance.....	96
Department of Human Services.....	105
Department of Parks and Recreation.....	112
Department of Public Safety.....	142
Office of the County Clerk.....	152
Office of the Prosecutor.....	156
Office of the Sheriff.....	170
Office of the Surrogate.....	175
Board of Elections.....	181
Rutgers Cooperative Extension.....	199
Superintendent of Schools.....	216
Board of Taxation.....	223

**County Manager Letter to
Union County Board of
County Commissioners**

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY MANAGER
Edward T. Oatman, County Manager

February 27, 2025

**BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

LOURDES M. LEON
Chairwoman

JOSEPH C. BODEK
Vice-Chairman

JAMES E. BAKER, JR.

MICHÈLE S. DELISFORT

SERGIO GRANADOS

BETTE JANE KOWALSKI

ALEXANDER MIRABELLA

KIMBERLY PALMIERI-MOUEDE

REBECCA WILLIAMS

EDWARD T. OATMAN
County Manager

AMY CRISP WAGNER
Deputy County Manager

BRUCE H. BERGEN, ESQ.
County Counsel

JAMES E. PELLETTIERE
Clerk of the Board

The Honorable Chairwoman Lourdes M. Leon
Members of the Union County Board of County Commissioners
Union County Administration Building
10 Elizabethtown Plaza
Elizabeth, NJ 07207-2204

Dear County Commissioners,

Enclosed for your review and approval is the 2025 Executive Budget, prepared in compliance with the Optional County Charter Law.

This budget reflects Union County's ongoing commitment to responsible fiscal management, ensuring that our residents continue to receive the highest level of services and resources. Careful planning has allowed us to maintain a stable tax rate in 2025, following last year's modest 1.75% increase—our first after four consecutive years of a zero percent tax increase (2020-2023). This reflects our continued focus on balancing fiscal responsibility with community needs.

Union County remains in a strong financial position, proudly maintaining a AAA credit rating—the highest a county government can achieve. This is the result of sound budgeting, strategic investments, and cost-saving measures. Preserving financial stability remains a top priority as we navigate economic challenges, including inflation, rising operational costs, and labor market pressures.

Under the leadership of Chairwoman Lourdes M. Leon and her "*Union County 2025: Connecting Communities, Committed to Progress*" initiative, this budget prioritizes accessibility, public health, and community engagement. Investments in youth development, senior services, and workforce training will ensure residents of all ages have the resources they need to succeed. Environmental stewardship remains a priority, with initiatives such as invasive species removal in County parks, the expansion of community gardening programs, and sustainability-focused education.

Public safety remains a key focus, with enhanced emergency response services, expanded first responder mental health support, and a new emergency preparedness certification program for residents.

ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

Elizabethtown Plaza

Elizabeth, NJ 07207

(908) 527-4200

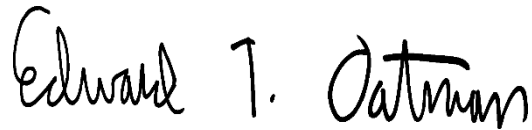
www.ucnj.org

At the same time, we must acknowledge the financial uncertainty posed by President Donald Trump and his administration. If federal funding cuts under his leadership are enacted, they could directly impact critical programs and services that Union County residents rely on. We are closely monitoring these developments and will take necessary action to protect Union County's fiscal health and ensure continued access to essential services.

This budget reflects a collaborative effort shaped by strategic planning, community input, and the dedication of our department heads and staff. Every effort has been made to minimize the impact on taxpayers while maintaining the high quality of life that Union County residents expect and deserve.

I extend my sincere appreciation to the Union County Board of County Commissioners for their leadership and guidance, and to our department heads and staff for their hard work in crafting a budget that supports both current needs and future growth.

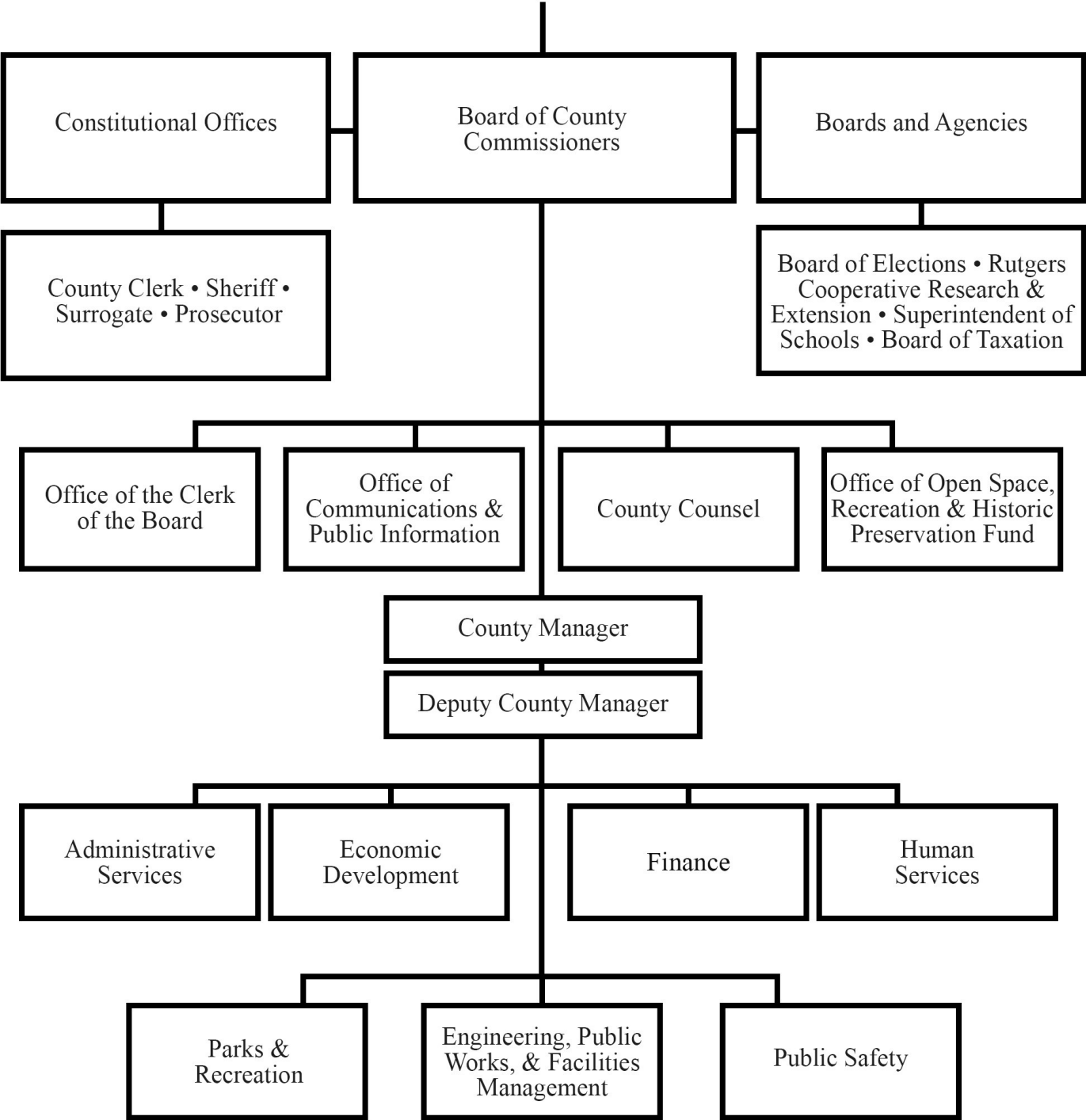
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Edward T. Oatman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Edward T. Oatman
Union County Manager

County of Union Organizational Chart

Residents of the County of Union



Financial Overview

**2025 EXECUTIVE BUDGET
REVENUE SCHEDULE**

	2024 Anticipated Revenue	2024 Realized Revenue	2025 Executive Budget
Surplus Anticipated	38,750,000.00	38,750,000.00	38,750,000.00
SUBTOTAL	38,750,000.00	38,750,000.00	38,750,000.00
Miscellaneous Revenues - Section A: Local Revenues			
County Clerk	1,700,000.00	1,535,362.94	1,500,000.00
Register of Deeds - Realty Transfer Fees	6,400,000.00	5,718,416.59	5,675,000.00
Sheriff	1,000,000.00	1,241,462.31	1,000,000.00
Surrogate	190,000.00	242,120.48	225,000.00
County Board of Pay Patients	12,500,000.00	15,188,907.55	825,000.00
Interest on Investments and Deposits	1,470,094.00	18,048,735.82	2,500,000.00
Parks and Recreation Facilities Revenue	7,500,000.00	8,514,292.41	8,250,000.00
Permits Road Department	150,000.00	270,419.70	200,000.00
SUBTOTAL Section A: Local Revenues	30,910,094.00	50,759,717.80	20,175,000.00
Miscellaneous Revenues - Section B: State Aid			
County College Bonds	2,605,151.00	2,605,151.48	2,809,028.15
SUBTOTAL Section B: State Aid	2,605,151.00	2,605,151.48	2,809,028.15
Miscellaneous Revenues - Section C: State Assumption of Costs			
Supplemental Social Security Income	1,729,906.00	1,448,287.00	1,703,965.00
SUBTOTAL Section C: State Assumption of Costs	1,729,906.00	1,448,287.00	1,703,965.00
Miscellaneous Revenues - Section D: Public & Private Revenues	15,692,257.08	95,362,225.47	14,201,197.83
SUBTOTAL Section D: Public & Private Revenues	15,692,257.08	95,362,225.47	14,201,197.83
Miscellaneous Revenues - Section E: Prior Written Consent			
County Clerk Increased Fees	1,400,000.00	1,400,454.00	1,400,000.00
Sheriff Increased Fees	625,000.00	802,989.04	700,000.00
Surrogate Increased Fees	310,000.00	283,626.93	275,000.00
Ambulance Services	1,750,000.00	2,239,973.55	2,000,000.00
American Rescue Plan - Revenue Loss	10,000,000.00	10,000,000.00	-
Debt Service - Open Space	4,225,843.00	4,225,843.33	4,104,733.98
Dispatch Services	750,000.00	1,218,178.56	1,000,000.00
Franchise Fee - Jersey Gardens	150,000.00	360,008.00	300,000.00
Fringe Benefits	2,850,000.00	3,085,500.57	2,850,000.00
Indirect Costs	1,000,000.00	905,202.52	900,000.00
Intoxicated Driver Resource Center Fees	-	-	220,000.00
NJ Division of Economic Assistance - Earned Grant	42,000,000.00	43,633,245.00	42,000,000.00
Open Space - Parks Maintenance	2,500,000.00	2,500,000.00	2,500,000.00
PILOT's	750,000.00	1,889,888.92	1,500,000.00
Rental Income UC College/Trinitas Hospital Kellog Building	160,000.00	183,333.37	160,000.00
Sale of Asset - County Infrastructure Program	1,500,000.00	1,500,000.00	1,500,000.00
Title IV D - Facility Reimbursement	1,500,000.00	1,916,728.26	1,750,000.00
Quarry Revenue	90,000.00	29,189.80	25,000.00
Union College - Insurance	7,951,968.00	8,138,127.86	8,696,399.00
Union County Utilities Authority	500,000.00	500,000.00	500,000.00
SUBTOTAL Section E: Prior Written Consent	80,012,811.00	84,812,289.71	72,381,132.98
Amount to Be Raised by Taxes	373,722,967.17	373,722,967.17	380,263,119.10
TOTAL LOCAL REVENUES	169,700,219.08	273,737,671.46	150,020,323.96
TOTAL REVENUES	543,423,186.25	647,460,638.63	530,283,443.06

**2025 EXECUTIVE BUDGET
APPROPRIATION SCHEDULE**

	Type	2024 Adopted Budget	2024 Modified Budget	2025 Executive Budget
GENERAL GOVERNMENT				
County Manager's Office	SW	536,898.00	536,898.00	565,005.00
	OE	750,500.00	750,500.00	352,000.00
Special Studies & Initiatives	OE	765,000.00	765,000.00	710,000.00
Board of County Commissioners	SW	565,787.00	565,787.00	554,572.00
	OE	120,000.00	120,000.00	102,500.00
County Infrastructure & Improvement Program	OE	1,500,000.00	1,500,000.00	1,500,000.00
Annual Audit	OE	240,000.00	240,000.00	250,000.00
Other Accounting and Auditing Fees	OE	125,000.00	125,000.00	125,000.00
Clerk of the Board	SW	1,076,046.00	1,076,046.00	1,101,114.00
	OE	221,500.00	221,500.00	233,500.00
Status of Women Advisory Board	OE	2,500.00	2,500.00	-
County Clerk	SW	2,627,123.00	2,627,123.00	2,723,239.00
	OE	193,700.00	193,700.00	193,700.00
Board of Elections	SW	2,159,468.00	2,159,468.00	2,262,241.00
	OE	665,000.00	665,000.00	1,023,260.00
Elections (County Clerk)	SW	274,911.00	274,911.00	274,411.00
	OE	1,613,200.00	1,613,200.00	1,614,900.00
Department of Finance:				
Office of Director	SW	267,957.00	267,957.00	280,211.00
	OE	167,500.00	167,500.00	167,500.00
Public Obligations Registration Act P.L. 1983	OE	100,000.00	100,000.00	100,000.00
Division of Reimbursement	SW	540,726.00	540,726.00	541,423.00
	OE	3,500.00	3,500.00	3,500.00
Division of Treasurer	SW	404,555.00	404,555.00	414,678.00
	OE	81,000.00	81,000.00	81,000.00
Division of Comptroller	SW	957,026.00	957,026.00	838,440.00
	OE	28,000.00	28,000.00	28,000.00
Aid to Union County Improvement Authority	SW	150,000.00	150,000.00	150,000.00
Division of Internal Audit	SW	380,061.00	380,061.00	375,296.00
	OE	7,600.00	7,600.00	7,600.00
County Counsel	SW	1,337,067.00	1,337,067.00	1,402,751.00
	OE	83,100.00	83,100.00	83,100.00
County Adjuster	SW	429,538.00	429,538.00	445,024.00
	OE	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Department of Administrative Services:				
Office of Director	SW	316,229.00	316,229.00	329,896.00
	OE	15,700.00	15,700.00	15,700.00

**2025 EXECUTIVE BUDGET
APPROPRIATION SCHEDULE**

	Type	2024 Adopted Budget	2024 Modified Budget	2025 Executive Budget
Division of Motor Vehicles	SW	1,872,046.00	1,872,046.00	1,823,761.00
	OE	5,180,000.00	5,180,000.00	5,180,000.00
Division of Personnel Mngt & Labor Relations	SW	1,231,021.00	1,231,021.00	1,284,143.00
	OE	1,154,450.00	1,154,450.00	1,154,450.00
Division of Purchasing	SW	500,803.00	500,803.00	495,965.00
	OE	249,130.00	249,130.00	249,130.00
Board of Taxation	SW	304,306.00	304,306.00	309,776.00
	OE	-	-	-
County Surrogate	SW	1,223,544.00	1,223,544.00	1,276,748.00
	OE	38,200.00	38,200.00	38,200.00
Department of Economic Development:				
Office of Director	SW	469,082.00	469,082.00	491,027.00
	OE	102,000.00	102,000.00	102,000.00
Community Services	SW	200,634.00	200,634.00	207,082.00
	OE	7,000.00	7,000.00	2,000.00
Division of Strategic Planning & Intergovernmental Relations	SW	719,695.00	719,695.00	517,943.00
	OE	755,000.00	755,000.00	737,250.00
Division of Information Technology	SW	863,870.00	863,870.00	886,634.00
	OE	2,126,000.00	2,126,000.00	2,841,000.00
Insurance:				
Group Health Insurance Plan for Employees	OE	60,732,777.00	60,732,777.00	61,228,096.00
Surety Bond Premiums	OE	12,000.00	12,000.00	12,000.00
Other Insurance Premiums	OE	10,310,184.00	10,310,184.00	9,753,424.00
Employees' Prescription Plan	OE	27,432,410.00	27,432,410.00	27,871,686.00
Dental Plan	OE	625,000.00	625,000.00	675,000.00
Disability Insurance	OE	200,000.00	200,000.00	200,000.00
TOTAL GENERAL GOVERNMENT		135,016,344.00	135,016,344.00	136,187,876.00
PUBLIC SAFETY:				
Sheriff's Office	SW	24,332,547.00	24,332,547.00	25,644,020.00
	OE	4,172,167.00	4,172,167.00	620,000.00
Division of Corrections	SW	5,935,337.00	5,935,337.00	5,165,856.00
	OE	18,668,500.00	18,668,500.00	18,668,500.00
Juvenile Detention	SW	74,300.00	74,300.00	76,529.00
	OE	2,000,000.00	2,000,000.00	2,000,000.00
Department of Public Safety				
Office of Director	SW	313,122.00	314,122.00	317,194.00
	OE	1,201,000.00	1,201,000.00	1,000.00
Division of Weights and Measures	SW	402,265.00	403,265.00	410,748.00
	OE	4,050.00	4,050.00	4,050.00

**2025 EXECUTIVE BUDGET
APPROPRIATION SCHEDULE**

	Type	2024 Adopted Budget	2024 Modified Budget	2025 Executive Budget
Division of Medical Examiner	SW	706,317.00	706,317.00	737,114.00
	OE	885,744.00	885,744.00	885,744.00
Division of Emergency Management	SW	1,448,476.00	1,508,476.00	1,574,278.00
	OE	481,575.00	481,575.00	536,263.00
Emergency Medical Services	SW	2,321,115.00	2,496,115.00	2,657,377.00
	OE	215,000.00	215,000.00	210,000.00
Division of County Police	SW	12,051,218.00	12,051,218.00	12,170,065.00
	OE	314,600.00	314,600.00	314,600.00
Division of Health	SW	404,123.00	404,123.00	406,392.00
	OE	168,183.00	168,183.00	161,000.00
County Prosecutor's Office	SW	26,072,348.00	26,072,348.00	27,143,411.00
	OE	1,917,082.00	1,917,082.00	995,249.00
Contribution to Soil Conservation District	OE	39,723.60	39,723.60	41,709.78
TOTAL PUBLIC SAFETY		104,128,792.60	104,365,792.60	100,741,099.78
OPERATIONAL SERVICES:				
Department of Public Works & Facilities Mngt				
Office of the Director	SW	41,852.00	41,852.00	43,107.00
	OE	9,700.00	9,700.00	9,700.00
Engineering, Land and Facilities Planning	SW	1,161,999.00	1,161,999.00	1,248,813.00
	OE	434,500.00	434,500.00	434,500.00
Division of Public Works	SW	2,448,832.00	2,448,832.00	2,497,588.00
	OE	221,200.00	221,200.00	67,700.00
Division of Facilities Management	SW	7,996,219.00	7,996,219.00	8,044,121.00
	OE	8,424,500.00	8,424,500.00	8,424,500.00
Contribution for Flood Control	OE	15,642.00	15,642.00	15,955.00
TOTAL OPERATIONAL SERVICES		20,754,444.00	20,754,444.00	20,785,984.00
HEALTH AND WELFARE:				
Children's Specialized Hospital	OE	50,000.00	50,000.00	50,000.00
Cornerstone Psychiatric Facility	SW	6,852,930.00	6,852,930.00	-
	OE	7,438,520.00	7,438,520.00	54,000.00
Adult Diagnostic Center	OE	9,000.00	9,000.00	9,000.00
Psychiatric Treatment	OE	5,000.00	5,000.00	5,000.00
Maintenance of Patients: Mental Health Services	OE	3,780,195.00	3,780,195.00	3,949,261.00

**2025 EXECUTIVE BUDGET
APPROPRIATION SCHEDULE**

	Type	2024 Adopted Budget	2024 Modified Budget	2025 Executive Budget
Rutgers Behavioral Health Care	OE	36,476.00	36,476.00	14,336.00
Maintenance of Patients: Geriatric Center	OE	200,000.00	200,000.00	1,700,000.00
Department of Human Services				
Office of Director	SW	965,977.00	965,977.00	1,032,444.00
	OE	1,694,450.00	1,694,450.00	1,654,450.00
Division of Aging	SW	457,448.00	457,448.00	468,979.00
	OE	2,185,134.00	2,185,134.00	2,520,379.00
Division of Children & Youth Services	SW	953,566.00	953,566.00	982,043.00
	OE	111,439.00	111,439.00	115,186.00
Division of Outreach & Advocacy	SW	683,232.00	683,232.00	706,516.00
	OE	27,100.00	27,100.00	27,100.00
Employment & Training	SW	271,278.00	271,278.00	274,994.00
	OE	355,050.00	355,050.00	215,780.00
Division of Social Services	SW	38,392,339.00	38,392,339.00	40,456,868.00
	OE	10,455,938.00	10,455,938.00	10,914,457.00
Division of Individual & Family Support Services	SW	629,618.00	629,618.00	784,999.00
	OE	884,551.00	884,551.00	939,063.00
Division of Paratransit	SW	58,923.00	58,923.00	60,362.00
	OE	2,600,000.00	2,600,000.00	2,600,000.00
TOTAL HEALTH AND WELFARE		79,098,164.00	79,098,164.00	69,535,217.00
RECREATION:				
Department Parks & Recreation:				
Office of the Director	SW	996,436.00	996,436.00	1,034,557.00
	OE	4,366,500.00	4,366,500.00	230,500.00
Recreational Facilities	SW	2,286,913.00	2,286,913.00	2,207,471.00
	OE	9,466,310.00	9,466,310.00	10,083,905.00
Division of Planning & Environmental Services	SW	687,638.00	687,638.00	695,469.00
	OE	145,900.00	145,900.00	145,900.00
Park Maintenance	SW	3,095,162.00	3,095,162.00	3,053,463.00
	OE	784,100.00	784,100.00	783,300.00
Cultural and Heritage Affairs	SW	212,578.00	212,578.00	222,186.00
	OE	20,000.00	20,000.00	20,000.00
TOTAL RECREATION		22,061,537.00	22,061,537.00	18,476,751.00
EDUCATION				
Office of County Superintendent of Schools	SW	295,832.00	295,832.00	271,906.00
	OE	12,500.00	12,500.00	12,500.00

**2025 EXECUTIVE BUDGET
APPROPRIATION SCHEDULE**

	Type	2024 Adopted Budget	2024 Modified Budget	2025 Executive Budget
Vocational Schools	OE	5,553,393.00	5,553,393.00	5,608,930.00
Union County Extension Service in Agriculture	SW	51,236.00	51,236.00	55,335.00
	OE	135,500.00	135,500.00	145,942.00
Union County Community College System	OE	16,133,582.00	16,133,582.00	16,294,920.00
Scholarship Program	OE	190,000.00	190,000.00	190,000.00
Reimbursement for Residents: Out of County	OE	217,000.00	217,000.00	217,000.00
Educational Services Commission	OE	70,000.00	70,000.00	70,000.00
TOTAL EDUCATION		22,659,043.00	22,659,043.00	22,866,533.00
UNCLASSIFIED:				
Prior Year Bills	OE	78,979.83	73,159.59	136,826.89
Salary Adjustment	SW	1,883,359.28	1,646,359.28	1,690,947.90
Accumulated Absences	SW	2,350,000.00	2,350,000.00	1,500,000.00
Utilities	OE	10,212,600.00	10,212,600.00	10,517,000.00
TOTAL UNCLASSIFIED		14,524,939.11	14,282,118.87	13,844,774.79
STATE AND FEDERAL PROGRAMS:				
State and Federal Grants	OE	15,692,257.08	95,362,225.47	14,201,197.83
Matching Funds	OE	1,250,000.00	1,250,000.00	1,250,000.00
TOTAL STATE AND FEDERAL PROGRAMS		16,942,257.08	96,612,225.47	15,451,197.83
TOTAL OPERATIONS		415,185,520.79	494,849,668.94	397,889,433.40
Contingent	OE	50,000.00	50,000.00	50,000.00
TOTAL CONTINGENT		50,000.00	50,000.00	50,000.00
DETAIL:				
TOTAL SALARIES & WAGES	SW	166,242,928.28	166,242,928.28	163,186,532.90
TOTAL OTHER EXPENSES INCLUDING CONTINGENT	OE	248,992,592.51	328,656,740.66	234,752,900.50
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS:				
Capital Improvement Fund	OE	3,300,000.00	3,300,000.00	3,300,000.00
Road Resurfacing	OE	2,750,000.00	2,750,000.00	2,750,000.00
TOTAL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS		6,050,000.00	6,050,000.00	6,050,000.00
DEBT SERVICE				
Bond Principal				
State Aid College Bonds	OE	3,610,000.00	3,610,000.00	3,925,000.00
Vocational School Bonds	OE	3,690,000.00	3,690,000.00	3,485,000.00
Other Bonds	OE	41,470,000.00	41,470,000.00	38,465,000.00
College Bonds	OE	2,190,000.00	2,190,000.00	3,245,000.00

**2025 EXECUTIVE BUDGET
APPROPRIATION SCHEDULE**

	Type	2024 Adopted Budget	2024 Modified Budget	2025 Executive Budget
Interest on Bonds				
State Aid College Bonds	OE	787,635.00	787,634.21	883,338.00
College Bonds	OE	457,588.00	457,587.50	496,669.00
Vocational School Bonds	OE	762,200.00	762,200.00	723,497.00
Other Bonds	OE	7,807,563.00	7,507,562.48	8,659,085.00
Interest on Notes	OE	3,520,000.00	3,499,999.93	1,300,000.00
Principal on Notes	OE	-	-	-
Lease Payments				
UCIA - Lease Payments	OE	10,625,340.00	10,496,888.93	18,977,765.00
UCIA - State Aid College Bonds	OE	812,669.00	812,668.76	809,719.00
Dam Restoration Loans				
Dam - Principal	OE	193,054.00	193,053.57	196,934.00
Dam- Interest	OE	16,487.00	16,486.75	12,607.00
License Agreements - Pace	OE	-	-	-
TOTAL COUNTY DEBT SERVICE		75,942,536.00	75,494,082.13	81,179,614.00
 DEFERRED CHARGES:				
Deferred Charges to Future Taxation - Unfunded	OE	317,965.46	317,965.46	2.66
TOTAL DEFERRED CHARGES		317,965.46	317,965.46	2.66
 STATUTORY EXPENDITURES:				
Public Employees Retirement System	OE	18,967,388.00	18,967,388.00	18,590,520.00
Police and Firemen's Retirement Fund	OE	15,644,776.00	15,644,776.00	15,383,873.00
Social Security System (OASI)	OE	11,000,000.00	11,000,000.00	11,000,000.00
Defined Contribution Retirement Fund	OE	115,000.00	115,000.00	115,000.00
Unemployment Compensation Insurance	OE	150,000.00	150,000.00	25,000.00
TOTAL STATUTORY EXPENDITURES		45,877,164.00	45,877,164.00	45,114,393.00
 TOTAL GENERAL APPROPRIATIONS		543,423,186.25	622,638,880.53	530,283,443.06

The instructions can be found on the Instruction Tab of the workbook.			
Summary Levy Cap Calculation			
		County	EXAMINER
2000		Union County	
Model Tax Levy Calculation Worksheet			
Levy Cap Calculation			
	Prior Year Amount to be Raised by Taxation - County Purpose Tax		\$373,722,967
	Cap Base Adjustment (+/-)		(\$1,388,406)
	Less: Prior Year Deferred Charges: Emergency Authorizations		\$0
	Less: Prior Year Deferred Charges to Future Taxation Unfunded		\$317,965
	Less: Changes in Service Provider: Transfer of Service/ Function		\$0
	Net Prior Year Tax Levy for County Purpose Tax for Cap Calculation		\$372,016,596
	Plus 2% Cap increase		\$7,440,332
	Adjusted Tax Levy		\$379,456,928
	Plus: Assumption of Service/ Function		\$0
	Adjusted Tax Levy Prior to Exclusions		\$379,456,928
	Exclusions:		
	Allowable Shared Service Agreements Increase	\$0	
	Allowable Health care costs increase	\$0	
	Allowable Pension increases	\$0	
	Allowable Capital Improvements Increase	\$0	
	Allowable Debt Service and Capital Lease Increases	\$5,602,765	
	Current Year Deferred Charges: Emergencies	\$0	
	Deferred Charges to Future Taxation Unfunded	\$3	
	Add Total Exclusions		\$5,602,767
	Less Cancelled or Unexpended Exclusions		\$448,454
	Adjusted Tax Levy After Exclusions		\$384,611,241
	Additions:		
	New Ratables - Increase in Apportionment Valuation of New Construction and Additions	\$641,245,026	
	Prior Year's County Purpose Tax Rate (per \$100)	\$0.368	
	New Ratable Adjustment to Levy		\$2,358,675
	Amounts approved by Referendum		\$0
	Maximum Allowable Amount to be Raised by Taxation - County Purpose Tax		\$386,969,916
	Plus: 2022 Cap Bank Utilized in 2025*		\$0
	Plus: 2023 Cap Bank Utilized in 2025*		\$0
	Plus: 2024 Cap Bank Utilized in 2025*		\$0
	Maximum Allowable Amount to be Raised by Taxation - CPT After All Exclusions		\$386,969,916
	Amount to be Raised by Taxation - County Purpose Tax		\$380,263,119
<i>*Can only be added to the extent that the Maximum Allowable Amount to be Raised by Taxation – CPT After All Exclusions (Cell E37) does not exceed the "1977 Cap" Maximum County Purpose Tax After All Exceptions (Levy Cap Determination and Budget Preparation Worksheet – Cell D45).</i>			

2024

1977 Cap Exclusions Calculation			
*The instructions can be found on the Instruction Tab of the workbook.			
County of:	Union	Municode:	2000
County Purpose Tax			373,722,967.17
CAP Base Adjustment			-1,388,406.07
Revised County Purpose Tax:			372,334,561.10
EXCEPTIONS:			
(Less:)			
Debt Service			69,111,542.00
Deferred Charges			317,965.46
Emergency Appropriations			0.00
Capital Improvements			6,050,000.00
Matching Funds			1,250,000.00
Authority - Share of Costs MUA			0.00
County Welfare Board			26,337,979.00
Special Services School District			0.00
Vocational School			5,553,393.00
Out of County Vocational School			0.00
County College (Current Year)		16,133,582.00	
Less County College (1992 Base)		8,995,000.00	
Net County College			7,138,582.00
Out of County College (Current Year)		217,000.00	
Less Out of County College (1992 Base)		275,000.00	
Net Out of County College			0.00
Capital Lease Payments			
9 1 1 Emergency Management Services			
Health Insurance			2,495,204.28
TOTAL EXCEPTIONS			118,254,665.74
Amount on which 2.50% Cap is applied			254,079,895.36
2.50% Cap Amount			6,351,997.38
Allowable County Tax Before Additional Exceptions per (N.J.S. 40A:4-45.4)			260,431,892.74

2025 Levy Cap Determination and Budget Preparation			
2000	County	Union County	
The instructions can be found on the Instruction Tab of the workbook.			
Allowable County Purpose Tax Before Additional Exceptions per (N.J.S. 40A:4-45.4)			260,431,892.74
Add:			
New Construction			2,358,675.30
Debt Service and Capital Leases		81,179,614.00	
Less Debt Service & Capital Lease Revenues Offset by Approps		6,913,762.13	
Net Debt Service and Capital Lease Obligations			74,265,851.87
Deferred Charges to Future Taxation - Unfunded			2.66
Emergency Authorizations			
Capital Improvements			6,050,000.00
Matching Funds			1,250,000.00
County Welfare Board		73,653,941.00	
Less Welfare Revenue Offset by Appropriation		43,703,965.00	
Net County Welfare Board			29,949,976.00
Special School Districts			
Vocational School			5,608,930.00
Out of County Vocational School			
County College		16,294,920.00	
Less County College 1992 Base		8,995,000.00	
Net County College			7,299,920.00
Out of County College		217,000.00	
Less Out of County College 1992 Base		275,000.00	
Net Out of County College			0.00
911 Emergency Management Services			
Health Insurance			0.00
Subtotal			387,215,248.57
2023 Cap Bank Utilized*			
2024 Cap Bank Utilized*			
COLA Increase Available/Utilized*		2,540,798.95	
"1977 Cap" Maximum County Purpose Tax After All Exceptions			387,215,248.57
"2010 Cap" Maximum Allowable Amount to be Raised by Taxation After all Exceptions			386,969,916.20
(From the Summary Levy Cap Worksheet)			
Amount to be Raised by Taxation - County Purpose Tax			380,263,119.10
			Use 2010 Calc.
*Can only be added to the extent needed to support the budget and to the extent that the "1977 Cap" Maximum County Purpose Tax After All Exceptions (Cell D45) does not exceed the "2010 Cap" Maximum Allowable Amount to be Raised by Taxation After All Exceptions (Cell D47).			

Overview of Union County Government

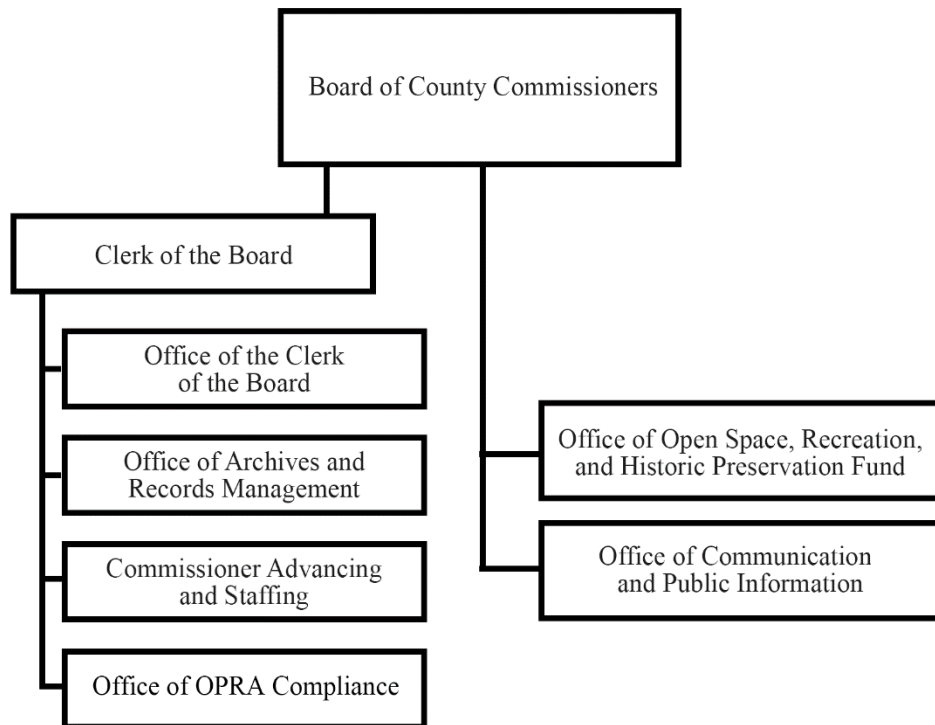
Office of Clerk of the Board

**Office of Communication and Public
Information**

**Office of Open Space, Recreation and
Historic Preservation Trust Fund**

Organizational Chart

Office of Clerk of the Board Office of Communication and Public Information Office of Open Space, Recreation and Historic Preservation Trust Fund



CLERK OF THE BOARD

Mission

To prepare for and coordinate the activities of Union County Board of County Commissioners meetings; act as the depository and maintenance of vital County documents; act as custodian of the official County seal and provide administrative services for the Board.

Programs & Services

Commissioner Meetings: Coordination of Commissioner meetings including but not limited to: scheduling, agenda development and preparation, policy execution, correspondence, attendance, recording of votes and actions, processing of all resolutions and ordinances and forwarding of same to appropriate entities, required legal advertising and constituent outreach and recognition.

Record Keeping: Note and preserve the minutes of the Board, recording all actions and votes taken, and the substance of discussions and debate relating thereto.

Official Depository: Preserve all official records, actions, votes, and substance of discussions of the Board of County Commissioners. Keep and compile all ordinances, resolutions, minutes, contracts, surety bonds, insurance policies, and other official papers. Maintain a system of receiving and processing all Open Public Records Act (OPRA) requests. Maintain a system of receiving and processing all departmental requests for archived government documents.

2024 Accomplishments

On January 4, 2024, the Office successfully coordinated the annual Installation Ceremony and Reorganizational Meeting of the Union County Board of County Commissioners held in-person in the Courtroom of the Honorable Assignment Judge Lisa Miralles Walsh, at the Union County Courthouse in Elizabeth, New Jersey. Following the Reorganizational Meeting the Office coordinated nineteen (19) double meetings (meetings where both the Agenda Setting Session and the Regular Meeting were held on the same night) and one (1) Special Meeting, totaling 39 meetings, held in-person at the County Administration Building in Elizabeth, New Jersey.

The Office continued its implementation of the electronic (and paperless) agenda process. The agenda, packet including all the back-up, is created electronically and emailed to the Commissioner Board, eliminating the need for duplication at the print shop and reducing labor hours of the messengers to deliver the packets to the Commissioners prior to the meeting, saving printing, gas and personnel costs.

The Office coordinated and prepared numerous Laudatory Resolutions to honor individuals, citizen groups, community and non-profit agencies for their outstanding achievements and/or worthwhile endeavors. In 2024, the office prepared approximately 225 Commissioner Sponsored resolutions; many of which required the drafting of multiple resolutions tailored to specific to multiple individualized presentations. Additionally, the Office prepared, in coordination with the Office of Public Information, Policy Resolutions offering either the Board's support or protest to legislative bills affecting residents of Union County. The Office reviewed all Departmental resolutions submitted to the Board for approval, and disseminated in accordance with said resolution and advertised same in accordance with the law.

Each meeting of the Board of County Commissioners was considered a double meeting, and as such, in an effort to continue to provide information to the public, the agendas for both the Agenda Setting Sessions and Regular Meeting were typically posted to the website no later than the Monday prior to the ensuing Wednesday meeting. Ordinances approved by the Board of County Commissioners were posted to the website after introduction and then in final format after final adoption. Said ordinances were advertised in accordance with the law. The public hearing dates and final adoption dates were posted on the website as well.

The Office assisted the publication and the conducting of Public Hearings for the Department of Administrative Services, Division of Purchasing & the Department of Public Works, Engineering and Facilities.

The Office maintained a record of the Union County Advisory Boards, maintaining the official Oaths of Offices for said boards, and successfully appointed members to various vacancies to a number of Union County Advisory Boards.

Open Public Records Act Compliance: The Office of the Clerk of the Board continues to maintain a thorough process for handling Open Public Records Act (OPRA) requests. The OPRA office continues to see a strong interest in government documents from the public. In 2024, there were 1,255 OPRA submissions, yielding requests for an amount upwards of 3,900 documents; representing a slight increase in OPRA Submissions from 2023.

The response tracking system benefits both the County and the requestor, allowing the OPRA office to track progress and maintain open lines of communication with the public. Requestors are advised in writing throughout the request process: acknowledgment of the request; updates as applicable; and notification the request has been completed. This system helps ensure the County is in compliance with OPRA and responds to requests within the time frame prescribed by law. Additionally, the County responds to the vast majority of OPRA requests electronically, providing documents at no cost to requestors.

Office of Archives and Records Management: During 2024 the Office of Archives and Records Management continued to assist County departments in storage and records disposal.

We continue to use VRC (Vital Records Controls) for our off-site storage, with our current, five-year contract set to expire at the end of 2026. We continue to experience challenges with delays and missing items, but negative impacts have been minimal. The Prosecutor's Office continues to communicate directly with VRC staff to follow-up on record orders. The Department of OARM continues to provide individual training in archiving and the VRC database as needed.

In July of 2024, Heather Seward, Vice-President of Client Relations for VRC, provided us with a status update regarding the partial roof collapse that occurred at VRC's facility located at 375 Mill Rd in Edison in November of 2023. She advised that VRC has reconciled 100% of the boxes from the affected building and that the landlord had fully completed the necessary repairs to the structure. She noted that on July 16, 2024, VRC had regained limited access to the affected building and would continue with Phase 2 of the reconciliation process, which she anticipated would be completed by September 30, 2024. Additionally, VRC anticipated having all boxes returned to permanent storage by the end of January 2025, returning to 100% service levels.

In October of 2024, following the County's transfer of ownership of Cornerstone Behavioral Health Hospital of Union County, the Department of OARM assisted staff with archiving 90 boxes of records from the Cornerstone and coordinated transport to VRC's storage warehouse.

OARM has continued its discussions with Naviant Inc. relative to Cloud Hosting for the OnBase database, through the auspices of Naviant. Aside from receiving a preliminary proposal, no additional discussions have occurred regarding the transition.

Office of the Commissioners/Office of Commissioner Advancing and Staffing: The Office of the Clerk of the Board administrated and implemented the Commissioners Office's 2024 Budget.

The Clerk of the Board supervised the Office's responsibilities as they related to providing the day-to-day support to members of the Union County Board of County Commissioners. These responsibilities included, but were not limited to, managing each Commissioner's independent schedules; coordinating and confirming the Commissioners' attendance to various events - often involving the coordinating of Commissioner Talking Points, photography, and Resolution or Certificate Presentations; advancing the Commissioners at various events and relaying the logistics of said event prior to a Commissioner's arrival; drafting constituent letters in response to constituent concerns and constituent outreach letters; and assisted in the overall promotion of County Events, County Programs & Services, and the County of Union/County Board of County Commissioners.

The Office coordinated the implementation of the Commissioner Sponsorship program, working alongside the Department of Parks, to ensure County equipment was made available and delivered to approved County sponsored community events.

The Clerk of the Board oversaw the transition of new Commissioner Advance and Staffing team to carry out the aforementioned functions into 2025.

2024 Initiatives

Office of the Clerk of the Board: In 2025, the Office of the Clerk of the Board will continue to perform statutory duties as required in an efficient and effective manner and continue to provide a high level of service to the public, the Board of County Commissioners and all other users of the office as is expected. In addition to the Agenda Setting Sessions, Regular Meetings and any Special Meeting of the Board, the Clerk of the Board's Office will coordinate all other Subcommittee Meetings of the Board. The Clerk of the Board's Office will coordinate the all Public Hearings of the Board; inclusive of the official public hearing on the budget.

The Office will undertake the coordination of the transition to a new electronic (paperless) agenda and minutes software system, and will coordinate a countywide training for all users to ensure all resolutions and ordinances are entered with appropriate attachments and all documents are scanned in their entirety. The Office will continue to explore ways to use the website to provide easier access and

transparency, and continue to maintain a monthly updated record of advisory boards and any agendas and/or minutes of said advisory boards.

The Office will create a complete ledger of all Advisory Boards highlighting purpose, membership, meeting minutes and recommendations to the Commissioner Board. The Office will continue to research and revise previous initiatives proposed, and implement amended initiatives accordingly.

The Office will work in conjunction with County Counsel on expanding the digital Document Management process for all contracts, resolutions and ordinances.

The Office will continue to assist in the coordination of the Chairman's initiatives and all initiatives of the Board of County Commissioners.

Open Public Records Act Compliance: Open Public Records Act Compliance: the OPRA staff will continue to respond to OPRA requests in an expeditious manner, allowing greater accessibility to government documents to members of the public. The OPRA staff will continue to explore ways to enhance the efficiency of the communication between the Office of the Clerk of the Board and County departments to facilitate responses to OPRA requests, and work with the Office of County Counsel to obtain legal guidance as necessary and review documents for legally required redactions. The Office continues to explore available technologies that may allow for greater transparency and efficiencies within the OPRA office. The Office will continue to provide continuing-education opportunities for OPRA staff to ensure their knowledge of the law is current and anticipatory of potential changes. The importance of continuing education was shown when OPRA was updated in June 2024, and staff attended training before the changes took effect in September 2024.

Office of Archives and Records Management: The Office will continue to ensure the proper processes relative to the storage and retrieval of its documents.

The Office will also continue to pursue training and or written instruction relative to State regulations regarding retention periods and disposal methods for emails and other electronic documents. The Office will continue to maintain the Certification of the County of Union's Electronic Data Management System, working closely with the State of New Jersey to document the County's imaging process and adhere to all State regulations. The OARM will explore alternatives to the current maintenance and IT services.

The Office will look to expand its OnBase records management document inventory and will incorporate new document types to promote convenience and mitigate document retrieval time within the Countywide OnBase system.

The Office staff will continue to monitor the retention schedules of the County's archived records and documents and set a biannual review of inventory and permanent withdrawal of records and documents that have reached their retention period, as prescribed by the New Jersey Department of Archives and Records Management (DARM), and will continue to implement a twice-a-year review of expired records in storage and destruction, and in compliance with the Bureau of Recycling & Planning Guidelines on shredding documents.

The Office will continue the purging of expired records from VRC; and seek to exponentially increase the number of purged documents through a "Scan and Shred" program for documents that have not met their retention date, but can be archived digitally in accordance with DARM guidelines, in its attempt to reduce the number of physical documents archived at an off-site location.

The Office will continue to work with the various departments with the retention of their documents and review unidentified boxes inventoried in the offsite document archive storage facility for destruction and retention schedules. OARM will continue to coordinate training for all Departmental Records Management personnel to minimize the on-site paper and file storage in County facilities and offices.

OARM will continue to assist municipalities in purging their inactive inventories at no cost under the successful municipal inventory purge project. Additionally, OARM will continue to make available scanning and indexing services to municipal clerks.

Office of the Commissioners/Office of Commissioner Advancing and Staffing: The Clerk of the Board's Office will continue to administer and implement the budget of the Union County Board of County Commissioners' Office; inclusive of the purchase of a new bandwagon and information van for their many countywide public events. The Office will continue to supervise the advance and staffing for the nine (9) elected County Commissioners; and furthermore, supervise the responsibilities of the Commissioner Aides as they relate to providing the day-to-day support to members of the County Commissioners. The Office will continue to coordinate the implementation of the Commissioner Sponsorship process. The Office will look to research and effectuate the most practicable and cost-effective method to provide informational outreach opportunities at community events.

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATION & PUBLIC INFORMATION

Mission

The Office of Communication and Public Information connects the residents of Union County's 21 municipalities with the programs and services initiated by the Commissioner Board and implemented by Union County Government, and for the Constitutional Offices on request. This is accomplished through media relations that have evolved from traditional print, television and radio outlets to include a wide range of online publications as well as the County's social media channels and website, along with an increased focus on graphics, videos, and livestreaming. The Office also connects with members of the public on a daily basis to provide information and service referrals, through staffing the toll-free Public InfoLine and Public Info email contact.

Programs & Services

The Office of Communications is responsible for managing all media and social media communications for Union County Government. This includes maintaining and updating the County website, composing County Manager or Commissioner Speeches—such as the annual Chair's Re-Organization speech outlining County initiatives and events Commissioners attend—drafting talking points for meetings, responding to public inquiries via phone and email, and compiling daily news clips for internal use. The team also supports public events by staffing, creating signage, and producing other event materials. In addition, the Office offers Spanish translation services in-house.

The Director of Digital, Web, and Social Media Services oversees the County's web and social media platforms, including those UCUA, and UCJIF through shared services agreements. Responsibilities include managing the EverBridge system (marketed as UC First Alert), providing IT and tech support for Commissioners, administering in-house bidding systems, and being on call 24/7 to respond to communication needs.

The Office also provides web and media support for Constitutional Offices such as the County Clerk, Sheriff, Prosecutor, and Surrogate, as well as frequent assistance

to the County Clerk, Board of Elections, and Rutgers Extension. Media and social media support are extended to the Vocational-Technical School District and other County-related offices upon request.

Collaborating with numerous publications and media outlets in Union County and the broader New York metro area, the Office works with newspapers, websites, social media, magazines, TV, radio, and newsletters. The Director maintains 24-hour contact with media outlets, Commissioners, County Directors, and personnel during emergencies and policy updates, with additional staff available around the clock as needed.

The Office also partners with all County departments to provide support with written, designed, or drafted documents, public outreach, and press inquiries. They work closely with the Board of Commissioners and the County Manager's Office to respond to constituent letters, emails, and media questions promptly and accurately.

2024 Accomplishments

1. Launch of Explore Union County App

The Union County Board of County Commissioners proudly announced the launch of its official "Explore Union County" app, available for free download on iOS and Android at <https://ucnj.org/explore>. Part of Chairwoman Kimberly Palmieri-Mouded's 2024 "Growing Together in Union County" initiatives, the app features a news tab, events calendar, parks and recreation directories, recycling and election shortcuts, Commissioner and administration contact directories, push notifications for countywide updates, and links to social media pages. The app includes a reporting function for residents to send feedback and photos about issues directly to County administration. With GPS integration, it helps pinpoint exact locations for reported issues. Feedback on the app itself is also welcome.

2. Website Revamp

The County website underwent significant updates to enhance user navigation, with interactive buttons, an updated event calendar, greater mobile responsiveness, and a more user-friendly design. This effort has improved accessibility and streamlined the user experience for residents seeking resources and information.

3. Press and Social Media

In 2024, nearly 300 press releases were issued covering a broad spectrum of topics, including public notices, community events, and county initiatives. Social media

updates continued to engage residents with timely information and interactive content and social profiles continue to grow. The County's Facebook page gained more than 1,500 new followers and is on track to hit 30,000 followers in 2025; the Instagram channel gained more than 1,700 new followers and is on track to surpass 13,000 followers in 2025. Link clicks between the two channels more than doubled, and both reach and engagement remain steady. The County received more than 2.5x the number of direct messages through social media and continues to respond to substantive messages and comments regularly, addressing resident concerns in a timely manner. Content reached more than 650,000 people; 99% of that reach was organic and only 1% resulted from selectively boosted posts. Top-performing posts by reach included upcoming job fairs, coyote sightings, and scam alerts—signaling that residents rely on the County for notifications about timely events, many of them related to public safety.

4. Initiative Support: The Office of Communication and Public Information has actively supported numerous initiatives led by the Commissioner Chairwoman in collaboration with various departments. Efforts included producing informational videos, engaging social media content, press releases, and visually impactful graphics. These coordinated actions were designed to effectively inform and involve the public, ensuring each initiative reached its intended audience and fostered greater community engagement.

2025 Initiatives

1. Digital Accessibility Hub: The County will continue to revamp the website with a focus on accessibility. A Digital Accessibility Hub will complement outreach efforts by featuring recorded seminars, multilingual guides, and interactive tools, ensuring resources remain available to all residents, regardless of location or schedule.

2. Expansion of the Explore Union County App: Enhancements to the app will provide additional features and resources for residents, including interactive walking and hiking maps.

3. New Chairwoman's Initiatives: In partnership with Chairwoman Lourdes Leon, the Office will promote and implement new initiatives, including Coffee with the Commissioners, Community Resource Fairs, Youth in Government Day, and more.

4. County Marketing Campaign: A comprehensive marketing campaign will be launched to strengthen public messaging, awareness, and engagement with county services and programs.

5. Union County Departmental Resource Guides: Create user-friendly resource guides for all Union County departments, modeled after the Department of Human Services directory. These guides will provide clear, organized information on services and programs, available in English, Spanish, Creole, and Arabic. Accessible both digitally and physically, the guides will be updated annually to ensure residents can easily find and access resources.

6. Countywide Alignment and Cohesion Initiative: Enhance countywide efficiency and cohesion through unified branding, streamlined data collection, and consistent public communication. This initiative, led by the County Manager's Office and Communications, includes developing centralized software for forms, payments, and data sharing. It ensures all departments collaborate effectively while reinforcing Union County's identity as a well-organized government.

The Office of Communication and Public Information will continue to be the principal point of contact for communication to the Union County Board of Commissioners, County Officials, and external participants such as residents, media, businesses, municipalities and partners, as well as employees. OPI will continue to coordinate any crisis communications and duties as needed for the County Commissioners.

We will continue to maintain the social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram and YouTube) with the most up-to-date information pertaining to the County of Union.

OPI will be working closely with each Department on their initiatives to gain more attention and interest from the public.

OPI will continue to be responsible for driving public and employee awareness to events, news, policies and initiatives for the County of Union, while upholding our reputation in developing relationships with local, regional and national press outlets.

**OFFICE OF UNION COUNTY OPEN SPACE,
RECREATION AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION TRUST
FUND**

Mission

The mission of the Open Space, Recreation and Historic Preservation Trust Fund is to assist in the execution of policy made by the Union County Board of Commissioners to conserve open space, provide recreational opportunities, and preserve historic sites throughout the twenty-one municipalities in Union County.

2024 Accomplishments

Trust Fund

The Open Space, Recreation and Historic Preservation Trust Fund was created by referendum on November 7, 2000 to be funded by establishing a levy of 1 ½ cents per \$100 of total County equalized real property valuation for twenty years. In 2016, a public question was placed on the November ballot to continue the Open Space, Recreation and Historic Preservation Trust Fund without an end date, and it was approved by the voters of Union County. The Trust Fund will continue to provide monies for:

- Acquisition of lands in Union County for recreation and conservation purposes;
- Development of lands acquired for recreation and conservation purposes;
- Maintenance of lands acquired for recreation and conservation purposes;
- Historic preservation of historic properties, structures, facilities, sites, areas, or objects in Union County and the acquisition of such properties, structures, facilities, sites, areas, or objects in Union County for historic preservation purposes;
- Payment of debt service on indebtedness issued or incurred for purposes (1), (2) and (4) above.
- According to a report prepared by the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Policy at Rutgers University, the following was noted: “The preservation and maintenance of Union County’s park system. . .will be necessary to help sustain an attractive quality of life for the residents of Union County. Initiatives to create an Open Space Trust Fund that will support this effort . . . are highly recommended.”

Open Space

The commitment to the acquisition of open space in the County of Union by the Union County Board of Commissioners is, and will remain, a cornerstone of the

Trust Fund. With over 318 acres of land preserved as we ended 2021, the residents of Union County benefit each day from the increased quality of life those acquisitions bring.

In 2022, the Open Space, Recreation and Historic Preservation Trust Fund acquired 1.5+ acres in Berkeley Heights. This property is surrounded on two sides by County-owned parkland, and a third side by the Passaic River. This acquisition will provide a valuable connection to the Passaic River, and will be developed to provide access to walking trails along the Passaic River, along with river access for non-motorized boating.

This and other acquired parcels continue to prove the thoughtful commitment of Union County voters when this initiative was approved in 2000. It is not difficult to imagine the economic hardship that the development of the 63 acre American Water Property in the Watchung Reservation, the 17 acres in Berkeley Heights, or the varied dozens of acres in Clark, Rahway, Union and other municipalities would have caused. Equally as distressing would have been the irreversible loss of that open space in our already crowded county.

Recreation

Through the Open Space, Recreation and Historic Preservation Trust Fund, the Union County Board of Commissioners has had a great impact on the recreational health of our county residents through multiple avenues of assistance.

Through the Open Space Trust Fund Office in collaboration with the Parks Department for the first time ever the County of Union applied and was awarded three 2024 NJDEP/Green Acres Grants. The Trust Fund managed a successful community outreach program in order to engage the public in the planning and development stages.

- **Jakes Law Grant-** awarded in the amount of \$915,000.00 to develop and construct a completely inclusive playground at Warinanco Park, Roselle.
- **Urban Parks Grant-** awarded in the amount of \$500,000.00 to revitalize the playground at Rahway River Park, Rahway.
- **Stewardship Grant-** awarded in the amount of \$239,900.00 for landscape restoration work at the Homestead Farmhouse at Oak Ridge Park, Clark.

In 2024, The Trust Fund administered various programs under the direction of the Chairwoman's Initiatives. These Grant programs promoted a stem-based education, improved nutrition, social activities, and volunteer service in local neighborhoods, and funding towards school and community art programs.

Plant A Seed Initiative- \$65,000.00 was awarded to School and Community Gardens. The Plant A Seed garden grant initiative began in 2018. It is funded by the Chair Initiatives and administered through the Trust Fund. This initiative encompasses both the Union County Kids Dig School Garden Grant program and the Union County Means Green Community Garden Grant program.

In 2024, our office received 85 applications from all over Union County. The grant was expanded to cover STEM educational programming and experiences related to agriculture, food science, nutrition, and sustainability. This includes project-based learning, afterschool STEM activities, and out of school experiences. In addition, the grant focused on inclusivity by offering ADA raised-beds as an option. This made gardening possible for individuals who are wheelchair bound or unable to kneel.

This year for the first time ever, the Annual Plant A Seed Kickoff event, included a donation of 65 compost bins and several fig trees to be raffled off to our gardeners. The office also worked with the Office of Public Information to create two testimonial videos that highlighted the importance and benefits of a stem-based education.

Sensory Friendly Theater-Sensory Friendly Theatre (SFT) is a series of live performances specially designed and adapted for children with autism and similar sensory sensitivity.

Five shows were offered this year at the Union County Performing Arts Center. The office also unveiled a mobile communication board modeled after the 2023 Communication Board in our Parks. This is now used at all our shows and made available for other departments to utilize.

Summer Theater Camp-Facilitated through the Open Space Trust Fund and made possible through the Chairwoman's initiatives, 21 Summer Theater Camp Scholarships were awarded to participate in a four-week camp held at the Union County Performing Arts Center, Hamilton Stage. This year campers performed Mean Girls Jr. and Junie B. Jones. The Scholarship Includes Full tuition, Show T-shirt, Script, and Costumes.

In addition, the Board has provided direct assistance to municipalities through the Kids Recreation Trust Fund Grant Program and the Greening Union County Grant Program. This grant allows for municipalities to create, improve and expand

recreational opportunities in their own backyards, as dictated by their needs and abilities.

Some highlights of these two avenues of improvement include:

- **Kids Recreation Grant Program-** \$1,002,000.00 was awarded to municipalities in 2024 through the Kids Recreation Trust Fund grant program. It is important to note that this matching grant program provides for recreational improvements with municipalities, directed by municipalities. Since its inception in 2004, this grant program has put more than \$21,000,000.00 back into the parks and playgrounds in each of the 21 municipalities in Union County
- **Greening Union County Grant Program-** Approximately \$100,371.25 was awarded to municipalities throughout Union County through the 2024 Greening Union County grant program. First offered in 2004, this grant program has provided over \$1,800,000.00 to municipalities throughout the County of Union. This matching grant program has added hundreds of trees throughout our county, improving the environmental health for the residents.

Historic Preservation

The Open Space, Recreation and Historic Preservation Trust Fund continues to work on preserving the rich history in Union County.

Revenue Generation

The Open Space, Recreation and Historic Preservation Trust Fund continues to be an excellent vehicle for the generation of additional revenue to the County of Union. The State of New Jersey, through its Green Acres Program, has been an important partner in the Union County Commissioner Board's efforts. In 2024 the Trust Fund applied for funding in the areas of acquisition and park development, and is proud to accept \$2,100,000. Since the inception of the Trust Fund, the Union County Board of County Commissioners have generated over \$24,600,000 in grant awards from the Department of Environmental Protection, Green Acres Program.

2025 Initiatives

Trust Fund

The creation of the Open Space, Recreation and Historic Preservation Trust Fund in 2000, and the 2016 approval to continue this Fund, affirms the Union County Board of County Commissioner's continued commitment to the quality of life in our area. This unprecedented opportunity allows the ability to pursue that goal, while bringing

an obligation to manage in a responsible and thoughtful manner. It is an opportunity that is respected, and an obligation that is taken seriously.

This Board will continue to pursue every avenue available as it seeks to preserve open space in the County of Union. Through its own efforts in the area of recreational expansion, the Board will continue to seek to improve existing facilities and add recreational opportunities as deemed necessary and affordable.

Grant programs like the Kids Recreation Trust Fund will continue to allow municipalities a strong voice in the management of their own recreational needs.

Preserve Union County, a matching grant program available to historical sites within the County of Union, will continue to bring our rich history to life through the preservation of the buildings and areas of history in our own backyard. Greening Union County will continue the important work of replacing trees throughout the County of Union, shaping the landscape and the environmental health of our municipalities.

The importance of planning documents commissioned by the Union County Board of Commissioners in the past several years will become strong tools as we move forward. This Board also believes strongly in the maintenance of the heralded Union County Park System as it presently exists and, in keeping with the tenants of the original ordinance, will continue its efforts to make certain that our park system remains a jewel of our county.

County Counsel

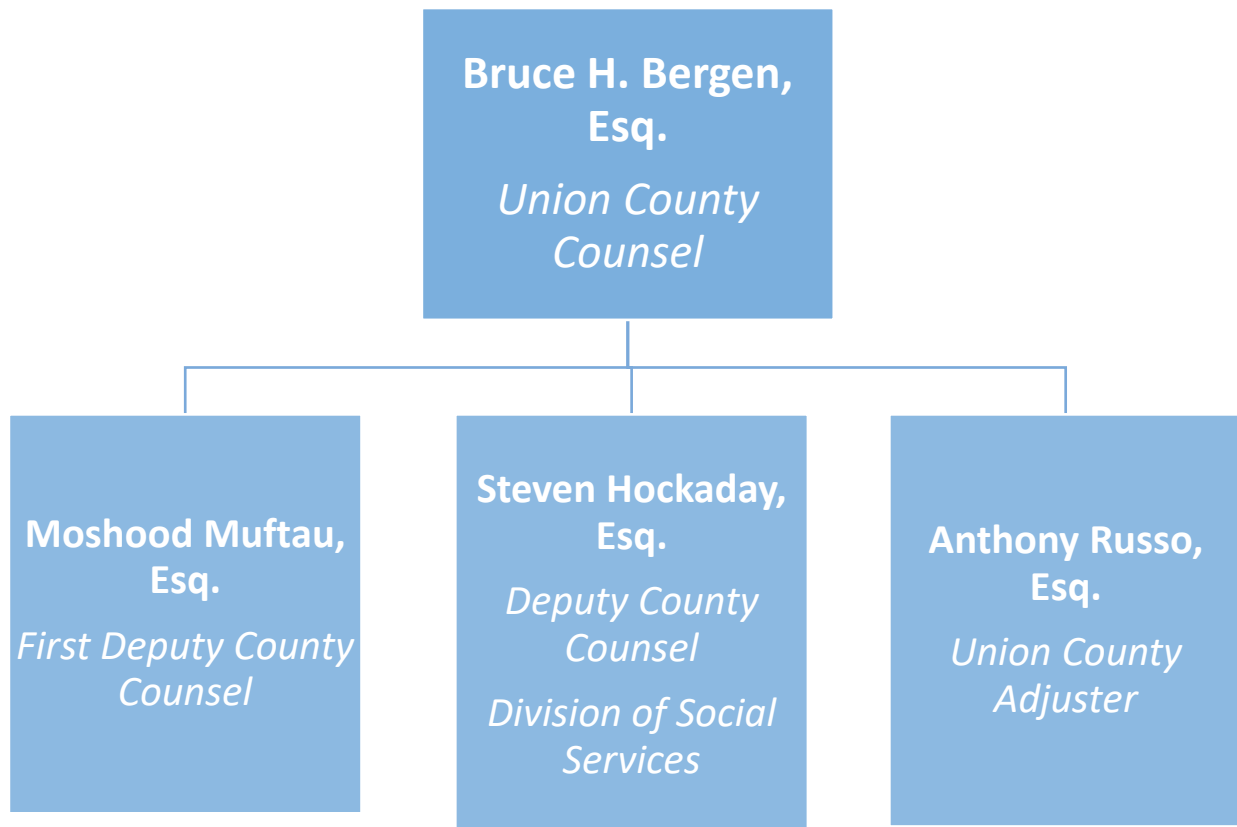
Office of County Counsel

Office of Adjuster

Office of Affirmative Action

Organizational Chart

Office of the Union County Counsel



OFFICE OF THE UNION COUNTY COUNSEL

Mission

The mission of the Office of the County Counsel is to provide a full range of legal representation, legal guidance and legal services to the Board of County Commissioners, the County Manager and to all departments, divisions, and offices within the County in a timely, efficient and cost-effective manner.

Programs & Services

Representation in Civil Actions

Prosecute or defend all civil actions brought on behalf of, or against, the County, its agents, employees, or representatives during the performance of their duties.

Legal Opinions and Advice

Advise County government, all divisions and departments thereof, and all constitutional officers on legal rights and responsibilities, remedies, and ramifications of actions taken by them in the performance of their duties.

Draft County Legislation

Prepare all resolutions and ordinances for consideration by the Board of County Commissioners.

Negotiate and Draft All Contracts

Negotiate, draft and approve the form of all contracts entered into by the County, including labor contracts, contracts committing County taxpayer funds for the performance of any work or service rendered by or for County and for the lease, purchase or sale of property.

Briefing of Current Laws, Rules and Regulations

Advise and inform all County officials and personnel of relevant State and Federal statutes, regulations, rules, and administrative orders and changes therein.

Review and Update of County Codes and Policies

Assist in the continuing review and revision, as required, of the Administrative Code, By-laws, and policies of the County.

Participate in Disciplinary Actions

Provide for hearing officers and counsel as appropriate, in all disciplinary actions filed against County employees and at other administrative hearings.

Review of Bids

In conjunction with the Division of Purchasing, review and evaluate all bids and bidding practices and procedures in accordance with the Local Public Contracts Law.

Fair and Open Process

Provide guidance on the Fair and Open process to the various departments, offices and constitutional officers, including overseeing and supervising the public openings and the review committee process in evaluating all the submitted proposals.

OPRA Requests

Provide advice and guidance to the Office of the Clerk of the Board on the more than 1100 OPRA requests received annually and provide representation at both the Government Records Council (GRC) and in the Superior Court of New Jersey on all contested OPRA matters.

Recovery of Bail Forfeitures

In conjunction with the Division of Finance seek recovery of forfeited bail monies in the Superior Court of New Jersey, including responding to a variety of motions and the filing of Default Judgments, as well as negotiating bail forfeiture matters with counsel for the insurance companies and bail bond agencies.

Division of Social Services

Provide on-site legal services, guidance, and advice to the Division of Social Services to support carrying out statutory mandates as they relate to State or Federal reimbursement programs, including appearances in all courts and fair hearings on behalf of the Division.

2024 Accomplishments**Case Management**

- Processed over 132 new Tort Claims filed against the County.
- Handled approximately 56 lawsuits, primarily where the County is named as a defendant or co-defendant, including all phases of the litigation from the initial pleadings through discovery, motions and, if necessary, trial.

- Successful utilized demands for dismissal of frivolous actions pursuant to Court rules, to expeditiously terminate unnecessary litigation.
- Where appropriate, filed motions for Summary Judgment to end litigation prior to trial.
- In conjunction with the Department of Administrative Services, coordinated assignment of personnel counsel relative to disciplinary matters to ensure timely and effective representation of the County and adjudication of claims.

General Office

- Continued to update the County Administrative Code as needed.
- Reviewed and as necessary updated contracts in various areas, including services, construction and purchasing; updated form contract provisions to reflect changes in the law and to better protect the County.
- Continued to initiate collection of funds due to the County.
- Drafted, administered and supervised the opening and award of more than 50 Requests for Proposals, Requests for Qualifications and Competitive contracting.

2025 Initiatives

In the coming year, the County Counsel's Office will seek further ways to limit the County's liability and legal exposure; and to identify frivolous lawsuits and where appropriate have cases dismissed prior to trial, to save counsel fees and costs associated with litigation. The Office will take necessary actions to collect monies due to the County on bail forfeitures, on judgments and for other reasons. We will continue to review the Administrative Code and other laws, to recommend necessary and appropriate changes and updates therein. Actions will be taken to ensure those receiving benefits from and through the County are legally entitled to same. The Office will continue to play an active role in negotiating and drafting shared services agreements with municipalities and other public entities. Finally, the Office of the County Counsel will provide ongoing advice and legal representation to all departments to ensure the best interests of the County are protected.

UNION COUNTY ADJUSTER

Mission

The County Adjuster is a statutory office authorized to act in cases of commitments or admission of persons to State, County or private hospitals for the mentally ill. It processes applications to determine both the legal residence of the patient and the ability of the patient to contribute toward care and maintenance. The Office also schedules all judicial initial and review hearings held at the hospitals on behalf of the patient and prepares all Court Orders relative to same. Upon request of local and state police departments, the office also handles all mental health searches for gun permit applications for county residents.

2024 Accomplishments

- Approximately 1364 initial hearings and 846 review hearings were heard at various hospitals for Union County. During this year, the Office worked with the Courts, Public Defender and Hospitals to effectuate remote and in-person hearings as appropriate.
- A total of 4223 hearings were scheduled.
- Provided necessary support for the conversion of Cornerstone Hospital to a privately-owned facility, now known as Mountainview Hospital.
- Over 180 cases were investigated and 171 cases court ordered.
- Over 590 consents for mental health reports were processed relative to firearm applications.

2025 Initiatives

For 2025, the County Adjuster's Office will provide counsel at all involuntary commitment proceedings, regardless of location, including to coordinate, prepare and submit all documents and information needed by attorneys to attend all civil commitment hearings in person. We will prepare appearance calendars for Trinitas Hospital Psychiatric ward, Greystone Hospital in Summit, Mountainview Hospital in Berkeley Heights, Ann Klein Forensic and Trenton Psychiatric Hospital, then distribute to all County Adjusters across the state, hospitals, Public Defenders Offices, Office of County Counsel and Judge's Civil Division Manager from NJ Superior Courts. The office will further the process of inputting current data into the State issued Civil Commitment Automated Tracking System (C-CATS) in order

to make access to medical records of psychiatric hospital patient's files easier for the Courts. Staff will continue to attend training sessions by State on the County Billing System which manages electronic data transfer between the State Psychiatric Hospitals, the Department of Human Services of NJ, and County Adjusters, Institutional Users and SPA Administrators. In order to obtain maximum payment due to the County, emphasis will be devoted to Medicaid and Medicare reimbursements for patients in all public and private hospitals and for resident psychiatric patients in State facilities.

Department of Administrative Services

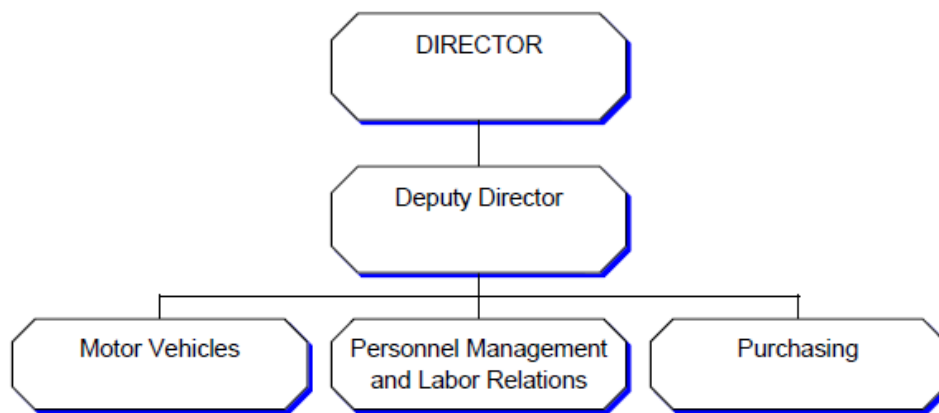
Motor Vehicles

Personnel Management and Labor Relations

Purchasing

Organizational Chart

Department of Administrative Services



DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Mission

To provide administration and internal structure for the departments of Union County government to allow for their effective and cost-efficient delivery of services to the public.

Programs & Services

- Provides programs designed to control costs for wages and benefits, comply with Civil Service requirements and increase workforce productivity.
- Provides expertise towards procurement pursuant to the New Jersey Local Public Contracts Law, management for the self-insurance funds of the County, and transportation and repairs to vital County work equipment and also for maintenance of the telecommunication systems of the County including landlines and cellphones.
- Works in conjunction with expert brokers of the County to manage health and prescription insurance costs, general liability insurance, risk management costs and equipment maintenance costs. Seeks insurance vehicles to lower said costs.
- Heads the County Safety Committee which examines and reacts to any potential hazardous situations and also takes preventative steps such as training for drivers/workers. Also works in conjunction with Sheriff to insure the safety of County workers against potential threats.

2024 Accomplishments

Administrative Services

Office of Asset Management: The Office of Asset Management, in conjunction with our vendor for equipment repair, conducts a yearly County-wide investigation into covered items and ensures accurate adjustments to the policy. Maintained approximately 2500 items in Fixed Asset Inventory (Vehicles and equipment combined).

Division of Motor Vehicles: The Division's repair facilities consist of two service garages located at the Quarry in Springfield and Scotch Plains DPW. The DMV oversees the repair, maintenance and procurement of the County's motor vehicles and active motorized equipment. The Division is also responsible for the management of the Telecommunications systems for landlines and cellular devices, operates the Messenger's dispatch office and the County's Mailroom.

Repair garages completed 1954 work orders as of October 31, 2024 for preventative and unscheduled repair and maintenance. The hours attributable to these work orders totaled 5816.0 hrs.

2024 (10/31) Repair orders: DMV Shop – 1241; Turf Shop (Public Works & Parks equipment) - 237; Paratransit - 401; Scotch Plains (Heavy Equipment Shop) - 75.

The Division operates 9 fueling sites across the county that has 410,719.60 gallons of gasoline and 95,185.7 gallons of diesel fuel, for a total of 496,510.47 as of October 31, 2023. These sites also provide fuel for various municipalities and authorities throughout the County, which are billed at a per-gallon charge. A total of 90771.41 gallons were dispensed to Garwood, Kenilworth, Springfield, Winfield, The Elizabeth Housing Authority, The Elizabeth Parking Authority, Union County Education Commission, and The Utilities Authority, Westfield & Fanwood

Messengers: Performed all duties and tasks assigned to them in an orderly and timely fashion. The messengers have completed 19,878 deliveries as of October 31, 2024.

Mailroom: Processed 430,271 pieces of mail as of October 31, 2024, through the postage machines and delivered interoffice letters and packages throughout the County Complex daily.

Telecommunications Unit: Provides the entire phone and communication service for the County of Union, manages all providers of communication services throughout all the facilities owned and operated by the County from routing phone calls to repairing and maintaining the communications infrastructure. Completed as of October 31, 2024, approximately 500 repairs and installations for both telephone and computer network lines in the various County complexes.

Division of Personnel and Labor Relations

- Administers New Jersey Civil Service Commissions matters relative to classifications, examinations, and certifications in compliance with the New Jersey Administrative Code.
- Manages programs and services including health benefit administration, classification and compensation, general insurances, employee/labor relations, employee assistance, risk management, and loss prevention.
- Provides staff training and development to maintain a highly skilled and productive workforce.
- Processes property, auto and workers compensation claims with our Third-Party Administrators.

Staff Training and Development: Supervisor and Employee Training - Preventing Workplace Harassment and Discrimination: Coordinated an online training seminar including employment discrimination, workplace harassment, sensitivity, diversity, state laws and guidelines for Supervisors.

Cybersecurity: Coordinated an online training seminar that educated and trained employees about the threats that lurk in cyberspace, how to prevent and what to do in the event of a security incident.

Wellness Programs:

Wellness Workshops: Broadcasts periodic emails to all employees on current health topics including registration for webinars and coordinates with our Wellness Coach for nutrition and healthy lifestyle information sessions.

Wellness Coach Program: Coordinated a wellness coaching program for the employees to provide health coaching, smoking cessation, stress management and health challenges are offered one-on-one in person. A second coach was added to the program, and has been assigned to the Division of Social Services in the Westminster and Plainfield office locations.

Flu Shot Clinic: Flu Shot Clinics were coordinated for County employees. Acme Pharmacy was brought onsite to administer flu shots to employees that wanted to be immunized for the upcoming winter season. There were 4 locations offered around the County throughout 1 week. In total, over 135 flu shots were administered.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP): In cooperation with the County's EAP vendor, ComPsych, coordinated referrals on an as-needed basis. ComPsych was

also available to all employees and their family members to provide guidance and assistance with various issues and needs.

Policies & Procedures:

Employee Handbook/Manuals: Distributed to all employees updated Employee Handbook, Disciplinary Action Manual, and Family Leave and Medical Leave Act Policy in January 2024.

Performance Evaluation Process: Enhanced the performance evaluations in our HR system to ensure employees are evaluated equally, fairly and consistently as well as creating an easier way to enter and track evaluations online. In 2022, a supervisor evaluation was implemented to review applicable employees on the leadership abilities expected in a supervisory position.

Disciplinary and other General Matters: Managed approximately 52 matters with the assistance of personnel attorney in regards to major disciplines.

Fitness for Duty: Coordinates physical and/or psychological examinations regarding an employee's physical and/or mental ability to perform their job.

Leaves of Absence: Processed approximately 236 leaves of absences.

FMLA Services: Tracks leaves that meet FMLA requirements between vendor and the Division of Personnel to ensure documentation and accurate processing.

ACA Compliance: As an "Applicable Large Employer" that offers health coverage under self-insured plans, the County is subject to IRS reporting requirements under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Information regarding offers of health coverage and enrollment for each month of the year is provided for each eligible employee and for all other County health insurance subscribers using IRS form 1095-C. The deadline for furnishing the forms to benefit eligible employees and covered retirees is March 1, 2024.

For tax year 2024, approximately 3,950 1095-C forms were furnished for eligible employees and other subscribers, including COBRA recipients and retirees, and must include enrollment data for approximately 4,000 dependents. The Division of Personnel monitors health enrollments on a consistent and ongoing basis throughout the year, conducting audits of enrollee and dependent names, birthdates, social security numbers and other relevant data in order to ensure compliance with the IRS deadline.

In cooperation with the County’s payroll vendor, Primepoint, multiple process improvements have been made to ensure smooth and timely fulfillment of the County’s ACA reporting requirements.

Certificate and Graduate Programs in Public Administration with Kean University: County of Union Tuition Reimbursement Plan – 2024: The County of Union Tuition Reimbursement Program continues to offer our County employees the opportunity to enroll in a degree program that provides career development in an area related to the work they perform for the County. Tuition Reimbursement is payable according to the grade as stipulated on the transcript; 100% for A; 75% for B; and 50% for C for tuition only. In 2024, six employees have enrolled in our tuition program. One employee is seeking a Doctrine Degree, four employees are pursuing their Master’s Degree, and one employee their Associate’s Degree. The County is proud to announce the continuation and expansion of its Tuition Reimbursement Program, reinforcing our commitment to the professional growth and development of our employees. This program is a testament to our belief in the value of continuous learning and the importance of empowering our workforce to improve their skills and advance their careers. Offering tuition reimbursement not only supports the educational goals of our employees but also underscores our deep appreciation for their dedication to serving the County. By investing in their personal and professional development, we aim to enhance the skill sets of our workforce, ultimately benefiting the communities we serve.

Salary Administration

Processing of 582 cost-of-living increases for Non-Contractual employees effective January 1, 2024.

Approximately 1,450 merit increases for Contractual employees throughout the year as required per collective bargaining agreements

56 Personnel Agendas consisting of 460 personnel change actions (transfers, new hires, promotions, job changes, etc.)

Retroactive salaries processed for two (2) Bargaining Units:

Bargaining Unit	Time Period due Retro	Employees Impacted
FMBA (HazMat)	01/01/2021 – 07-14-2024	29
PBA 108 Sheriff’s Officers	01/01/2023 – 10/14/2024	171
		200

Labor Relations

Employee/Labor Relations: Finalized negotiations with 2 bargaining units.

Non-Law Enforcement Settlements:

Bargaining Unit	Contract Duration	Salary Increase
Law Enforcement Settlements:		
FMBA (NAGE LOC R2-343/SEIU 5000) Hazmat Techs & Responders	1/1/2021- 12/31/2026	2021 - 2% across the board 2022 - 2% across the board 2023 - 2% across the board 2024 - 3% across the board 2025 - 3% across the board; plus \$1500 added to top step 2026 – 3% across the board plus \$2000 added to top step
PBA 108 – Sheriff Officers	1/1/2023- 12/31/2026	2023 - 2% across the board; 2024 - 3% across the board; \$1500 added to top step effective 7/1/2024 2025 - 3% across the board 2026 – 3% across the board \$2000 added to top step effective 1/1/2026

Collective Bargaining: Labor Relations wishes to provide an update on its ongoing efforts to reach settlements with several bargaining units. These include Council 8, the Supervisors Association, Park Maintenance, PBA Local 199, PBA Local 108A, and PBA 73.

As of December 31, 2022, some of the existing agreements with these unions have expired. Despite the expiration of certain contracts, we remain committed to ensuring fair and equitable outcomes for all parties involved. Negotiations are expected to resume in 2025, and we are optimistic about reaching mutually beneficial agreements that address the needs and concerns of both the workforce and the organization.

We understand the importance of these negotiations and are actively engaged in preparing for upcoming discussions. Our goal is to continue fostering positive working relationships with our valued employees while maintaining the high standards of service and operational efficiency that our community deserves. We will provide further updates as necessary and remain dedicated to a transparent and constructive bargaining process.

Division of Purchasing:

- Use of Edmunds computerized requisition system to vet, amend and approve over 10,000 requisitions for goods and services in 2024. Staff proofs each requisition for legal requirements.
- Advertised and processed about 69 public bids and 9 competitive contracts for County entities and cooperatives.
- Held an educational “Meet the State” forum to obtain various continuing educational credits for local government employees as a shared service.
- Shared service agreement with Hudson County to serve as the temporary Qualified Purchasing Agent
- Met with departments throughout the County to educate, reiterate and train employees on purchasing policies and the local public contracts law.
- One staff member completed their educational courses to become certified as a Registered Public Purchasing Specialist through Rutgers University.

2025 Initiatives

Administrative Services: Will continue to manage insurance aspects and investigate avenues to increase services and effectuate savings while providing managerial and strategic planning to: Motor Vehicles (maintenance including heavy duty truck fleet); Telecommunications (cell phones, land lines, systems); Mailroom and messenger service; Purchasing (state procurement law and assurance of open competition), and Personnel (human resources and health insurance management).

Division of Motor Vehicles: The division continues to operate at the Quarry Service Yard vehicle maintenance facility and offers the repair and preventive maintenance services for the counties fleet that it has throughout the years. We will continue update our facilities for the technicians with the latest diagnostic equipment through vendor partnerships and training. Motor Vehicles will be removing the aging UST at Warinanco and replacing them with state of the day AST that will carry the Fueling sight forward and in compliance for 50+ years. The

yard will be astatically appealing with a much greater volume available, thus adding to the demand for fuel completing the planned updates to the fueling sites located at the Echo Lake and Quarry Service Yards.

Mail Room: Has moved to its updated service area in the courthouse. Staff will continue to work diligently to keep mail going out on time and tracking all certified and priority mail. We anticipate the delivery of new mail processing equipment to expedite our mail services.

Messengers: Will continue prompt completion of work orders (with approximately 19,878 total deliveries in 2024).

Telecommunications: Phone Room and Technicians will continue to assist Constituents and County employees, and complete work orders. Telecommunications is looking into new equipment and processes to better streamline phone and data services throughout the County complexes.

Personnel -- Staff Training and Professional Development:

- Departmental Personnel Liaison seminar training on all Personnel matters to include policy & procedures for FMLA, attendance, disciplinary, position control actions, salary, benefits, and worker's compensation.
- Continue to arrange Personnel staff meetings, broadcast monthly emails and Wellness Seminars on current health topics, and coordinate Wellness Fairs, Flu Shots and Health Screenings.
- Continue to promote employee participation in the updated Certificate and Undergraduate/Graduate Programs in Public Administration and other programs in cooperation with Kean University and Union College of Union County.
- Continue wellness coach program for overall health of County employees and to help reduce the cost of health insurance. Wellness Coach will continue to meet with County employees on an individual basis to reduce health risks.
- Continue to enhance the online employee portal for County Policies and Personnel forms to make it accessible to all employees.

As a Local Appointing Authority, the Division continues to support the New Jersey Civil Service Commission in all endeavors by participating in their efforts to streamline efficiency. The Division will continue to enforce and comply with all laws, statutes, and regulations for improving communication and workflow. Continue to digitize records and important documents including all insurances and employee training documentation.

Risk Management and Loss Prevention: Last year Union County trained over 600 employees in PEOSH job-related Health and Safety courses, General Safety and Building Evacuation Safety Drills. These courses in 2024 include:

- CPR Defibrillator Recertification for Employees.
- CPR Defibrillator Certification for Employees who request training.
- On Site Safety Audit Inspections of County owned and Leased Buildings.
- Confined Space Entry Team Drills.
- Continue Work Site Specific Safety Training.
- 6-hour New Jersey Safety Council Defensive Driving Course (DDC) for CDL Drivers
- Updated Emergency Action Plan Drills. (BEAP) FIRE DRILLS for all County Buildings.
- In addition, continue employee training to meet or exceed PEOSH Standards for Blood Borne Pathogens, Right to Know/Hazardous Communications, Lockout/Tagout, Fork Lift, Fall Protection, and Respiratory Protection/Fit Testing.
- Training of Supervisors on Reasonable Suspicion.
- Conducted fire drills in all County buildings, leased and owned. Ensured all drills were conducted safely, and that all fire equipment is being maintained in a good-working condition.
- Received and reported all motor vehicle accidents and property damage to the claim management TPA, as well all legal matters pertaining accidents to County Council.
- Ensure all Departments have all required PEOSH Education and Trainings are current.
- Investigate all accidents to create a safer work environment.
- Performed investigations and evaluations of the air quality in County buildings.
- Required monthly Tool Box Talks for employees in Parks and Public Works departments that work out in the field on a regular basis.
- Verify that all registered CDL drivers are enroll on the clearing house system.
- Participated in our Labor Safety meetings, as well on our executive safety meetings.
- Participate as a member in NJCE JIF Safety and Education Committee meetings.
- Conducted loss-control visits to all County Building with the assistance of J.A Montgomery and the JIF.
- Reviewed and approved invoices for services rendered by safety consulting vendors.

We are updating our training plan for 2025 to make sure every Department completes requirements.

Employee Benefits:

- Assist in County compliance with Federal Affordable Care Act mandates and guidelines.
- Coordinate health benefits modifications and implementation of the new plan options with carriers and employees.
- Assist with the Federal Retiree Subsidy Drug Program application where required.
- Perform audit of all benefit enrollment information across all in-house databases, as well the databases of our service providers, to ensure data integrity among all systems.
- Financial administration of insurance plans and incurred claims.

Salary Administration & Labor Analysis:

- Continue working with Primepoint on customization and optimization of new HR System, including moving toward additional electronic personnel action processing and application tracking.
- Continue training on new system usage for departmental personnel and attendance liaisons.

Division of Purchasing: Continue to employ membership in the County Purchasing Agent Association, Governmental Purchasing Association, Northern Chapter of NIGP and the National Institute for Governmental Purchasing to network and keep abreast of peers in public purchasing to find solutions for common problems. Cooperation with the N.J. Association of Counties, N.J. League of Municipalities and the Rutgers Educational Forum also contributes. Goals for 2025 include:

- Hold educational forums for government employees and as a shared service for local government entities. Approved continuing educational credits for purchasing officials, finance, clerks, public works, tax collectors, recycling coordinators and clean communities' coordinators.
- Continuing a shared service agreement with the County of Hudson as the temporary Qualified Purchasing Agent.
- Continue to meet with each department throughout the County to educate, reiterate and train new employees on purchasing policies and the local public contracts law.

Department of Economic Development

Strategic Planning

Community Services

Workforce Development Board

Information Technologies

Organizational Chart

Department of Economic Development



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mission

The mission of the Union County Department of Economic Development is the promotion and development of planning and growth in the County of Union, through the implementation and coordination of all economic development plans and programs including matters affecting workforce development and the quality of community services.

Programs & Services

Workforce Development Board: Responsible for all strategic planning efforts under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), including the oversight of the American Job Center.

Bureau of ADA Compliance: Ensures compliance with federal and state disability rights laws by the County and will assist municipalities and school districts within the County with training and guidance concerning same. The Bureau of ADA Compliance continues to oversee several ongoing programs aimed at fostering accessibility and inclusivity. These include monitoring and updating the ADA Transition Plan to ensure consistent progress in improving county facilities and parks, managing the ADA Access & Inclusion Solutions Process to address accessibility concerns for employees and residents, and supporting reasonable accommodation requests for staff. The Bureau also provides ongoing ADA guidance and resources for employees, focusing on equipping supervisors with the knowledge and tools needed to ensure compliance and build awareness. Collaboration remains a key focus, as the Bureau works with various departments, including Engineering, to evaluate new construction projects for ADA compliance and assists with safety initiatives. Additionally, efforts to enhance communication and recreational accessibility persist, supported by grants for innovative

projects such as courtroom hearing devices and improvements at recreational facilities. These programs ensure a continuous commitment to accessibility and inclusion throughout the county.

Division of Community Services: Partners with communities and non-profit agencies to reduce the causes of poverty, increase job opportunities, expand economic security for individuals/families and revitalize communities. The Division of Community Services prepares matters pertaining to planning, development, and community development mandated by federal or state government; performs all functions related to implementing a housing and community development program, as required by the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 and any amendments thereto; and is responsible for all aspects of Veteran Services.

Bureau of Housing: Improves accessibility to safe, affordable housing in the county and assure the continuation of an adequate housing stock. The Bureau serves as administrator for the Union County Home Improvement Program, Section 8 Program, and the Senior Home Improvement Program.

Bureau of Community Development: Oversees the Community Development Block Grant Program, HUD's primary program for promoting community revitalization. CDBG funds are used for a wide range of community development activities directed toward neighborhood revitalization, economic development, social service programs and improvements to community facilities. CDBG funds are leveraged with municipal, state and private dollars to meet long- and short-term objectives. To maximize the effectiveness of CDBG dollars, efforts are coordinated with the Union County Department of Human Services.

We Are One New Jersey:, Provides U.S. citizenship application guidance, voter registration, and notary services in conjunction with the New Jersey AFL-CIO. The goal is to build stronger communities by engaging new Americans to become active participants in our democracy.

Division of Strategic Planning: Consists of five offices – the Office of Community Engagement and Diversity, the Office of Business Development, the Office of LGBTQ Affairs, Office of Veteran Services, and the Office on Women.

The Division's responsibilities are:

- Strengthen the County's economy and positioning it to compete in a global marketplace by stimulating and creating new jobs, retaining existing businesses, and facilitating economic development in partnership with the Union County Economic Development Corporation and other public/private partnerships.
- The establishment of an ongoing program of legislative advocacy at the federal, state and/or local levels; lobby for and/or develop legislation as needed; provide analysis of legislation as needed; and act as liaison with municipal, state and federal levels of government.
- Maximize federal, state and foundation grant dollars and reduce the property tax burden by increasing revenues into the county to fund existing and/or new programs and services as consistent with the needs of the county.

- Develop and administer continuing shared service opportunities with other public entities throughout the county and state; and facilitate intergovernmental relations on behalf of the County.

Office of Community Engagement & Diversity: Provides outreach to local community-based groups and volunteer organizations to create a network and directory of same. The Office coordinates countywide community events and programs which foster and promote volunteerism in Union County. The focus is to reinforce strategies for building relationships with the County's diverse communities to include culture, lifestyle, ethnicity, and race.

Office of Business Development: Cultivates strategies for business attraction and retention. In partnership with the Union County Economic Development Corporation and Chamber of Commerce stakeholders, the Office integrates strategic activities to attract and retain industry businesses, stimulates job creation and increases the capacity of small businesses to remain competitive. The *Union County Means Business* networking business events are coordinated through this office.

Office of LGBTQ Affairs: Assesses the needs of LGBTQ residents to plan for and facilitate access to resources, increase understanding of civil rights and promote unity. The Office provides information and referrals to resources and services that improve the quality of life for LGBTQ residents of the county, educates individuals and organizations on rights and advocacy support, and develops outreach activities to promote community diversity and unity.

Office on Women: Provides information and referral to resources to improve the quality of life for women, and serves as an advocate to coordinate programming with other offices to promote community diversity and unity.

Office of Veteran Services: Provides information and advocacy for veterans and their families including burial and memorial benefits, education and training programs availability, and coordination of flag placement on all veterans' graves.

Bureau of Information Technologies: Responsible for the County's data center, wide-area high-speed network, and office technology. Plans, develops and manages software applications to improve workflow processes in County offices.

2024 Accomplishments

Union County Workforce Development Board

Extension of Work First New Jersey Program Contracts

The Union County Workforce Development Board (UCWDB) approved a no-cost extension of Work First New Jersey (WFNJ) program contracts with Workforce Advantage and Union College. Originally set to conclude on June 30, 2023, the contracts were extended through September 30, 2023, requiring all funds to be obligated by that date and liquidated by December 31, 2023.

Close-Out Agreement with Union College

UCWDB authorized a close-out agreement with Union College for its role as Affiliate American Job Center Operator, providing career services to WIOA Adult and Dislocated Workers. Final payments totaled \$21,725.81 from the Adult Account and \$33,415.64 from the Dislocated Worker Account for services rendered in May 2023. This action rescinded a prior resolution due to procedural issues.

Adoption of Program Year 2023 Budget

UCWDB adopted a \$5.97 million budget for Program Year 2023, which included federal and state funding allocations for WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs, as well as initiatives such as Work First New Jersey-TANF, GA/SNAP, and Workforce Learning Link services.

Work First New Jersey Service Contracts

Contracts were awarded to Workforce Advantage and Union College for the delivery of WFNJ services in Eastern Union County. Workforce Advantage received \$485,455, and Union College was awarded \$255,416 to support TANF and GA/SNAP participants.

One Stop Operator Appointment

UCWDB designated the Union County Department of Human Services as the One Stop Operator for a 24-month term (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2025), with two potential one-year extensions. The contract is capped at \$100,000 annually, subject to funding availability.

Comprehensive Career Center Services

UCWDB awarded a 24-month contract to the Union County Department of Human Services for Comprehensive One Stop Career Center Services to Adults and Dislocated Workers, with a maximum annual funding of \$1.7 million. A separate contract was awarded for Youth services with an annual cap of \$400,000.

Allocation of Budget Accounts

UCWDB authorized the allocation of \$2.2 million in budget accounts for American Job Center personnel costs for Program Year 2023. The

allocations include \$100,000 for One Stop Operator services and \$2.1 million for Career Services.

Contract Amendments

The Board amended several contracts, including an increase for legal services with Weber Dowd Law, LLC, raising the contract total to \$15,000, and reallocating TANF funds among Workforce Advantage and Union College to align with revised priorities.

Youth Employment Initiatives

UCWDB awarded contracts to Union County Vocational-Technical Schools and United Way of Greater Union County for Out-of-School and In-School Youth Services, respectively. These programs target at-risk youth with comprehensive educational and career readiness services, supported by investments totaling \$575,000.

Digital Literacy Investments

UCWDB expanded digital literacy initiatives through funding partnerships with the Plainfield Public Library and the Workforce Learning Link program, collectively allocating \$204,000 for IC3 and Microsoft Office certification programs.

Performance Management and Quality Assurance

The Board authorized the continuation of the FutureWorks BI subscription for performance management, enhancing data-driven decision-making aligned with WIOA performance metrics.

Competitive Contracting and Procurement

UCWDB approved the issuance of Requests for Proposals for various services, including WorkFirst New Jersey services, career services for adults and dislocated workers, and youth programs, ensuring comprehensive service delivery through competitive contracting.

Certification of American Job Center

The Union County American Job Center achieved certification, validating its compliance with quality standards and operational excellence in areas such as strategic planning, customer service, and accessibility.

Memorandum of Understanding and Infrastructure Funding Agreement

UCWDB finalized agreements with One Stop Career Center Network Partners to define roles, responsibilities, and funding mechanisms for One Stop system operations, effective January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2026.

This formalized summary underscores UCWDB's commitment to strategic workforce development, operational efficiency, and enhanced service delivery for Union County residents.

Bureau of ADA Compliance

In 2024, the Bureau of ADA Compliance made significant strides in promoting accessibility and inclusivity across Union County. The ADA Access & Inclusion Solutions Process was launched for county employees. The Bureau initiated and monitored the ADA Transition Plan, focusing on accessibility improvements in Union County Parks, and

collaborated with the Office of Public Information to enhance website and document accessibility. Safety measures were a priority, assisting Administrative Services on fire and safety initiatives.

The Bureau continued to provide critical support for employees by facilitating reasonable accommodation requests and guiding supervisors and staff on ADA regulations. Infrastructure projects were also a key focus, as the Bureau advised the Engineering Department on ensuring ADA compliance for new buildings and roadways. Grant funding efforts were highly successful, with the Bureau securing a Communication Grant to install hearing devices in courtrooms and a Recreational Improvement Grant for ADA-compliant upgrades, including new flooring and bleacher seating at the Warinanco Sports Center.

Professional development remained a priority, attending ADA conferences to stay current on federal and state regulations and earning ADA certification credits. Additionally, collaboration with the Parks Department helped secure funding for accessibility projects. These accomplishments reflect the Bureau's unwavering commitment to advancing accessibility, safety, and inclusion throughout the county.

Division of Strategic Planning

Office of Business Development:

- Coordinated the Union County Means Business Networking Breakfast “AI- Unleashed” panel discussion at Kean University on May 21, 2024. “AI Unleashed” event delved into the vast potential of AI technologies in business, providing insights into the opportunities and challenges they present. The panelists shared their diverse experiences and perspectives, discussing how AI can be leveraged to drive innovation, efficiency, and growth in various business sectors.
- Coordinated efforts with Union County Microbreweries, Department of Parks & Recreation, and Union County Police to create an inaugural

Union County Fall Festival event. This event took place on September 14, 2024 and featured a collection for Diaper Needs Awareness.

- Coordinated the Union County Means Business EXPO on September 12, 2024, marking the first Expo since the pandemic. The EXPO drew almost 100 vendors and hundreds of attendees from across Union County, creating a vibrant atmosphere of networking and collaboration.
- Coordinated Union County Loves Small Business Campaign to encourage the public to shop and dine at local establishments during the holiday season. Helped design UCLOVESSMALLBIZ webpage and marketing campaign. Partnered with Union County's toy drive to establish additional toy drive drop off locations with business participants.
- Helped promote online workshops centered on helping small businesses (Business Certifications, Business Protection workshops, bookkeeping, etc.).
- Continued outreach to new businesses. Sent welcome letters from the Commissioner Chair to approximately 2,100 new businesses.
- Continued to provide crucial business information to the Union County Business Community via newsletters and email communication.
- As part-time County Shared Services Fellowship Coordinator, updated the Union County Shared Services Directory.

Office of Community Engagement & Diversity:

- Continued to expand the Union County volunteer directory; compiled and posted a list of volunteer opportunities.
- Organized cultural events & flag raisings included: Black History Month, Irish Heritage, Haitian Heritage Month, Portuguese Heritage, Juneteenth, Polish Heritage, Hispanic Heritage Month, Columbus Day, and Kwanzaa.

- Assisted/Coordinated in the following Supply Drives:
- Coordinated efforts with the Office on Women for Female Active Military Personnel Deployment Donation Drive- This drive resulted in over 200 care packages created.
- Coordinated efforts with the Union County Sheriff's Department for the Hurricane Relief Drive collecting donations to aid relief efforts.
- Coordinated a School Supply Drive items were donated to Children's Dyslexia Center of Scotch Plains.
- Tracked Bonus Points associated with the UC STEP's START Now Grant.
- Assisted in the Stepping Up To Mental Health Assemblies at participating schools.
- Coordinated UC STEP (Union County Student Training and Enrichment Program) a day-long summit that invites high school sophomores and juniors from throughout Union County to participate in hands-on activities focused on leadership, personal growth, and civic engagement.

Bureau of Transportation Planning

- The Bureau continued to participate in the Union County Paratransit System's Senior Citizen Disabled Resident Transportation Advisory Board (SCDRTAB) and worked to improve awareness of the Route 22 Safety Shuttle.
- Continued to manage the Union County Transportation Advisory Board

- Continued to provide support to the Raritan Valley Rail Coalition.
- The Bureau represented the County on the NJTPA Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) and on the Rutgers Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Council. It worked with the Transportation Management Association, EZ Ride, on an Elizabeth Street Smart Campaign.

Bureau of Planning and Land Use:

Planning Board: During the period from January through early December 2024, the County received 91 land development applications with 88 found to be complete and 82 reviewed in this time period. In comparison, the planning office received 125 complete development applications at this point last year. The number of complete applications compared to last year represents about 29% decrease in the number of complete applications received this year compared to 2023, mainly due to increase in interest rates and earlier economic inflation that have slightly reduced development in the County, State, and Country. The slight decrease in development applications shows the resilience in development growth of Union County and New Jersey as a whole in the face of the later stages of the pandemic, associated inflation, and increase in interest rates to the economy. The County continues to have a significant participation in development throughout County municipalities. The number of participating municipalities in the County based on submitted applications is 18 of the 21 county municipalities which represents all but three municipalities in the County with proposed development projects.

Of the 88 applications reviewed to date, about 63% were approved, 26% withheld and 11% were conditionally approved. The types of development applications consist of 54% - site plans, 11% - subdivisions, 25% - revised applications, and 2% - combined applications. To date there have been two plat recordings and one pending plat recording. The two plat recordings will create eight (8) new development lots producing 16 new residential units.

In 2024, the amount of development application fees collected to this date (January to early December) is \$51,990, this represents a 32% decrease compared to the amount of land development fees collected at this time last year. The main contributing factors related to this decrease in received application fees is due to the decrease in the number of applications received this year, compared to last year, and the intensity/size of proposed developments. The County and State economy have continued with steady economic results since the state and country have moved to the post-pandemic period. As the economy has significantly increased since 2020 it makes sense that a cyclical decline occurs after a rebounding economy especially when the Federal government increases interest rates to combat inflation.

As the post pandemic concerns continues to some degree the board has decided to maintain meetings online with associated noticing this year. The public are able to provide questions to the day of the meeting that would be presented to the board at the scheduled meeting. Operational adjustments, such as, requiring digital plans and reports to be provided by applicants and their professionals has assisted the review of development applications. Requiring these digital files was strictly enforced to assure County Engineering staff access to plans and documents in a more-timely fashion. The number of development applications has decreased due to economic pressure over the last year. Staff has continued to provide expedient and consistent on-time reviews while providing regulation requirements and associated information to applicants and their professionals and to the general public.

Another strong year of development applications received and reviewed shows a continuing increase in County development over the years indicating a consistently strong economic improvement for the County. The development projects reviewed by the County Planning Board represent millions in development dollars, an increase in associated tax revenue, and respective jobs generated by these construction projects adding to the vitality of municipalities in Union County.

The County Planning Board and staff provide fair, prompt, and expedient service to all applicants and associated projects. The County Planning Board continues to provide 100% on-time review within the time-frame permitted by the County Planning Act. This effort will continue in the upcoming year.

Constituents Served : The Bureau of Planning and Land Use receives notices and requests for information to assist residents, developers, and associated professionals. In 2024, from January to end of November, the Bureau received 207 municipal notices or 19 notices per month representing an average of 10 towns-per month. In this timeframe, the Bureau also received 371 data requests or about 34 per month representing an average of 9 municipalities per month. In this time period, the office also received a total of 46 municipal ordinances, updated master plans, or redevelopment plans which correspond to about average of 4 per month related to about three towns per month. The total number of requests for this period is 788 or 66 per month representing about 9 municipalities per month. Comparing the total requests for this time period in 2024 to last year represents a 7% increase in requests.

The bureau also reviewed 103 environmental notices or about 9 notices per month related to about six towns each month. Most of these data requests and notices are related to development applications, planning process, economic development, environment, transportation, demographic information, and other general areas related to planning.

Office of LGBTQ Affairs:

- Reconnected with local non-profit and health organizations.
- Facilitated the Queer Empowerment Hour series.
- Coordinated Pride Flag Raising in June in partnership with Judiciary.
- Coordinated the inaugural Union County LGBTQ Pride 5K and Fun Color Run at Oak Ridge Park on Saturday, June 8th.
- Coordinated efforts with RiseUp on an LGBTQ+ Health Conference that took place on September 21, 2024.
- Provided schools and organizations Pride related supplies.

- Worked with Lighthouse Collaborative to continue the GSA Grant, providing support and guidance to schools around Union County to start and continue their GSA programs.
- Updated and distributed resource directory.

Office on Women:

- Coordinated with the Office of Public Information in the creation of a video series celebrating Women's History Month.
- Coordinated a special collection drive with the Bonds of Courage and the Division of Strategic Planning to support military women from our area that are currently serving overseas as a part of Women's History Month.
- Developed a Women's History Month coloring book, blending education and creativity, which was distributed to schools and libraries to engage young learners in celebrating women's achievements
- Recognized SHERO(s) under the theme "*Union County Women Who Are Making History*," honored extraordinary women within the community who embody the values of diversity, equity and inclusion while driving positive change.
- Coordinated with the Division of Strategic Planning on the Union County Women Mean Business Summit held on Tuesday, June 11, 2024. This once-a-year conference brought together hundreds of women entrepreneurs, professionals, and industry leaders.
- Created impactful banners with the Office of Public Information to raise awareness about key women's issues promoting community engagement.

Such as:

- Women's History Month
- Women's Equality Day (Right to Vote)
- Ovarian Cancer Awareness
- Breast Cancer Awareness

- Coordinated with the Sheriff Office to offer free specialized hands on self-defense training classes designed to empower women with the skills and confidence needed to protect themselves.
- Coordinated a diaper collection drive with the Union County Commission on the Status of Women in support of Diaper Needs Awareness. Items collected were provided to Union County Social Services and Moms Helping Moms.

Office of Veterans Services:

- Coordinated a farewell ceremony on January 15th with the Bonds of Courage recognizing the soldiers deploying from the First Squadron, 102nd Cavalry Regiment. The day consisted of families and military personnel saying goodbye to the troops included food and fun activities.
- Coordinated efforts with the Office on Women for Female Active Military Personnel Deployment Donation Drive.
- Sourced, and distributed approximately 28,000 American flags for placement on graves of veterans in observance of Memorial Day.
- Coordinated “First Swing Golf Clinic” - a joint venture with the Office for Persons with Disabilities and Special Needs was held on June 2nd.
- Coordinated with the American Job Center on August 21st to host a special job fair dedicated to helping veterans find new career opportunities.
- Coordinated with the Office of Business Development to set aside EXPO vendor space for veteran-owned businesses to honor their service.
- Hosted a POW/MIA flag raising ceremony on September 20th that honored and remembered those who were prisoners of war and those still missing in action.
- Hosted a Networking Mixer on October 16th that offered a valuable opportunity for veterans and military personnel, to connect to resources and establish relationships within the community.
- As a part of Veteran Appreciation Month:
 - Coordinated with municipal contacts to increase

participation in Operation Green Light to show support for our veterans.

- Created banners & clings with the Office of Public Information celebrating service members
- Continued to work with the New Jersey SOS Veterans Stakeholders meetings.
- Filed hundreds of Veteran's claims with the Veteran Affairs Benefits Department. 148 claims are in various stages of progress.
- Increased Veteran parking spots around the County by three spots located in Roselle Park.
- Mailed out over a 100 new parking placards to Union County Veterans.

We Are One New Jersey

- Continued to provide: citizen applications, citizenship and English as a second language training, assistance to legal residents, assistance to obtain certificate of naturalization, referral services, additional services such as translations and notarization.
- Applications Total -572
- Citizenship – 489
- Renewal Green Card-64
- Naturalization- 19
- Citizenship training: 4,227 (131 classes)
- 107 applicants became citizens; 373 applicants are in the USCIS queue
- 1,440 students are preparing for the Civic and Government Test
- Legal Permanent Residents – Renewal of their green card -64
- Certificate of Naturalization Processed - 19
- Translations 2,640; Notarizations – 3015
- The Center has registered an average of 1,874 walk ins interested in the program.

Division of Community Services Community Development Block Grant

Facilities Improvements:

A total of \$633,000 was allocated for facility projects. Some of the accomplishments are as follows:

- The ARC of Union County was funded \$27,000 to replace their gas generators.
- New Providence DeCorso Community Center was funded \$30,000 for drainage and driveway improvements.
- The Cerebral Palsy League was funded \$30,000 for their ADA entrance and reception area upgrade.
- Plainfield Neighborhood House was funded \$50,000 to renovate their parking lot.
- Rahway Community Action Center was funded \$50,000 for roof improvements and interior/exterior upgrades.
- Rahway Housing Authority Schaffhauser Apartments was funded \$30,000 to upgrade and renovate security safety.
- Senior Housing Corporation of Scotch Plains was funded \$30,000 to replace windows.
- Westfield Community Center was funded \$25,500 to upgrades to their roof.
- Greater Refuge Church of Christ was funded \$30,000 to improve their basement.

Public Improvements:

A total of \$1,800,000.00 was allocated for projects. Some of the accomplishments are as follows:

- Clark (\$22,000), Cranford (\$25,000), Garwood (\$18,000) and Kenilworth (\$25,000) utilized their funding for curb cuts and ramps at various locations within each municipality for the purpose of complying with ADA codes.
- Hillside utilized \$115,000.00 of CDBG funding for resurfacing various streets that had deteriorated.
- Linden utilized \$310,000.00 of CDBG funding for various streets, curbs and sidewalk improvements.
- Plainfield utilized a total of \$355,000.00 CDBG funding for two (2) projects covering street rehabilitation, tennis/pickleball court upgrade and improvements.
- Rahway utilized \$355,000.00 of CDBG funds for the rehabilitation of deteriorated streets at various locations within the city.
- Roselle utilized \$240,000.00 of CDBG funds for the rehabilitation of deteriorated streets at various locations within the city.
- Roselle Park utilized \$215,000.00 of CDBG funds for the rehabilitation of deteriorated streets at various locations within the city.
- Springfield utilized \$120,000.00 of CDBG funds for the rehabilitation of deteriorated streets at various locations within the city.

Public Services:

A total of \$662,000.00 was allocated for projects. Some of the accomplishments are as follows:

- **Child Care Services:**

- Over 900 children Countywide from low to moderate-income families were provided with daycare programs; as well as afterschool and summer programs. The after-school programs provided homework and reading assistance, tutoring, cultural and

recreational activities. The summer programs the children were provided activities such as swimming, arts and crafts, field trips and other recreational services. This funding allowed parents the opportunity to work without having to worry about their children receiving quality care.

- **Emergency Shelter Services:**

- To address homelessness in the County, 99 individuals were served by programs such as Family Promise, Gateway YMCA of Eastern Union County and the YWCA of Union County. These programs provide case management, counseling, follow-up services, hot meals, transitional housing, one-time rental assistance payments, transportation, clothing, assistance with job and apartment searches and medical care to persons who are homeless and are homeless due to abusive family members

- **Food Pantry Program:**

- LINC'S Linden Food Pantry, The Salvation Army Hygiene Pantry, New Covenant Development Corp, IRIS House, and GRACE Food and Community Program have served over 9,900 people and families with essential food and health care products. These programs have helped to support hard working families in their biggest time of need. This population consists of low-income and no income residents of Union County.

- **Handicapped Services:**

- Approximately 1,000 Handicapped individuals were served in the County of Union with programs that provided individuals with rehabilitation services promoting physical, emotional and cognitive development and assuring their safety and wellbeing. Program included ARC of Union County, Cerebral Palsy of Union County, Occupational Center of Union County, Shut-In Council for Disabled Care Services in Plainfield,

Westfield Area YMCA Adult Special Needs Program and the Union County Recreation Program for Disabled Adults; providing individuals with rehabilitation services promoting physical, emotional and cognitive development and assuring their safety and wellbeing. These programs provided services to low- and moderate-income families who would not be able to afford these programs and also allows other family members the chance to work which otherwise would not be possible.

- **Maternal & Child Health Care Services:**

- Over 165 parents and their children were able to participate in Hillside's Maternal Child Health Care Program and Moms Helping Moms Foundation. Public nursing staff provided counseling services, medical screening and referrals to appropriate resources as needed. Children care wellness was also provided on a monthly basis, which included vaccinations administered by physicians to ensure proper immunizations protection, lead screening and more. Typically, a health fair is held biannually, however, the nurses at Maternal Child Health administered immunizations and flu shots for children, eye screening and lead screenings in the office. The Mom Helping Moms Foundation distributes dozens of car seats and feminine hygiene products throughout the year.

- **Mental Health Services:**

- To address mental health in the County, approximately 20 individuals were served by programs such as Jewish Family Services of Central NJ and United Family & Children Services.

- **Senior Citizens Social Service Programs:**

- Approximately 7,000 Senior Citizens throughout the County received a variety of cultural, educational, nutritional, medical, health related, and recreational programs and the following benefits during the contract year: health benefits included educational presentations by guest speakers on topics of maintaining wellness

and fitness through nutrition and exercise, health aide services to seniors who are unable to attend outside programs showing them how to live safely in their homes and prevent nursing home placement or hospitalization, health assessments including weight and vital signs, cardiovascular, diabetic, urinary, mental health, skin and wound healing and much more.

- Recreational benefits included Arts & Crafts workshops, Line Dancing, Bingo, Tai Chi, Yoga and Zumba just to name a few. Seniors also had the opportunity to participate in special events such as a Fashion Show and Holiday Party
- Transportation benefits included pick up and drop off service to various senior programs as well as weekly trips to food markets, doctor appointments, post office, hair appointments and many more events.
- These programs enable the seniors to have a more enjoyable life in addition to giving them the opportunity to socialize with other individuals which promotes a better quality of life.

- **Teen Programs:**

- Over 700 teens were assisted in achieving a better quality of life by several agencies and programs including the, the Boys and Girls Club of Plainfield, Buie Center Youth Recreation Program in Hillside, Second Street Youth Center Afterschool Program and Teen Resource Program in Plainfield, institute of Music for Children, Plainfield Community Outreach, Plainfield Grassroots Community Development Corp. STEM and SAT Prep, Careers in Recreation Lifeguard Program, YMCA Plainfield Afterschool Program, Young Lives Teen Moms Supplies, Roots and Wings Age-Out Youth Program and Visions and Pathways Independent Living Skills and the Summit Youth Center.

United Way of Greater Union County:

- The County of Union and United Way of Greater Union County partnered to administer a project called the “Family Strengthening Program”. Community Development funds in the amount of \$100,000.00 were provided to the United Way for this program. This program is designed to support family strengthening activities for the most vulnerable and at-risk population in Union County. Funds were spent on quality child care services, disabled services, homeless prevention, domestic violence programs, and mental health/counseling services. Thirteen agencies working directly with United Way provided a coordinated systematic approach to delivering the various services. The agencies included: ARC of Union County, Cerebral Palsy League of Union County, Community Coordinated Child Care, Jewish Family Services of Central New Jersey, Kings Daughter Day Care, Neighborhood House Association, Occupational Center of Union County, Rahway Community Action Organization, Rahway Day Care Center, Roselle Day Care Center, United Family and Children’s Society, Gateway Family YMCA, and YWCA of Eastern Union County.
- **Housing Counseling Agencies:**
 - A total of **\$50,000.00** was allocated to Housing Counseling Agencies.

The County of Union has utilized the services of one HUD certified Housing Counseling Agency – Urban League. Urban League has expanded their services beyond regular counseling services to include foreclosure, rental, mortgage and re-entry issues. These agencies are CBDO (Community Based Development Organization) agencies.

Economic Development:

A total of \$200,000.00 was allocated to the Union County Economic Development Corporation to provide technical assistance to businesses and to administer a loan program.

CDBG-CV:

A total of \$5,439,197 was allocated to the County of Union, Community Development Block Grant Program CARES Act (CDBG-CV) to prevent, prepare and respond to COVID-19 Related Community Needs. Over 7,500 individuals were served for a variety of programs by over 23 organizations including Family Promise, Urban League of Union County, United Way of Greater Union County Urban League of Union County, YWCA of Eastern Union County, and the Arc of Union County.

Bureau of Housing**HOME Investment Partnerships Program:**

Rosegate and Glendenning Homes projects did not come to fruition.

The Esterbrook Project has applied for the 2024 NJHMFA 9% Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) and are awaiting approval:

- Esterbrook Senior Housing: New construction 58 affordable rental units.

The County is in its final stages of contracting with A&T Housing and Westfield Village:

- A&T Housing, LLC - New construction of 8 affordable rental units.
- Westfield Village - New construction of 3 affordable rental units

Home Investment Partnerships Program monitoring of HUD projects for compliance that were due for inspection in the year 2024 have been completed.

Thirty-three (33) housing units were rehabilitated countywide.

Bureau of Information Technologies

- Between January and December of 2024, the IT Bureau responded to 10,410 Help Desk calls for support from all County facilities.
- 75% done- implementation of the Union County Fiber Project.
- Upgraded our outdated virtual network environment.
- Upgraded our Exchange email system.
- Routine replacement of outdated PCs, printers, and servers as well as monitoring and maintenance on all servers and firewalls.
- Moved We Are One to new location in Rahway.
- Moved Rutgers Coop to new location in Berkeley Heights.
- Setup new training room for Social Services at Parker Rd.
- Server migration for ESS at Social Services.
- Closing of Cornerstone Behavioral Unit.

2025 Initiatives

Union County Workforce Development Board

The Union County Workforce Development Board (UCWDB) is prioritizing youth empowerment in 2025 by expanding services for at-risk Out-of-School Youth (ages 16-24) and In-School Youth (ages 14-21). Programs will focus on academic support, work experience, career readiness, and access to all 14 WIOA program elements to bridge educational and employment gaps. A single service provider will be selected to ensure streamlined and effective delivery, emphasizing collaboration with schools, employers, and local organizations. Additionally, UCWDB will integrate technology to enhance digital literacy and career planning, reinforcing its commitment to preparing youth for sustainable careers and contributing to the economic growth of Union County.

Bureau of ADA Compliance

In 2025, the Bureau will focus on streamlining the implementation of the ADA Transition Plan by developing a more efficient system to track progress and productivity. This initiative aims to provide clear insights into project milestones and ensure accountability in achieving accessibility goals. Additionally, the Bureau will prioritize seeking new grant opportunities to fund further accessibility improvements throughout Union County, enabling continued enhancements to public spaces, facilities, and programs. Furthermore, the Bureau will prioritize the completion of ongoing grant projects, including the installation of hearing devices in courtrooms and the ADA-compliant upgrades at Warinanco Sports Center. These initiatives underscore the Bureau's dedication to advancing accessibility and fostering an inclusive community.

Division of Strategic Planning

Office of Business Development

The **Business Needs Assessment** aims to better understand and address the unique requirements of local businesses. This assessment will help build a targeted list of businesses, offering a deeper insight into their priorities and needs. The findings will enable us to enhance UCMB events and initiatives, ensuring they provide meaningful value to the business community. Additionally, this initiative could serve as a foundation for re-establishing a **Task Force** to address municipal-specific needs and deliver tailored solutions. Ultimately, this effort will provide valuable insights into the challenges businesses face, helping align resources and opportunities more effectively.

Business Development: Union County is launching a focused initiative to enhance business development by targeting and attracting anchor stores to key commercial areas. Leveraging the **CoStar** program—a premier commercial real estate data platform—this effort will identify strategic

opportunities to bring well-known retailers into the county, driving economic growth and revitalizing local business hubs.

Creation of a new brochure focused on “Why Union County?” as it pertains to business and / or living. The goal is to bring new business into the county while also addressing recreation and the workforce. The target audience is businesses both out of the county and inside the county with a plan of showcasing the County of Union’s available offerings and overall best qualities.

The brochure will be designed without a mailer panel and is intended to be included in an outer envelope. The call to action website listing will lead to a resource page.

Office of Community Engagement & Diversity

Enhancing Flag Raisings with Educational Components: Union County will incorporate educational elements into all flag-raising ceremonies to enrich the experience and provide attendees with historical, cultural, and civic insights. Each flag raising will not only honor the represented group, cause, or event but also serve as an opportunity to educate the community on its significance. These items can be offered to local schools to promote diversity.

The **Employment Connection Drive** is a community-based initiative designed to support individuals facing economic hardships by connecting them with employment opportunities. The project combines a collection drive for professional attire and resources with direct partnerships with employment agencies, workforce development programs, and local businesses. The goal is to empower job seekers with the tools, confidence, and connections needed to re-enter the workforce successfully. Possible Partnerships- Cinderella’s Closet, AJC and UCMB

Office of LGBTQ Affairs

A **“Senior Prom”** this project celebrates the importance of the elderly in our community while providing a unique opportunity for LGBTQ+ seniors who may have never attended their own prom due to societal stigma or personal circumstances. The event honors their stories, resilience, and contributions to progress while offering a safe, joyous space for them to embrace their authentic selves.

Collaborative Art Installation for the County’s First LGBTQ. This project involves creating a collaborative community art piece to celebrate the opening of Union County’s first LGBTQ+ affirming park space. The initiative aims to honor diversity, foster inclusivity, and provide a permanent symbol of acceptance and unity within the community. The collaborative artwork will be designed by local artists and completed with contributions from community members, creating a shared experience of creativity and connection. Possible partnership with Cultural and Heritage & Office of Diversity

Office on Women

Expanding Self-Defense Program for College-Bound Female. This project aims to expand the existing self-defense program to support high school females preparing for college. Hosted at the Stamler Academy and held **during school hours**, the program will focus on empowering young women with physical, mental, and emotional tools to navigate safety concerns as they transition to college life. In addition to practical defense techniques, the program will incorporate group discussions on the importance of empowering females and fostering self-confidence. Starting with UCVTS and expanding to other schools.

"Boxes of Hope" is a community-based initiative designed to provide comfort, encouragement, and essential items to cancer patients undergoing treatment. These care packages, assembled with thoughtful donations, will be distributed to local hospitals, treatment centers, and clinics to support individuals during their challenging journey. The boxes aim to offer both practical support and emotional solace, helping patients feel cared for and less isolated. Possible partnerships- little words project, Atlantic Health, Loreal

Women's Health Care Fair- The Women's Health Care Fair is a community-focused event designed to provide women with access to essential health resources, information, and services. This fair will bring together health professionals, wellness experts, and community organizations to create an informative and supportive environment. The goal is to educate women on a wide range of health issues, from preventive care to mental health, while offering free screenings, health assessments, and educational workshops.

Women Focused Event to Discuss Financial Success is an interactive event designed to bring together women to discuss personal finance, wealth-building strategies, and financial independence in a relaxed and engaging setting. The event pairs financial education with a social atmosphere, using wine as a metaphor for how wealth, like wine, can grow and mature with the right care and attention. Through expert-led discussions, networking opportunities, and informal group chats, the event aims to empower women to take control of their financial futures and promote financial literacy.

Office of Veterans Services

Pet Therapy & Veteran Mental Health- This project focuses on providing veterans with essential support services, particularly through the use of pet therapy programs, to address the mental health challenges many veterans face, such as PTSD, anxiety, and depression. By combining traditional veteran services with the therapeutic benefits of animal companionship, the project aims to improve the emotional and psychological well-being of veterans and foster a stronger sense of community and support.

Veteran Golf Outing is an initiative aimed at promoting physical activity, social connection, and mental well-being among veterans through the sport of golf. This project will offer free or discounted golf lessons, tournaments, and recreational events designed specifically for veterans. Golf provides a therapeutic outlet, fostering relaxation, teamwork, and camaraderie while also promoting physical fitness and reducing stress. Target date is first week of October

Increasing Operation Green Light for Veteran Awareness Month: **Operation Green Light** can help create a stronger, more supportive community for our veterans and increase visibility for ongoing efforts to improve their lives. Together, we can make a lasting impact by shining a light on their bravery and sacrifices. This initiative encourages individuals, businesses, and communities to display green lights to honor veterans and raise awareness about the challenges they face. **Possible Partnership- Amazon**

We Are One New Jersey

Inclusive Education Initiative: This initiative offers classes that will be video recorded and translated to ensure accessibility for diverse communities. By providing educational content in multiple languages and formats, we aim to break down barriers and reach a wider audience, promoting inclusivity and learning for all. Additionally, having the videos accessible online allows students to replay the class if they miss a session or need to review the material for better understanding. These resources will empower individuals by offering knowledge in a flexible, accessible format tailored to their needs, fostering greater understanding and engagement.

The “Scholarship” Program is designed to support applicants facing significant financial challenges who may not meet traditional income guidelines. This initiative provides financial assistance to individuals who demonstrate a need based on extenuating circumstances such as unexpected emergencies, medical expenses, or other hardships. As of this year 905 applicants did not meet waiver requirements and did not have personal funds to cover the cost.

Division of Community Services

Bureau of Community Development

Released CDBG-CV Round 4 applications late 2024 and will allocate the remaining CDBG-CV funds in early 2025. Approved projects will be awarded funding for a twelve-month period.

We will be preparing the CDBG Five-Year Consolidated Plan for HUD which includes the Annual Action Plan. A minimum of two public

hearings are scheduled in 2025 to solicit public input and feedback to the plan.

Bureau of Housing

HOME Investment Partnerships Program

The 2025 Initiatives for the County of Union Home Investment Partnerships Program include the development of affordable rental units for the following projects:

- A&T Housing, LLC - New construction of 8 affordable rental units.
- Westfield Village - New construction of 3 affordable rental units.

Upon the release of the 2024 NJHMFA Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), we will begin the process of developing more rental units for the following projects:

- Esterbrook Senior Housing: New construction of 58 affordable rental units.

In addition, HOME staff will continue monitoring the HOME assisted units currently in their affordability periods for Housing Quality Standards and income compliance.

HOME-ARP (American Rescue Plan Program) – The Bureau of Housing released a HOME-ARP RFP in late 2024. It is anticipated that projects will be awarded by early 2025.

Section 8

Continued compliance of the Section 8 Program. Provide administrative support to other County Housing Authorities. Pursue additional Section 8 vouchers.

Continue outreach efforts for new Section 8 landlords.

Bureau of Information Technologies

- Provide Cybersecurity Awareness Training to county employees.
- Finish County wide fiber project.
- Changing county domain from ucnj.org to ucnj.gov
- Increase storage capacity for County data.
- Upgrade county backup system.

**Department of
Engineering, Public Works & Facilities
Management**

Engineering

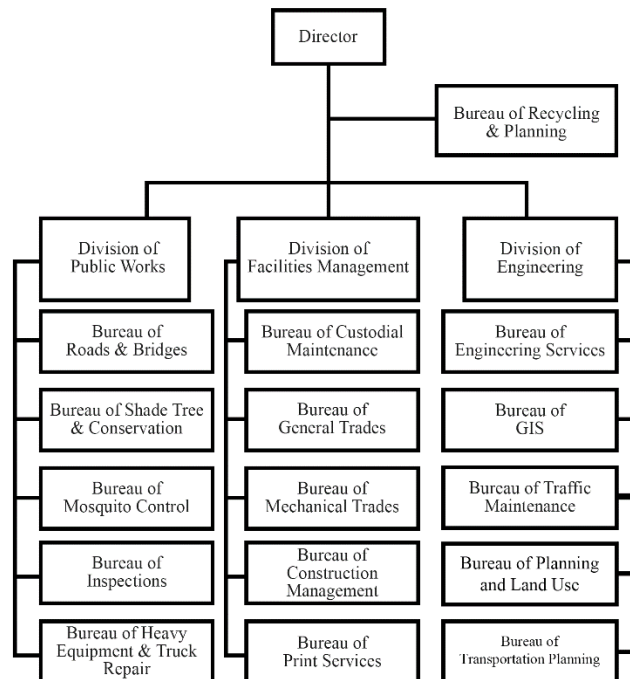
Public Works

Facilities Management

Recycling & Planning

Organizational Chart

Department of Engineering, Public Works and Facilities Management



DEPARTMENT OF ENGINEERING, PUBLIC WORKS & FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

Mission

The mission of the Department of Engineering, Public Works & Facilities Management is to provide and administer professional design and construction services for the planning, development and maintenance of the county's infrastructure, while supporting various other County departments, divisions and agencies in bringing to fruition the Capital Program.

Programs & Services

Office of the Director of Engineering, Public Works & Facilities Management

Bureau of Recycling and Planning

- Responsible for implementing county-wide recycling programs including scrap metal, fluorescent bulbs, Styrofoam, computer and electronics, tires, used motor oil and motor oil filters, plastic film, mobile paper shredding events and the reusable bag recycling/ reuse program.
- Manages New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) Recycling Enhancement Act (REA) and New Jersey Clean Communities grants, which Union County receives, and their associated responsibilities.
- Coordinates Household Hazardous Waste Disposal days for disposing non-latex paints, pesticides, fertilizers, solvents, pool chemicals, used motor oil and more as well as tires, which are recycled through our tire vendor, Casings, Inc.
- Sponsors regular meetings for Municipal Recycling Coordinators (MRCs) to help them network and improve recycling efforts in their municipalities, and therefore the County. The Bureau aids the municipalities with filing their annual recycling tonnage reports and therefore obtain annual state recycling grants.
- Disseminates environmental education and recycling information.
- Implements Union County Clean Communities Program.
- Provides recycling compliance assistance and support to municipalities.

- Supports municipal and County recycling efforts by distributing flyers, labels, and other items to help instruct residents, businesses, and government entities on proper recycling techniques.
- Answers questions and responds to residential concerns regarding recycling, hazardous waste disposal and handling, as well as similar topics via phone or email.

Division of Public Works

Bureau of Roads & Bridges: Repairs and maintains a safe surface on 340 lane miles of County roadways, 413 bridge and culvert surfaces, County Park roads and paths, County Golf Course parking lots, and over 30 County-owned facilities and parking lots. The Bureau completes thousands of work requests through our *CarteGraph* work order system.

Roadways are swept a minimum of twice each month. Storm drains including 4,564 inlets and catch basins are cleaned and maintained on schedule in compliance with the Clean Water Act and requirements of Union County Highway Agency Storm Water General Permit NJ0141887 of 2005, as required by the State of New Jersey.

The Bureau is responsible for snow and ice removal on all county roads and bridges, and assists with snow removal for other County agencies. Snow accumulation totals, cost of material, labor, and duration of storms are recorded as required.

The 141 major bridges and 240 culverts are inspected and maintained on a regular schedule. Major and minor repairs on these structures are performed as outlined through a bi-annual inspection. Debris blockages are cleared when needed to maintain the downstream flow to reduce flooding. Bridge rails, decks, and walkways are cleaned, repaired and repainted as required. Graffiti is removed instantly. Beam guiderail repair, replacement, and installations are performed as required for the benefit of public safety. Right-of-way maintenance is conducted whereby vegetation is cut back or removed through treatment to aid in driver visibility on County roads, intersections and bridges.

In late winter and early spring, a comprehensive pothole repair program is instituted. Crews are dispatched to repair any and all potholes resulting from harsh winter conditions or anything else causing them. Crack sealing of county roadways and parking facilities is carried out during the winter, summer, fall and spring.

A bi-annual Road Rating Survey is conducted. The intent of this survey is to provide the means to establish priority repairs and preventive maintenance measures. This aids in providing recommendations for the County's Resurfacing Program conducted in cooperation with the Division of Engineering.

The Bureau maintains a mutual aid/shared services agreement with other county agencies and municipalities, providing equipment, personnel, and/or materials. Examples of these services include milling, paving, and vegetation removal.

Solid waste and recyclable hauling is performed weekly. Roll-off containers at various locations are dropped off, picked up, and emptied and returned upon request. The roll-off trucks and personnel also assist with Union County sponsored recycling and disposal events through the Bureau of Recycling.

The Bureau of Roads & Bridges is proactive on employee safety, providing up-to-date training and equipment for employees. The Bureau maintains a trained and equipped Confined Space Rescue Team on staff to monitor safety when confined space entries must be performed. Snow plow safety training is performed in-house yearly for new employees.

Equipment maintenance is performed daily. Snow equipment undergoes routine maintenance year-round to ensure readiness at the start of the winter season. Repair to snow equipment is also made available to other county departments and divisions.

The Bureau is on call and available 24 hours a day, seven days a week for emergency responses including flooding, snow & icing conditions, and downed trees, blockages at our culverts and bridges, and much more other unforeseen emergency conditions.

Bureau of Mosquito Control: Responsible for controlling the mosquito population in Union County. The Bureau inspects, constructs and maintains drainage ditches to eliminate standing water where mosquitoes breed. Applications of pesticide are kept to a minimum; however, Union County has many marshes and wetland areas that need to be monitored and treated when mosquito breeding reaches levels endangering the health of human and animal populations. Mosquito samples are gathered for identifying species and for virus testing at the State Lab in Trenton using New Jersey light traps, BG Pro (dry ice) and Gravid (grass and water) traps. Other main activities include:

- Public education and outreach to eliminate potential breeding sites.

- Individual inspections at homes and businesses when complaints are received by the Bureau, which provides identification of breeding sites and remediates any standing water when practical.
- Working with local Boards of Health to inspect and remediate breeding sites at abandoned properties (requires annual recertification of staff).

After the monitoring and treatment season ends on November 1 each year, the Bureau assists in Union County's annual Leaf Collection Program, and covers snow plow routes as needed. The staff is trained annually in safety seminars, storm water discharge, and county policy and is also trained biennially for fork lift operation and is required to attend defensive driving courses.

Bureau of Shade Tree & Conservation: Maintains approximately 15,000 trees along County roads. To maintain and improve the shade canopy on County roads, the Bureau exceeds the requirements of Resolution 493-2000, which calls for at least one tree to be planted for every tree removed. The Bureau also maintains thousands of trees throughout the County parks system.

We also maintain all the trees along the county road. Trimming and removal of dead trees, working along with PSEG and Jersey central removing dead trees that may cause a problem with the wires if they fall and general trimming by request we also do root cutting for sidewalk repairs.

Bureau of Inspections: Responsible for the proper restoration of roadway excavation performed by private contractors and utility companies. The safeguarding of our underground utilities and properly restored roadway are essential in a congested area like Union County.

Bureau of Heavy Equipment & Truck Repair: Repairs all heavy equipment including trucks in the Divisions of Public Works and Park Maintenance including hydraulic and diesel mechanics. All mechanics have CDL permits with Hazmat and tanker endorsement; this enables the shop to provide delivery of fuel to various departments throughout the County. The shop also has two 4X4 Road Service vehicles for all-year service including winter storms.

Division of Engineering

The Division of Engineering consists of Engineering Services, the Bureau of Geographic Information Services and the Bureau Traffic Safety and Maintenance. In support of the mission of the Department, the Division has established several goals: provide and execute the annual County paving program, bridge improvements and other infrastructure projects, provide access to the electronic inventory of the

County's infrastructure mapping, and maintain the County signs/striping along County roadways.

Engineering Bureau

- Responsible for the inspection, design, rehabilitation, and replacement of 141 major bridges and 272 culverts, for a total of 413;
- Responsible for the inspection, design and rehabilitation as necessary for the County's classified 13 dams.
- Coordinate and manage the annual resurfacing program for 173 miles of County roadways, averaging about 17.3 miles of rehabilitation per year.
- Manage environmental remediation programs for former underground storage tanks (UST) and other contaminated sites.
- Support all of the Municipalities within the county with design and construction of traffic signal rehabilitation and replacements along County routes, as well as analyzing traffic needs for new traffic signals.
- Manage the New Jersey Storm Water Program for Union County and its municipalities, and support their flood control efforts.
- Support other County departments and agencies, including the Department of Engineering, Public Works and Facilities Management, Department of Parks and Recreation, the Office of Open Space, Recreation and Historic Preservation Trust Fund, and the Department of Public Safety in fulfillment of their capital programs by providing design services for and supervising construction of their facilities.
- Administers and solicits Request for Proposal documentation to design consultants for initiation of design process
- Supervises, coordinates and manages all County capital improvement projects as part of the Design/Construction Team and acts as the liaison for each department from the consultant procurement process through the preparation, development and completion of construction documents, public contract bid process and the construction and project closeout documentation phases.
- Provide engineering review of the site plans and subdivision applications that are brought before the Union County Planning Board.

Bureau of Geographic Information Systems: Maintains, manages and supports countywide systems: GIS system with over 200 GIS layers, 5 GIS websites and provides support to various Departments.

- Supports the County Prosecutors office, Office of Emergency Management and State defender's office on a daily basis.
- Supports, manages and maintains the countywide asset management system that is used by over 85 employees and 24 countywide GIS layers.

- Supports all aspects of IT operation for the Public Works Department, which includes desktop support, hardware and software support, replacement and coordinating the purchasing of hardware are just some of the other responsibilities of the Bureau.
- Maintains County bridge inventory, priority bridge repair requests from NJDOT, and tracks the progress.
- Creates and supports hundreds of GIS layers including two dozen layers for the Prosecutor's office for their Megan's Law notification and sex offender tracking.
- Maintains about 20 layers for the Department of Public Safety, 18 layers for Union County Police, 25 layers for the Division of Engineering and 23 layers for the Department of Public Safety. We update and reprint no loitering zone maps, official county maps, park maps and various other official maps quarterly.
- Maintains and manages the County GIS investment by updating GIS layers on a regular basis. Updates include county parcel layer, road layer, public and private school layers, Board of Election layers and community organization layers. The Bureau of GIS has been actively supporting our 21 municipalities by providing data which reduces their overall financial burden.
- Maintains and updates certified digital drug free zone maps, distributed by the Bureau through a secured website to the local law enforcement entities.
- Implements Cartegraph work and asset management systems for the County.
- Provides mapping for the Union County Prosecutors office related to crime scene analysis and drug free zone prosecution.
- Maintains automation of our playground and outfall inspection systems using Cartegraph and iPads.
- Geo-locate County assets via Cartegraph for cost tracking purposes.

Bureau of Traffic Safety & Maintenance: Maintains Union County's traffic signs and roadway striping along its 173 miles of roadway. The Bureau also approves, designs and implements temporary work zones, detours, collects and documents traffic movement data, designs and installs custom signs and vehicle markings, conducts traffic safety reviews and audits, and provides support for other Engineering Division. Each task is vital in protecting the County by limiting its liability in traffic tort claim cases, saving the County large sums of money in any given year. The Bureau also interfaces with the County's twenty-one municipalities through co-op purchasing, shared services, and mutual aid services as well as providing technical guidance on various traffic issues.

The functional attributes of the Bureau are: Sign Design and Fabrication, Sign Installations, GIS Asset Management of the signs, Line Striping, Data Collection, Traffic Counts and Investigations, and Traffic Control. Additionally, the Bureau:

- Maintains over 9,000 roadside signs and over 500 miles of linear roadway striping that is managed through the GIS Asset Management System.
- Conducts traffic counts for volume, speed, and classifications of vehicles on County and Municipal roads, vehicle turning movements, and pedestrian crossing movements. Also conducts investigations in order to determine unsafe conditions and their causes, and make recommendations to the County Engineer.
- Supports the 21 municipalities through mutual aid and the Municipal Striping and Signs Programs, assists with traffic control for local events and emergencies, and supports communities by providing traffic data and studies when requested.
- Reviews detour and work zone traffic control plans for private and public construction and maintenance projects, in concurrence with the Departments of Engineering & Public Works. The Bureau also developed and maintains a page on the County's web site providing the public with educational material and up-to-date roadway traffic construction project information.
- Supports other County departments and agencies with the fabrication and installation of outdoor metal signs, fabrication and installation of vehicle graphics, and the application of pavement markings.
- The Bureau provides the County Counsel's Office with information and professional consultation related to depositions, and interrogatories, and testimony in regard to tort claims and law suits.
- Assists municipalities and other County agencies with traffic related issues, and works with community and professional organizations to further traffic safety.

Division of Facilities Management

Services, maintains and repairs State Court System facilities, various properties and facilities owned and operated by Union County, including but not limited to general trades, custodian maintenance and printing.

The Division provides technical and mechanical services required by all County agencies for their safe and efficient operation. This encompasses two million square feet of multi-purpose facility space including the maintenance of boilers, generators, electrical, plumbing, and structural, elevators, HVAC and carpentry in addition to providing custodial services for all County facilities.

The Division also provides coordination for the County's capital improvement projects working collectively with various professional service consultants to

accomplish set goals in a timely, cost efficient manner. The majority of the County's standard utilities such as Public Service Electric, Water and Gas are monitored and paid through Facilities. Monitoring also incorporates contractual bids, non-bid agreements, and collective purchasing through New Jersey State Contracts, Middlesex Regional Education Commission and Somerset Cooperative.

The Division consists of four Bureaus:

Bureau of Construction Management/ Bureau of Trades: Maintains approximately 60 Union County buildings, leased and owned, consisting of the non-mechanical trades. The Bureau sees to all maintenance issues such as cleanliness, recycling, personnel moves, etc. Trades governed by this Bureau are the carpenters, masons, painters and maintenance repair (day shift).

- Conducts Countywide renovation projects such as, but not limited to, framing and dry wall of new offices, ceiling tile replacement, painting and the installation of vinyl base and carpet tile, setting up or modifying cubicles provided by staffed furniture installers. Cost effective carpentry cabinet work and furniture is done in-house instead of buying same from outside vendors at higher cost.
- Directs compliance and maintenance with safety regulations and standards such as the replacement of damaged sidewalks, retaining walls, steps, etc., and snow removal from the County Complexes and parking lots.
- Completes approximately 4,000 work orders annually from a computerized system that records the job type, the shop, and the man-hours to complete the job.

Bureau of Custodial Maintenance (Night Shift): Works with day shift maintaining approximately 22 Union County buildings with 21 employees under direct supervision. Primary responsibility is an effective work schedule for cleaning, garbage removal, recycling, stripping and waxing of floors and carpet shampooing.

- Daily record keeping and equipment inventory required to provide cost effective measures and the ability to complete the job.
- Oversight of work areas in order to ensure safety for all employees and public.
- Training of new employees, consisting of building familiarity, uniforms, safety equipment, emergency situations, cleaning techniques and products, individual employee conduct and individual responsibilities.
- Works collectively with the day shift on snow removal and emergency situations such as the use of snow plows, shovels and salt deposits in addition to addressing any crisis situation on an as needed basis.

Bureau of Stationary Engineers: Strictly coordinates and monitors four mechanical trade units in the Division of Facilities Management -- electricians, plumbers, HVAC and stationary engineers -- to ensure adherence to Federal, State and County mandates regarding health, safety and fire code enforcement.

- Maintains approximately 28 buildings with two million square feet, 24 hours per day, seven days per week. The electricians, plumbers and HVAC function on the standard time frame with the exception of being on an on-call basis when needed.
- Oversees larger scale capital projects, in-house renovations and reconstruction independently and in conjunction with the architects and engineers retained by the County. The bureau Chief will attend vital meetings to enforce and monitor progress tracked by computerized system and work orders.
- Monitors the Automatic Logic Control System (ALC) reporting and regulating individual building temperature control.
- Enforces compliance and consistency with New Jersey EPA STACK testing mandates guideline and permits.
- Maintains power house consisting of: three high pressured vessels, electrical buss with 480 switches gears, all generators within the County buildings.

Bureau of Print Services: Provides a wide range of services including printing, graphic design, image & document scanning, creation of digital files including .pdf, .tiff, .jpg, .indd, .ai and .psd image file preparation for Digital Printing and Sign Making. The Bureau makes custom signs of vinyl, plastic, foam board, aluminum composite, paper etc. Printing includes carbonless (NCR) forms, flyers, business cards, invitations, door tags, nameplates, labels, calendars, directories, event signs, temporary signs, indoor/outdoor banners, posters, presentation checks etc.

- Countywide production, job tracking and management of Union County's In-house Print and Sign Shop including Xerox services.
- Provide print and sign to several municipalities, government agencies, local non-profits and the Union County Courts through shared services.
- Orders and tracks copy paper deliveries county wide, maintains various consumable inventories, and supports numerous computer equipment, printers and software.
- Maintains spreadsheets for tracking, monitoring and logging.
- Offers guidance on design, layout/paper, software usage and troubleshooting.
- Utilizes a variety of software such as Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, In-Design, Acrobat, MS Word, Excel, Gerber Omega, Onyx Production-House, Fiery RIP, XMPie Ustore, Uproduce and FFCore.
- Operates equipment such as Gerber thermal printers, Gerber plotters, HP Latex 360/365, HP Scitex FB550B Printer and Summa F1612 cutter. Other equipment

include Martin Yale RapidColor 1170 digital printer, Riso GL7430 digital printer, Neopost Mach 6 printer and numerous other post-press equipment.

2024 Accomplishments

Division of Public Works

Bureau of Roads & Bridges: In 2024 the Bureau filled and repaired in hundreds of potholes. Minor and major road surface repairs and preventive maintenance were completed throughout the county. Repairs to related infrastructure on county roadways were performed such as sink holes and storm line failures. The County's 340 lane miles of roadway were swept approximately twice per month as per our Sweeping Schedule. Vegetation maintenance was performed as required. The County's 4,564 inlets and catch basins were cleaned and or inspected twice per year, as scheduled. Repairs were made as required. Union County's 386 bridges and culverts were inspected and maintained as needed. Beam Guide Rail was repaired as needed. Weather related events including snow & ice were managed, staffed and tackled during and following each occurrence. There were approximately 500 tasks completed related to snow and ice removal during this time frame.

During the County sponsored recycling events, the Bureau provides assistance with personnel and equipment. Assistance was provided to the Office of the County Clerk with hauling records to the incinerator from various agencies and municipalities throughout the County. Assistance was also provided to the County Police in hauling confiscated drugs to the incinerator for destruction.

The Welding Shop performed fabrication projects included Park Maintenance, Public Safety, Bureau of Shade Tree & Conservation, Bureau of Heavy Equipment and Truck Repair as well as repairs and modification to DPW Equipment.

The Bureau assisted the Bureau of Shade Tree & Conservation with personnel and equipment for the Leaf Compost Facility in Springfield, including receiving leaves and related materials for composting, forming windrows, and turning as required.

Routine inspections and preventive maintenance and priority repairs of bridges, culverts and parapets were conducted throughout the county. Graffiti removal was performed at various locations. Priority repairs are evaluated, scheduled and repaired via reports from DOT, Consulting Engineers and supervising staff of the Bureau.

The Bureau completed over 2,500 work requests in 2024 including services and mutual aid to all Divisions, Agencies and Municipalities. Approximately 2,000 tons of asphalt were used for Roads & Bridge Maintenance and Repairs and Mutual Aid requests. The Bureau also provided personnel and equipment to multiple pandemic related projects including COVID-19 test sites and vaccination call centers, as well as Food Drives.

Bureau of Inspections: In 2024 the Bureau issued 618 roads and curb permits, collected \$215,842.40 in permit fees and \$168,065.00 in refundable bond fees, for a total of \$383,907.40. The Bureau also provided continuous monitoring of curb installations, and roadway and right-of-way excavations to ensure restoration and compliance with county specifications, and provided personnel for snow removal.

In addition to Roads & Bridges Inspectors, the Bureau personnel also include the Department's Safety Coordinator, who scheduled safety programs to ensure compliance with Local, Federal and State regulations. Examples of these regulations are: OSHA and Hazcom Right to Know Compliance, Commercial Driver's Licensing, CDL Medical Certifications, Storm Water Management, and Work Zone Safety. We now do tool box talk monthly.

Examples of in-house training included: chainsaw, forklift, backhoe and bucket truck operations, fire extinguisher, ladder usage, and proper flagging techniques. Reporting and recording of employee injuries and motor vehicle accidents also fall under this Bureau. Other safety training added in 2018 included slip and fall precautions, lifting techniques, PPE and defensive training.

Bureau of Shade Tree & Conservation: Each year, the Bureau plants 150 trees throughout the County along County roadways. This is done yearly due to the amount of trees that were removed due to decay or as a result of storm damage.

To date the Shade Tree Bureau has completed most of the work orders from last year and is focused on outstanding complaints. We are focused on removing all dead and dying trees along County roads and in the parks, including approximately 300 trees in the parks. There have been more than 700 trees removed due to safety and over 1,000 trees have been trimmed, mainly identified through requests from the public as well as county personnel.

This year, the Bureau completed a large request for tree trimming and removal in all of our park system and large amounts of requests Scotch Plains, Elizabeth, Plainfield, Berkeley Heights, Kenilworth, Cranford, Clark, Roselle and Roselle

Park. The Bureau also continues to work with PSEG and Jersey Central Power & Light electric companies on tree removal. This year a few hundred trees were lost due to weather and out growing its space.

The Shade Tree Bureau also provided aide to Berkeley Heights, New Providence and Roselle in removing large trees and hanging branches. The Bureau also loaned equipment to assist some municipalities.

The Bureau also completed work in several parks as requested by Park supervisors, including Cedar Brook, Echo Lake and Rahway River.

Bureau of Mosquito Control: Mosquito Control completed 70 tasks related to ditch maintenance and 290 tasks for Drainage maintenance prior to the start of our surveillance and treating season. The mosquito surveillance season began March 1. To date, we had 1 human cases of West Nile Virus reported in Union County and 6 Dengue Fever cases (travel history). EEE was detected in 2 samples submitted by Union County to the NJ State PHEL labs for virus testing. Our Bureau submitted 18 different weekly portable trappings at locations in our data base, we collected 13,596 mosquitoes, identified and encapsulated 292 pools for testing. Those pools were tested for 5 different viruses carried by mosquitos. (WNV, EEE, SLE, JCV & Dengue Fever) and we had 84 positive pools of mosquitos for W.N.V. This season was monitored by twenty- two semi-permanent New Jersey light traps for tends and 27,898 mosquitoes were collected. Our Inspectors also were active with our WNV surveillance. They performed 15 Gravid trap runs. All 21 municipalities in Union County had at least one portable trap sent for virus testing with all having at least one positive WNV pool. The Inspectors performed 845 NJ light trap runs during the 2024 season. U.C. Bureau of Mosquito Control currently has over 959 identified and cataloged sites registered with the NJ PHEL Labs in Ewing Township, NJ.

This Bureau handled 217 complaints for 2024. There were 491 spray locations during 651 adulticiding operations during evening hours to control adult populations of mosquitoes. There were 1904 tasks completed for 2024. This includes the work the inspectors do on a daily basis to control breeding at the source in several locations throughout Union County where standing water cannot be eliminated.

The Bureau has offered “Barrier” treatments for problem yards of individual home sites, using a backpack blower that sprays a mist of a barrier pesticide that dries down in an hour and leaves a residue that can provide active mosquito control for up to 12 days. The Bureau has received positive feedback with the results, but because

of equipment, personnel and pesticide cost, we had to drastically reduce our Barrier treatment program for 2024 season.

Our office staff attended outreach venues in order to educate the public to the health risks and public nuisance of mosquitoes and how to prevent breeding of them.

Bureau of Heavy Equipment & Truck Repair: There were 1030 total repair and work maintenance Work Orders including repair of in-house work. The Bureau has also made repairs to equipment for towns within Union County. The shop will continue to work with various schools to keep the mechanics updated on vehicle scanner training. The Bureau added two new professional diagnostic tools into our shop, which has enabled the Bureau to work on our equipment more effectively. Our Department will expand our ability diagnose and repair our current fleet of vehicles and equipment. The staff of technicians will be updated by means of either classroom or online training in order to keep up with current and future vehicle technology.

Bureau of Recycling and Planning: In 2024, the Bureau had many new and innovative ideas that came to fruition. The County-wide Recycling Directory was completed in a hardcopy version. A few thousand of these directories were distributed to residents, students, and other groups to enable them to have information regarding many aspects of recycling and how to recycle different items that they use on a daily basis “at their fingertips.” We are looking to get this document online as well.

The Bureau continued it’s “Beyond the Bin” recycling events. There were two of these events held in 2024. The first of these events was held on June 2, 2024, in conjunction with a Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) at UCNJ (Union College of Union County New Jersey). The Bureau also held a second “stand alone” Beyond the Bin event on November 4, 2024. This event was also held at UCNJ. These two events provided residents the opportunity to recycle “harder to recycle” items. These materials consisted of plastic film, Styrofoam, electronic devices, unwanted clothing and related items (textiles), reusable cloth bags, food waste. At the second event, we also included the recycling of mattresses and box springs. We do not have an exact number of participants for the first event since it was held in conjunction with the HHW event. However, at the second event, we accommodated 117 cars at the event. The weight of electronics that were collected between the two events totaled 12,353 pounds. These electronics were recycled with NewTech Recycling and ReWorld, who are both subcontractors of MRM, who our electronics recycling contract is with. We also recycled 2603 pounds of textiles with Helpsy. We also

collected multiple bags of plastic film and Styrofoam, which we recycled. We also collected reusable bags, which numbers are included later in this report. Finally, we enabled residents to purchase composters and other waste reducing items from BrandBuilders at a price that was subsidized through Recycling Enhancement Act (REA) grant funds. At the November event, we also utilized the services of Renewable Recycling, which recycles mattresses and box springs. Utilizing this resource, we were able to recycle 28 units (combination of twin, full, queen, and king) mattresses and box springs. This new element of the event was very well received by residents. We received multiple positive comments from residents who attended. These comments were along the lines of that the recycling of mattresses and box springs is a very good idea due to the anticipated high cost of disposal that the residents would be paying had the residents have to dispose of the mattresses and box springs on their own or through the company that they bought their new mattress/ box spring through. Not only that, but the elements of the mattresses are being recycled with this program, where in the other case, they would most likely be landfilled.

In 2024, the Bureau introduced a new educational initiative for second-grade students in Union County called the NexGen Recycling program. This program introduces students to the concepts of recycling and waste reduction. The initiative includes presentations by the Bureau to educate students about these important issues. After the presentations, teachers then guide their classes to create their own “recycling superhero.” The classes then “compete” against one another to determine which superhero is most effective in their mission, which relates to recycling. Judging is conducted based on recommendations from County staff. The winning “superhero” is transformed into artwork that is turned into buttons and distributed to all of the students. Additionally, each student receives a “goodie bag” containing information about recycling, handouts, and a County recycling t-shirt featuring Curby the recycling robot. This program has already reached 546 students in Winfield Park, Roselle Park, Kenilworth, Westfield, and Mountainside, with very positive results. We are eager to carry on with this initiative in the coming months.

The Pumpkin Recycling Program is presently underway for 2024. The County is operating in Berkeley Heights, Kenilworth, Linden, Plainfield Roselle Park, Union Township, and Westfield. The program began on November 1, 2024 and will end on November 30, 2024. These pumpkins will be converted to green energy through the Waste Management CORE facility in Elizabeth. This program, as well as the other County recycling programs were publicized through The Star-Ledger/nj.com, TapInto, RecycleCoach and through County advertising channels.

The Clean Communities Program continued a strong presence to date in 2024. Through November 19, 2024, the Program assisted with 24 group cleanups and 19 individual efforts involving participants who worked a total of 809.5 manhours. The personnel involved with the program collected 240.75 estimated bags of litter and 67 estimated bags of recyclables. This program was heavily assisted by Parks staff.

The Bureau is in the process of finalizing details to award a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a company to fabricate and install an exhibit space at the Trailside Nature and Science Center in Mountainside which will focus on recycling and litter abatement topics. Construction for this project will hopefully start in early 2025.

Styrofoam Recycling: The Styrofoam recycling program is still going strong with a relationship with Plastic Services, Inc. that was forged in 2023 and has worked greatly in 2024. This new destination for County generated Styrofoam is due to the closure of FoamPak in Springfield, NJ. The County of Union continues to support the program with gaylord bags for towns for collection of Styrofoam as well as educational materials and promotion.

Recycle Coach: Union County continues to support all 21 municipalities and their residents for use of the Recycle Coach app. County staff and Municipal Recycling Coordinators continue to communicate and meet with representatives from Recycle Coach to optimize the user experience, including free educational tools.

Communication with Municipalities: The Bureau has focused on communications with the Municipal Recycling Coordinators, including multiple meetings and emails at least weekly. The Bureau continues to build relationships with new staff to make for the best recycling resources for Union County residents.

The New Jersey “Bag Ban”/ “Straw Law”: The Bureau continued to assist in public awareness campaigns, including the purchase and distribution reusable shopping bags and ban-related educational materials at county and municipal events. The Bureau also purchased and distributed more reusable shopping bags. All materials were purchased with Clean Communities or Recycling Enhancement (REA) grant funds. The County also expanded upon our reusable bag collection “pilot” program in which reusable bags were collected. The program now collects reusable bags at thirteen locations throughout the County, which is up from the two locations that we had with the original “pilot” program. At these locations, Union County residents can drop off their reusable bags. From there, a vendor, GoaTote, collects, sanitizes and redistributes the bags to the Community Food Bank in Hillside for use in their food distribution operations. To date, this permanent program has collected 25,881

bags from all locations. The two Beyond the Bin events generated an additional 1,050 bags. In turn, all in, to date, Union County has sanitized and given 20,120 bags given to the Community Food Bank in Hillside, which forwards them on to local food pantries in need. The remainder are still “in process” with GoATote.

Also, the Bureau of Recycling and Planning staff went to all twenty-one municipalities to see what occurs in their recycling yards, should they have one, discuss recycling concerns with each town, and see what assistance the county could provide to each town as far as recycling goes. This was very well received by all twenty-one municipalities and helped further educate Bureau staff as to the needs of each town, how we can help each town, and how we could communicate better with the towns and residents to make recycling efforts more effective in Union County.

Countywide Recycling Collection Events: Event and tonnage data for the 2024 recycling events are as follows:

- Mobile Paper Shredding – Union County sponsored 12 residential paper shredding events in 2024 with 6,239 residents participating and bringing 193,762 pounds of confidential documents for shredding. Union County’s local government document destruction program also assisted seven County offices and eleven non-County government entities in shredding their confidential documents and recycling the paper from the process. We also provided a shredding truck so that the residents at the Cranford Senior housing complex could shred the confidential documents of their residents. The Bureau has a contract with IDS AutoShred, who has been very good to work with. REA grant funds were used to cover all costs for both the residential shredding program and office shredding program, including vendor costs, overtime for staff, and lunch for staff. The service fees for the vendor of office shredding program was also covered.
- Household Hazardous Waste – Union County sponsored four household waste events in 2024 with 2,897 residents participating in the program. REA grant funds covered all costs. These costs included payment for the vendor, overtime for staff, recycling fees for tires, and lunch for County staff. The vendor for the events is Radiac Environmental, Inc.
- Fluorescent Bulbs – To date in 2024, 30,111 feet of straight fluorescent bulbs were collected and recycled at nine municipal drop-off sites, along with 563 U-shaped and compact bulbs for a total weight of 5.87 tons. The bulbs are picked up and recycled through AERC/ Clean Venture. Bulbs were also collected at the County’s five Household Hazardous Waste events. All bulb recycling fees were covered by Recycling Enhancement Act (REA) grant funds.

- **Tires and Propane Tanks** – A total of 648 tires and 206 propane tanks were collected at the Household Hazardous Waste events in 2024. Again, all of the fees associated with recycling/ processing them were covered by Recycling Enhancement Act (REA) grant funds.
- **Scrap Metal** –The Bureau of Recycling managed bi-monthly scrap metal collection programs from April through November at two drop-off locations in Cranford and Rahway, collecting 57,670 pounds (28.835 tons) of scrap metal.
- **Motor Oil/Filters:** As of October 31, 2024, Union County successfully recycled 9,188 gallons of oil, 150 gallons of anti-freeze and 2,700 pounds of spent oil filters for the year. These collections took place via 15 municipal drop off locations as part of our Motor Oil and Filter Recycling Program. There was additional motor oil and filters accepted at our Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) events.
- **Electronics Recycling** – Union County continues to provide free electronics drop-off at 17 municipal locations for e-waste covered by state regulations. The amount collected from January 1, 2024 through September 30, 2024 was 440,453 pounds of covered electronics (the most current data available due to reporting) and an estimated 64,480 pounds of non-covered electronics collected for the same period. The big change in our new contract with MRM, which started on January 1, 2024, is that the municipalities that are collecting on behalf of the County for the program is that the towns are now making money through rebates from our vendor. MRM paid out \$42,640.31 for the period from January 1, 2024 through June 30, 2024. So far, for the second half of 2024 (through September 30, 2024), the revenue anticipated from collections is \$24,830.38. This totals \$67,470.69 of unanticipated revenue going to the seventeen partner municipalities that are collecting electronics as part of the County program. Prior to this new contract, the towns were not seeing any rebate funds from the program.

Division of Engineering

Bureau of Engineering: Projects in 2024 included the 2024 Road Resurfacing program of approximately 15 miles in 14 municipalities, which has been completed on time for the time in several years, bridge design is complete for the Irving Street Bridge in Rahway, Trenton Avenue Bridge in Elizabeth, and Pine Grove Avenue Bridge in Summit. Scour protection projects at the Randolph Road Bridge in Plainfield and Central Avenue Bridge in Rahway are complete. The Gordon Street Bridge was demolished in Roselle/Roselle Park, and the new bridge is complete and open to traffic. The Nomahegan Pedestrian Bridge was demolished, replaced, and open to pedestrians. Design is complete for replacing and upgrading over 20,000 feet

of guiderail throughout Union County. An extensive dam maintenance project was completed at 13 Union County dams. Union County has been working with FEMA to secure funds to repair assets damaged by the remnants of Hurricane Ida. Intersection improvement projects include the East Front Street corridor in Plainfield. Project studies were also started for FHWA's Safe Streets for All project as well as the Rahway Valley Rails to Trails project.

Facilities Projects included the completion of the stairway tower project in the County Court House building, renovation of the County Clerk's office, commencement of the demolition to the existing parking deck at the Union County Courthouse, commencement/completion of the New Annex Courthouse roof replacement, completion of the Galloping Hill Mason shed restroom facility, UC Courthouse boiler replacements design, Fire Academy improvements, design of the Administration Building sliding door replacement, construction renovations to various UC park restroom facility, design Deserted Village roof replacements, and the commencement/completion of the Rahway Park pool gutter replacement. The Stamler Police Academy running track was also repaved and rehabilitated.

Park Projects included the reconstruction of the azalea gardens at Warinanco Park in Rahway and the on-going 15 parks projects throughout the County ranging from small improvements to major turf field renovations. Construction is underway for the tennis courts at Warinanco Park, and design is complete for a proposed second ice rink at Warinanco Park. The first phase of hydro-raking at Briant Pond in Summit was completed, and design is underway for the second phase. Parking lots are being paved at Ponderosa Park and Zimmerman Park.

Bureau of Geographic Information Systems: The Bureau maintained, managed and supported the county-wide asset management system which includes over 20,000 assets and over 100 users. Maintained, managed and supported School Crisis Mitigation system with 230 schools and over 400 law enforcements users a key infrastructure piece that assists our municipal partners in keeping schools safe. Maintained, managed and supported the County's GIS public website with 4,000 local certified tax map sheet, sex offender database and supported several staff members within the Prosecutor's office who require access to our data. Created GIS maps and supported GIS operations for 21 municipal partners and kept the parcel layer with 160,000 parcels up to date. Supported and maintained Board of Election maps, road resurfacing maps, road sign database with 20,000 signs, county road video logs and county park asset. Supported and managed over 150 computers within the PW Department, including upgrade and troubleshooting. Additionally, the Bureau moved the Cartegraph system to the cloud, created and automated new

monthly park inspection system for Park employees, collected drone footage for areas of the county that are related to county projects, created several asset layers in Cartegraph, including a duplicate Hydro layer that is showing the erosion for the past 20 years, actively updating 2024 road resurfacing map while creating new map for 2025, building a GIS layer showing the East Coast Greenway throughout county, created 10-foot county contour lines using geo points, continued to update Watchung Trail map and updated the National Highway System Layer.

Bureau of Traffic Safety and Maintenance: Conducted numerous Traffic Count Studies for the County and its municipal partners. Upgraded numerous Pedestrian Crosswalks signs and over 350 other warning and streets signs improving pedestrian safety and driver awareness. Assisted our municipal partners via our Mutual Aide/Shared Services Program with several thousand dollars' worth of signage and vehicle graphics. Supported County Parks Department with numerous sign installations, pavement marking upgrades, event banner installations, Deer Management sign installations and land encroachment signs. Supported County Police with signs, pavement markings and vehicle graphics. Supported annual Infrastructure Municipal Aid Grant program with sign installations at each specific project location. Provided consultations and general information or responses to County Counsel Office related to depositions, interrogatories regarding tort claims or law suits related to traffic incidents. The Bureau also continued updating sign inventory within the County GIS system.

Division of Facilities Management

- UC Courthouse Tower– Fire Code Violation, Interior Stairwell Project: Project commenced in January 2020. Erection of the new Interior Stairwell and Fire Sprinkler System has been installed. Project has been completed.
- Replaced the entrance patio and walkway of Trailside Nature & Science Center
- Upgraded the lighting throughout Stamler Police Academy to LED fixtures
- Renovated the bathrooms at Cornerstone Behavioral Health
- New Annex Courthouse: Replacement of the entire roof; asbestos abatement and installation of fire sprinkler system on the 2nd floor; modernization of the existing three (3) elevators (ongoing).

Administration Building: Replacement of the existing aging and outdated Main Entrance/Exit Doors will commence. In house MX has repainted front entrance area. Sealed all entrance roof flashing & replaced County seal signage as of 10/24

UC Courthouse: Replacement of the Entrance/Exit Doors at rear (Atrium) entrance will commence. Completed, both doors installed 11/24

UC Parking Garage: Existing Parking Garage will be demolished and replaced with a new Parking Deck. Demo has started, as of 11/24 2 floors completed. Estimated completion 3/25

Parks Restrooms: Renovation of Public and Employee restrooms will continue. Ongoing County Roof repairs as of 11/24 which include Admin building / Court house Tower / Old Annex building / Fire Academy / Rotunda building / Froehlich building / Engineering building / Old jail / New Jail / Election board building & Spray park.

Bureau of Print Services

- Completed 2,225 print/sign/paper requests from Nov. 9, 2022 - November 9, 2023 for Union County and 28 Municipalities & non-profit agencies.
- Processed 3,982,643 impressions from Nov. 2022 – Nov. 9, 2023.
- Assembled 230+ Banners from Nov. 9, 2022 – Nov. 9, 2023.
- Invoiced \$43,297.97 from Nov. 9, 2022 – November 9, 2023 to various Townships, non-profits and government agencies.
- Researching new vendors and cost-effective materials for signs, banners and printing in spite of the ongoing supply chain issues.
- Upgraded design and production software to keep an efficient workflow.
- Replaced 2 aging digital printers with newer efficient models.
- Installed a wide format graphic scanner.

2025 Initiatives

Division of Public Works

Bureau of Roads & Bridges: The goals for the Bureau is to have employees attend driver and operator safety courses specific to equipment used and tasks performed within the department as well as obtaining additional training specific to asphalt projects. The Bureau is replacing time clocks with a new facial recognition.

The Bureau is also seeking approval from the Department of Environmental Protection for a potential milling and paving project within Meisel Park.

The Bureau's in-house paving program will provide Mutual-Aid Milling and Resurfacing services to various Municipalities, Departments and County facilities prioritized as requested through County departments. Requests submitted to the Bureau will commence on or about May 1, 2025.

Bureau of Inspections: The Bureau will continue to closely monitor all construction, maintenance, and repair being performed on County roads as it pertains to the proper permitting for curing, road openings, excavations and alterations, and continue to assure compliance with County specifications.

The Safety Coordinator will continue to do more conduct training in areas, and will continue to assure compliance with Local, Federal, and State regulations. The Bureau's goal is to become an injury and accident free workplace.

Bureau of Shade Tree & Conservation: The Bureau is looking into the Sponsor A Tree commemorative tree planting program. We hope to partner with five planting programs that work with Sponsor A Tree.

The Bureau is also will be receiving new trucks and chippers to maximize our performance and productivity in getting work orders completed earlier and looking to increase staff. The Bureau is looking for a new system utilizing an iPad. This new system would allow us to upload on site into a GPS system, to increase productivity, identify dead trees and classify work orders. We are looking to replace more trees going forward due to global warming, and increase education for the public.

The Bureau would like to change over from gas power to electric all saws, blowers and trucks. Employees of the Bureau will attend more safety classes which would include bucket safety, stump grinder, crane operations and chainsaw training.

Bureau of Mosquito Control: Mosquito control is an evolving science that requires this bureau to stay current with up to date science and technology, including qualified staff. Some vendors are changing their product line, so we will be seeking to keep an array of products that both continue effectiveness and avoid the possibility of resistance occurring in the insect population.

Bureau of Heavy Equipment and Truck Repair: The heavy equipment shop will continue to train and update our ability to quickly and safely diagnose our fleet of equipment in house. The shop is looking forward to purchasing more tools and equipment needed to keep pace with the ever-changing advancements in vehicle technology. The Heavy Equipment Shop looks forward to moving with any and all advancements in the arena of fleet maintenance and repair.

Bureau of Recycling and Planning: The Bureau has multiple projects that we are looking to either initiate or improve upon in 2025. The Bureau has accepted proposals regarding the Trailside Nature and Science Center Recycling and Litter Abatement Exhibit Design, Fabrication, and Installation. This contract will allow the Bureau to work with Parks staff and the chosen vendor to make the display at Trailside regarding litter abatement and recycling education come to fruition. The Bureau continues to investigating instituting the first “County-wide” food waste initiative in the state of New Jersey. We are presently researching different options and vendors that can help us in this endeavor. Before the end of 2024, the Bureau will have a county-wide program instituted to collect used clothing and accessories from residents. Through this program, Union County residents can take unwanted and donatable clothing, shoes, accessories, stuffed animals and children’s books to one of five locations (Hillside, Roselle, Plainfield, Scotch Plains, and Summit). The materials collected will then be picked up by Helpsy. The towns will receive \$0.10 per pound for all material collected at their municipal site. The Bureau continues to look to open more opportunities to senior residents. This may include more shredding events at eldercare facilities and similar institutions. Finally, the Bureau would like to work on Recycling in the Schools. From our work with the NexGen program, it was discovered that the recycling efforts in Union County schools is very poor. With that being said, it is felt that by not only instructing the students, but the staff as well, the recycling in the schools of Union County could only get better. There is a presentation that is set in the coming weeks to instruct the school districts on how to improve recycling in the schools. The Bureau looks to build on this and make a formidable program to instruct the staff of the schools (teachers, janitorial staff, other staff, and administration) on the proper techniques of recycling. This can be used in conjunction with our NexGen program to allow for the largest exposure of recycling education in Union County schools. Finally, in 2025, the Bureau is going to make a more formidable approach to help the municipalities in compliance assistance and enforcement. We are realizing, over time, that since the Bureau has no enforcement power, the best plan for us to gain compliance with recycling activities is to work with municipal staff, either on the enforcement side, or the compliance assistance side, to make things as good as they can be for recycling in Union County.

Division of Engineering

Bureau of Engineering: The Bureau anticipates the 2025 road resurfacing program to include 16 miles of roadway repaving in 9 Municipalities; Traffic Signal Projects at three intersections on W. Seventh Street in Plainfield; the start of the Irving Street Bridge Project in Rahway, Trenton Avenue Bridge in Elizabeth, Passaic Street Bridge in New Providence, Lower Road Minor Bridge in Linden, the start of the Guiderail Restoration project throughout Union County. Parks and Recreation and Facilities projects will also be executed.

The Bureau will also continue to improve the project specifications for the annual paving program to make the program more efficient and timely along with seeking potential traffic safety improvements within our 21 municipal partners.

Capital improvement Facility projects administered through Engineering will be:

Proposed award of construction project renovations to the New Annex Building Asbestos Abatement, Fire Suppression and Elevator Modernization as well as repairs from water damage, proposed award of construction project for interior renovations and repairs to 921 Elizabeth Ave, proposed award of construction project for the replacement of (3) Courthouse Boilers, proposed award of construction for the repair/replacement to the main Courthouse Tower Roof, repairs to the Ruotolo Justice Center from vehicle crash, design of Galloping Hill parking lot canopy photovoltaic roof panel system, proposed award of construction for various HVAC rooftop unit replacements, design of Old Annex elevator replacement and a DOE EECBG Program Grant Application for general energy efficient upgrades to various county facilities.

Bureau of Geographic Information Systems: The Bureau will continue to maintain, manage and support the county wide asset management system while adding additional vital assets and increasing its usage by promoting additional users to the system. The Bureau will continue to manage the School Crisis Mitigation system which include over 400 law enforcement users. The GIS public website will continue to house over 4000 certified tax maps, drug free zone maps and sex offender database information for the UC Prosecutors Office all of which need to be maintained constantly. We will continue to support several staff members of the Prosecutors office on using the system and data, to create GIS maps and support GIS operations. The Bureau will continue to assist our 21 municipal partners and keep the parcel layer which includes over 160,000 properties up to date. Support and

maintain Board of Election maps, road resurfacing maps, Road Sign database which includes over 20,000 signs, County roadway video logs and County park assets. Support and manage over 150 computers within the Engineering, Public Works & Facilities Management Department including upgrades and daily troubleshooting. We will actively capture more drone footage to help with various county projects. In addition, we will capture video footage of the county roads showing current conditions using the 'Go Pro' camera. Uploading pending drawings to the new Paper Vision system and train all employees in the system.

Bureau of Traffic Safety and Maintenance: The Bureau anticipates applying approximately 40 linear miles of needed roadway line striping and continually maintaining the line striping machines. We plan to continue upgrading the County route markers and pedestrian crosswalk signs to enhance public safety, as well as continuing to maintain, replace or upgrade County roadway signs; acquire yearly traffic data for County roadways; provide mutual aid to our municipal partners; and assist all County Departments on their sign and graphics needs. Additionally, the Bureau will be upgrading the County horizontal curve signs as required by MUTCD.

Division of Facilities Management

New Annex Courthouse: Replacement of the entire Roof; Asbestos Abatement and Installation of Fire Sprinkler System on the 2nd Floor; Modernization of the existing three (3) Elevators.

Administration Building: Replacement of the existing aging and outdated Main Entrance/Exit Doors will commence.

UC Courthouse: Continue painting & removal of old wall coverings at the Court house entrance as well as many other areas of all County properties.

UC Parking Garage: Existing Parking Garage will be demolished. Ongoing.

Parks Restrooms: Renovation of Public and Employee restrooms will continue.

County buildings & property's: Continue to maintain all Facilities & properties with a safe & clean environment for our employees & general public. Also continue to support other divisions in a timely & professional manner.

Old Annex: Replacement of non-working freight/prisoner elevator.

Bureau of Print Services: Continue searching for cost effective alternative printing/sign supplies. Evaluate the integration of sign shop work orders into ordering system and end user interface. Purchase spot color digital duplicator for color consistency. Evaluate new equipment options for Xerox contract renewal. Review hydraulic paper cutter options.

Various County Locations: Modernization of Fire Alarm Panels, Smoke Detection and Fire Sprinkler Systems will continue.

Department of Finance

Comptroller

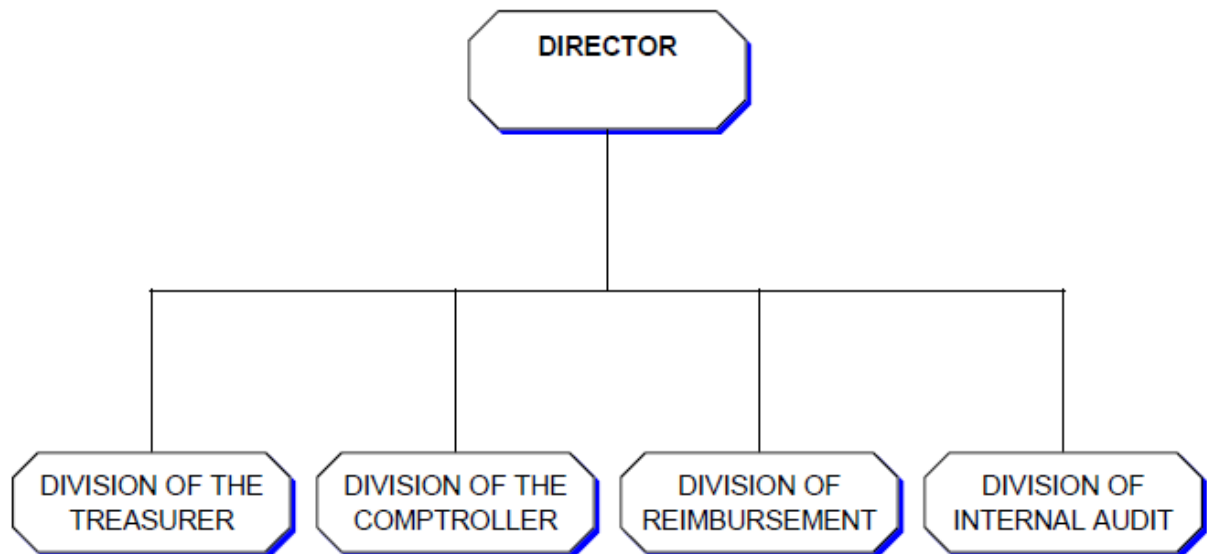
Internal Audit

Reimbursement

Treasurer

Organizational Chart

Department of Finance



DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE

Mission

The mission of the Department of Finance is to provide quality financial services to all Union County operations and provide decision-makers with sound and reliable information for managing resources. The services provided include planning, programming, budgeting, reporting, consulting, investing, and evaluation.

Programs & Services

The Division of the Treasurer

Serves as the custodian of all County funds and disbursing of said funds only on order of the County Manager. Collects and receives all moneys due the County and reports on same as directed. Whenever excess County funds are available for investing purposes, will invest at the best interest of the County government.

The Division of Comptroller

Keeps adequate records and reports on receipts and disbursements when necessary. Maintains general books of accounts in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Local Finance Board. Maintains a central payroll for the County. Assists in the preparation and review of departmental budgets. Reports to the Director of Finance any over-expenditures or budget variations of any departmental budget or any other matters of a financial nature which may come to the Division's attention.

The Division of Reimbursement

Establishes financial and administrative controls for all funding sources received by Union County other than by direct taxation, including all federal and state grants. Implements, manages and enforces of grant management procedures. Provides assistance in development of all grant applications regarding financial controls, contracts and reporting procedures. Responsible for updating and monitoring the Union County indirect cost allocation rate and development new applications of said rate.

The Division of Internal Audit

Performs the routine work involved in auditing and keeping extensive financial records and reports. Prepares reports, examinations and audits of books and financial records. Insures regulations and accounting procedures are properly observed and compiles financial and other statements and reports using data. Periodically reviews accounting and fiscal practices.

2024 Accomplishments

Comptroller's Division

Financial Controls and Audit Function Procedures:

Assist other departments with the implementation of the Financial Controls and Audit Function procedures that have been issued by the Department of Finance. These procedures include existing as well as new procedures that assist in improving the maintenance of the financial system, the accounts payable process and payroll process.

Treasurer's Division

Sale of Bonds:

Issued \$38,510,000 General Improvement Bonds, \$ 1,375,000 County Vocational-Technical Bonds, \$ 4,415,000 County College chapter 12 State Aid Bonds (Series A), \$ 2,535,000 County College Bonds (Series B) for a total issuance amount of \$46,835,000.

Sale of Bond Anticipation Notes:

Issued rollover bond anticipation notes of \$25,800,000 to fund capital projects such as road and bridge improvements, traffic signals and improvements to buildings and parks.

Revenue Enhancements:

Continued upgrades for various on line banking platforms.

Investments:

Utilized surplus funds (sale of assets) by investing in a CD and opening investment accounts with County depositories for excess funds.

Bond Arbitrage:

Completed bond arbitrage services to calculate the arbitrage rates for various bonds and notes issues and have the calculations completed and up to date through 2023 bond and note issues. Additionally, the five year calculation was completed for the Series 2019 bonds.

Bond Rating:

AAA rating by Moody's Investor Services for Bonds issued during 2024

Miscellaneous:

Worked regularly with the County's depositories to make sure interest rates were being increased to take advantage of the Federal Reserve's high interest rates before they began reductions in interest rates in the latter part of the year.

Reimbursement Division

The Division of Reimbursement was tasked to oversee the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds-American Rescue Plan Act awarded to the county. Some of the current projects the Division managed funded by this grant in the past year are:

1. To continue to provide COVID 19 vaccinations at county designated sites, mobile operations and homebound visits throughout the County.
2. To provide summer and fall swimming lessons to children and seniors to address the health needs of County residents which were negatively impacted by the pandemic and also address the mental health impacts caused by the economic impact of the pandemic which are exacerbated by social isolation and inability to engage in healthy exercise.
3. As a result of COVID-19, the county has seen an increase in violence.

Particularly, gun violence and criminal street gang activity remains pervasive through the County, homicides, shootings, stolen vehicles have increased, the Sheriff's Office will utilize the purchase of body worn cameras as an investment in technology and equipment to allow the County's law enforcement to respond to the increase in gun violence in the County's urban areas.

4. Funds have been used to purchase caravans to provide transportation to reach vaccination or testing sites, or other services for vulnerable populations. For improvement of in-person client experience and digital check-in/appointment scheduling in the waiting room at the Division in-person locations, a Qmatic queuing system was purchased.
5. A community outreach program was initiated to provide multilingual outreach services for vaccine outreach, food assistance and distribution, employment and training job fairs, child welfare, rental and utility assistance, homeless services and other similar multilingual outreach programs.
6. Continuation of the county's Fiber Ring Project to upgrade the County's fiber optic network to establish a secure-county-wide network that would enable reliable communication between the county and local government units.
7. Continuation on the county's investment in the upgrades and repairs to parks, public plazas and other public outdoor recreation spaces to promote healthier environments and outdoor recreation and socialization to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.
8. Funding has been used to maintain and/or rehabilitate the county's park system for the removal of dead trees and branches to improve the parks and make them safer for residents.
9. ARPA funds have been used for the replacement of the grass field at the Union County Vocational Technical Schools in Scotch Plains with an artificial soccer/baseball field.
10. Funds have been provided to the Union College of Union County, NJ for the college's Food Insecurity Program. This program provides grub passes for free lunch, a food pantry for nonperishable food stuffs and an occasional Farmer's Market with fresh fruits and vegetables to meet the nutritional needs of the college's most needy full-time students.
11. The county initiated a Tutoring-Peer-to-Peer Program. This program would increase tutoring engagement by leveraging a peer-to-peer tutoring platform that offers unlimited tutoring hours to county student in 5th-8th grades to mitigate learning loss associated with the COVID-19

pandemic and to improve retention and course completion; provide paid opportunities for work-based learning experiences to county high school and college aged students (ages 16-22) in the field of education to tutor their peers; increase interest and build the confidence of tutors in education and education-related careers via work-based experiential learning and via direct training and support.

Internal Audit Division

In 2024 the Division of Internal Audit ensured that proper accounting procedures and regulations were being followed where necessary.

Ensured all Retroactive Payments in regards to settled Labor Contracts were completed accurately and in a timely manner for those received in 2024.

Maintained appropriate requested position movements based on Internal Controls and Labor Contracts.

Completed all necessary reports for the State and Auditors in regards to the Financial Management of Cornerstone Behavioral Health Hospital of Union County.

2025 Initiatives

Comptroller's Division

Financial Controls and Audit Function Procedures:

Continue assisting other departments with the implementation of the Financial Controls and Audit Function procedures.

Deferred Compensation:

During 2025 the Department of Finance will provide services to employees in an effort to provide assistance with a deferred compensation program. Offer the service of onsite consulting services by a licensed investment advisor. The Department of Finance also assists employees with enrollments and changes requested through deductions.

Treasurer's Division

Banking:

Continue upgrades and training on electronic banking sites via the County's approved listing of GUDPA approved financial institutions.

Continue review of minimizing account fees and continue ongoing discussions with the County's approved depositories for opportunities to increase interest rates.

2025 Bond Anticipation Notes Sale:

Rollover outstanding notes of \$25,800,000 bond anticipation notes and potentially issue new bond anticipation notes for the funding of capital improvement projects.

2025 Bond Sale:

Will issue College Series A chapter 12 State Aid bonds in the amount of \$ 3,097,423 to take advantage of state funding for the Union College Cranford campus gym expansion project.

Bond Arbitrage:

Follow up with bond arbitrage service provider to stay current with new calculation dates for the more recent issues of bonds and notes.

Miscellaneous:

Will work with depositories on providing fraud training with Finance staff to remain vigilant on new fraud schemes.

Will work with depositories on providing financial literacy sessions for employees, youth and senior demographics throughout 2025.

Reimbursement Division

Will continue to develop an automated time keeping program utilizing the county's payroll provider for the tracking of employee's activity on federal, state and local grants.

Improvement with the preparation of the annual central services cost allocation plan to determine fringe and indirect cost rates utilized for various federal and state grants.

Streamline the use of the UC Grants Program as a centralized information system for all reports filed for grants awarded to the county.

Continued development of monitoring procedures for federal and state grants awarded to the county.

Internal Audit Division

The Division of Internal Audit will continue to verify and retain financial records, as well as ensure that proper accounting procedures and regulations are being followed.

Ensure all documentation required for upcoming audits will be provided in a timely manner.

Oversee the financials in regards to the Pediatric Behavioral Health Access Expansion program.

Will continue to complete all necessary reports for the State and Auditors in regards to the Financial Management of Cornerstone Behavioral Health Hospital of Union County.

Department of Human Services

Aging

American Jobs Center

Cornerstone Behavioral Health Hospital

Outreach and Advocacy

Paratransit

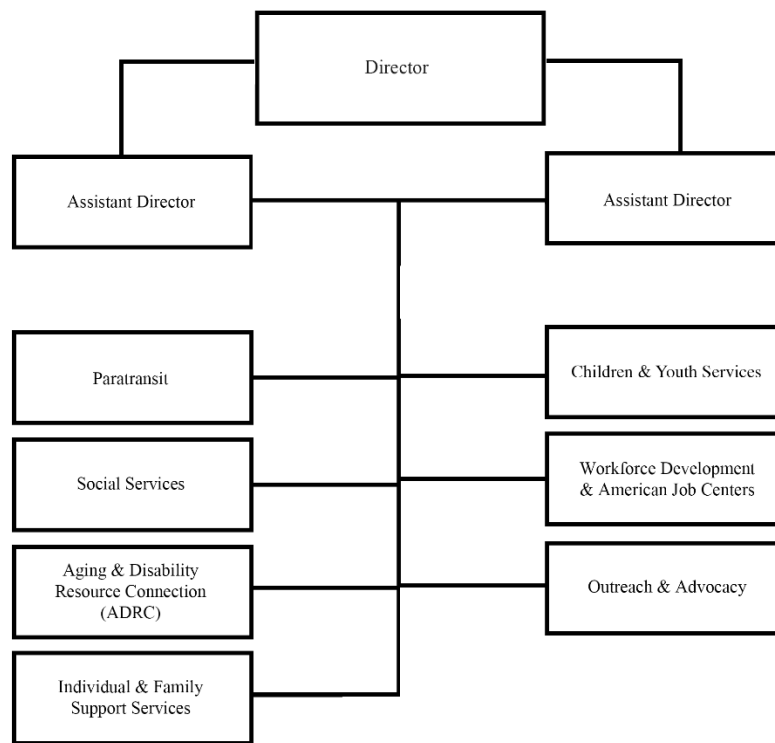
Planning

Social Services

Children and Youth Services

Organizational Chart

Department of Human Services



DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Mission

The mission of the Department of Human Services (DHS) is to empower Union County individuals, families, and communities to achieve their highest level of self-sufficiency and quality of life using an accessible, inclusive, and comprehensive approach to service delivery and care.

Programs & Services

DHS encompasses an array of programs and support services administered through its Office of the Director and other offices and divisions, which include: Division on Aging and Disability Resource Connection, American Job Center, Division of Outreach and Advocacy, Paratransit, Division of Individual and Family Support Services, Division of Social Services, and the Division of Children and Youth Services. Last year, the Department served more than 357,385 individuals more than half of our Union County population, through an array of direct services, contracted community-based provider agencies, and received funding to provide services through different state, federal, and private foundations.

2024 Accomplishments

Division of Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC)

Through its nationally recognized Social 60+ restaurant voucher program, the Division served vouchers to more than 800 eligible individuals to use at three (3) local participating restaurants. The Division on Aging also provided Farmer's Market e-benefits to more than 2,000 eligible seniors to access local and fresh produce valued at \$50 per person. The congregate meals program served more than 92,000 meals to more than 1,378 older adults. Through the partnership with the Community Food Bank of New Jersey, the Division continued to provide nutrition education to program participants and assisted with benefit acquisition. Through its bilingual team, the Division increased the number of locations where face-to-face service is provided, by hosting more than fifty (54) Aging Services Kiosk (ASK) events throughout the county. In addition, our MLTSS (Medicaid Waiver program) screeners conducted over 430 clinical screens for individuals in need of clinical care

in their homes.

American Job Center (AJC)

In 2024, the AJC delivered impactful services to both job seekers and employers. The AJC conducted 1,447 orientations and hosted 11 job fairs that attracted 1,888 attendees, securing employment for the unemployed, underemployed, re-entry, youth, older adults, and persons with disabilities and special needs. Training was provided to 75 individuals in high-demand fields and distributed weekly job postings through our Business Team to AJC customers. A total of 1,265 residents registered through the Virtual One Stop website and over 565 customers were assessed for Adult Basic Skills Education. Through our collaboration with the Workforce Development Board, three providers offered stackable credential certifications in Workplace Readiness and Digital Literacy, resulting in 134 certificates earned. Additionally, three On-the-Job Training (OJT) contracts are under development, further expanding employment opportunities and career advancement for job seekers.

Division of Outreach and Advocacy

In continuation, the Division managed the operations of the FRESH START program, providing Union County residents in need access to a mobile trailer with clean showers, laundry services, bathroom facilities, & necessary resources. Over the year, 333 individuals were provided showers and 192 were able to utilize laundry services at various locations in the County. In addition, 1,750 households were provided with hot meals through community outreach. Over the year, the Division responded to over 8,328 inquiries for assistance through its Action Line. The Action Line merged the Division of Social Services Call Center to assist with benefit inquiries and connect residents with essential resources.

Division of Individual and Family Support Services (DIFSS)

In 2024, DIFSS continued to provide essential and emergency support services for Union County residents; including but not limited to mental health and substance misuse resources; programming for persons with disabilities and special needs; services for victims of sexual assault and family members; homeless/supportive service for independency & sufficiency living.

Highlights of the year include: Received an additional \$15,000 in new grant funds to expand Disaster Response services to support the community during a difficult

time; partnered with the Union County Prosecutors Office to host a community roundtable titled *Growing Together in Union County: Alternative Responses for an Inclusive Community*; featured a variety of panels focused on highlighting alternative community responses that demonstrate collaborative partnerships between behavioral health and law enforcement; provided 33 Division of Social Services staff Mental Health First Aid training; completed outreach to over 30,000 Union County residents about DIFSS and community funded resources; provided 9 Art for ALL Abilities program sessions to over 60 persons with disabilities and special needs allowing them the opportunity to express themselves through art; provided over 1,000 crisis support calls to victims of sexual assault and family members; and additionally, the Union County Rape Crisis staff provided over 100 accompaniments to victims of sexual assault at medical screening and/or legal assistance.

Division of Children and Youth Services (DCYS)

In 2024, the Division achieved significant milestones, delivering impactful programs and services that supported youth and families across the community. Through its Youth Forward program, Family Crisis Intervention Unit (FCIU), and Youth Services Commission partnerships, the division provided critical resources to address community needs. The Electronic Monitoring Bracelet Program achieved a 91% success rate, with 32 of 35 youth completing the program, a success significantly influenced by the Mental Health Support Program, which addressed underlying challenges for families. Additionally, 97% of FCIU cases were diverted from entering family court, a 35% increase from the previous year, further highlighting the Division's growing impact. These accomplishments underscore DCYS's commitment to fostering stability and positive outcomes for youth and families.

Paratransit

In 2024, the Union County Paratransit System was able to provide over 76,000 rides to adults aged 60 and over, disabled residents, veterans, and those who are economically disadvantaged throughout Union County. The Paratransit Route 22 Safety Shuttle was able to provide over 62,000 rides for local and transit-dependent residents working or traveling along a stretch of Route 22 through Union, Kenilworth, and Springfield. To date, the Paratransit System has collected \$165,000 in fares.

2025 Initiatives

Division on Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC)

The Division will incorporate innovative changes to its overall operation to continue to serve the growing population of older adults in response to federal funding cuts. The Division will revamp its congregate meal program to improve service delivery and adapt to the changing needs of older adults. The Division will initiate a campaign to enroll older adults in SNAP, which will include community outreach, education, and 1:1 assistance with applications; relaunch the ADRC's newsletter; expand ASK locations to additional sites; expand Social 60+ restaurant participation by adding at least one new restaurant. The Division will also work towards improving service delivery for the Farmers Market program by expanding enrollment at community partner sites.

American Job Center (AJC)

The AJC's 2025 initiatives prioritize strengthening partnerships with employers to enhance workforce development and focus on career pathways to gainful employment. In response to increased requests from the business community, we will expand collaborations through the On-the-Job Training and Incumbent Worker programs. The AJC is committed to resuming essential services that support job seekers in the eastern part of the county. By fortifying our relationship with the Division of Social Services, the AJC aims to create a crucial pipeline to self-sufficiency for residents receiving public benefit assistance. Additionally, the AJC will utilize new state-directed notices to streamline customer processes and improve resource allocation.

Division of Outreach & Advocacy (DO&A)

In 2025, the Division of Outreach and Advocacy will implement and integrate advanced AI technology into the DHS Action Line to enhance the efficiency of call handling, reduce wait times, and provide real-time responses to frequently asked questions. The DO&A will build and launch a comprehensive data infrastructure that links all local nonprofit partners and service agencies into a single platform. This data integration system will facilitate seamless communication, resource-sharing, and coordinated service provision, ensuring holistic, wrap-around services for Union County residents. The system will utilize real-time DHS data from the new infrastructure and AI-powered tools to perform in-depth analyses of service trends,

client needs, and program effectiveness. These combined initiatives will support personalized service plans and ensure that clients have access to a full spectrum of support services, from emergency assistance to long-term stability programs.

Division of Individual and Family Support Services (DIFSS)

In 2025, DIFSS will work in collaboration with the Division of Outreach and Advocacy in building and launching a comprehensive infrastructure that links all local service agencies into a single platform. The platform would work in conjunction with the County's Coordinated Entry System. These systems together will provide seamless communication, resource-sharing, and coordinated service provision, ensuring holistic, wrap-around services for all Union County residents seeking services. This effort will ensure that residents have access to a full spectrum of support services, from emergency assistance to long-term stability programs. Additionally, monthly programming will be implemented to educate Union County residents on the impacts of opioid use, funded by Opioid Settlement funds.

Division of Social Services (DSS)

In 2025, the Union County Department of Human Services, Division of Social Services, will introduce the Union County Resource Hub, a transformative initiative designed to deliver holistic, wrap-around services for residents through strategic partnerships with leading community organizations. This centralized hub will streamline access to critical resources, eliminating barriers and providing comprehensive support to individuals and families under one roof.

Key partners include the Community Foodbank of NJ (SNAP navigation), United Way of Union County (financial assistance and resource connections), Proceed, Inc. (energy assistance and outreach), Jewish Family Services (Senior Meals Program), International Rescue Committee (immigrant and refugee services), Family Promise of Union County (housing stability and homelessness prevention), Elizabeth Coalition to House the Homeless (shelter and advocacy), Bridgeway Rehabilitation (mental health services), Make the Road NJ (immigration legal assistance and advocacy), and Community Child Care of Union County (childcare and family services). Services will be co-located at DSS offices and the Union County One Stop Center in Elizabeth and Plainfield on designated days, enabling residents to access tailored support directly.

The Resource Hub will also leverage data-driven tools to monitor service utilization, identify gaps, and improve outcomes continuously. This initiative marks a new era

of collaborative service delivery in Union County, ensuring all residents have access to the resources needed to achieve stability and thrive.

Division of Children and Youth Services (DCYS)

The Family Crisis Intervention and Electronic Monitoring Program will incorporate a specialized initiative aimed at supporting parents experiencing emotional burnout, ensuring they are equipped to assist their children effectively during crises. Recognizing that parental exhaustion can lead to communication breakdowns, hinder effective interventions, and destabilize family dynamics. This initiative will provide targeted support to address these challenges while emphasizing the importance of mental health. By offering active listening, coping strategies, and connections to mental health resources and community support, the program will foster a preventative approach that stabilizes families and enhances youth outcomes. This initiative will not only improve the effectiveness of the Youth Crisis Team's efforts but will also contribute to higher rates of court appearance compliance, as stabilized families with strengthened mental health are better positioned to navigate judicial processes and maintain accountability.

Department of Parks and Recreation

Recreational Facilities and Events

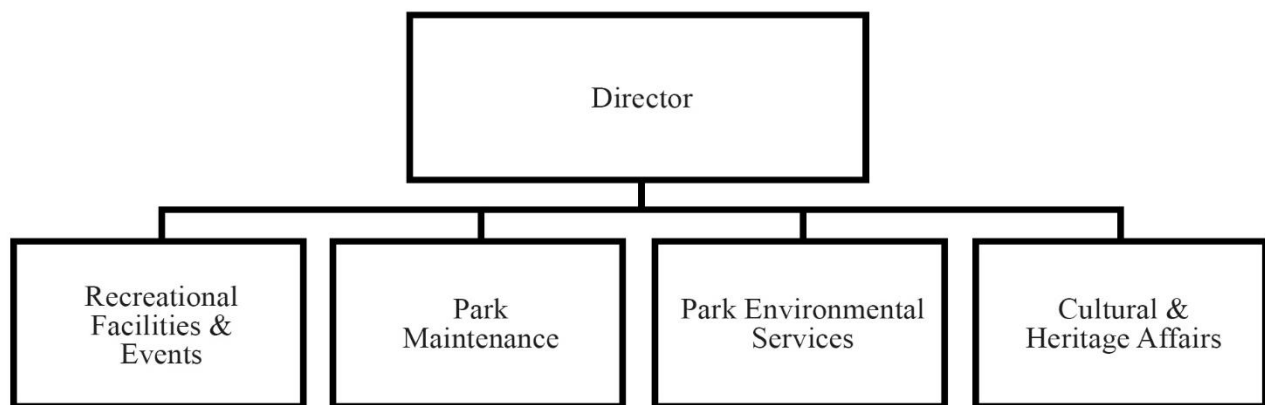
Park Maintenance-Park Grounds

Park Environmental Services

Cultural and Heritage Affairs

Organizational Chart

Department of Parks and Recreation



DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Mission

The Union County Department of Parks and Recreation's mission is to develop and maintain Union County parks, playgrounds, recreational facilities, and open space while providing recreational programming and entertainment for County residents.

Programs & Services

Division of Recreational Facilities and Events: Manages and operates Galloping Hill Golf Course, Ash Brook Golf Course, Warinanco Sports Center, Wheeler Spray Park, Walter E. Ulrich Pool, Watchung Stable, Trailside Nature, and Science Center.

Division of Park Maintenance/Bureau of Park Grounds: Preserves and improves County parks and recreational facilities, supports recreation initiatives and programs, facilitates public use and enjoyment of the parks and recreation resources, and assists with new and rebuilt projects. Tasks include grass cutting, athletic field maintenance, tree pruning/removal/planting, leaf pick-up, janitorial services, and more.

Division of Park Environmental Services: Plans and conducts programs that foster conservation and stewardship of the natural and historic resources of the Union County Park System, including wildlife management, habitat management, volunteer coordination, hiking and bridle trail maintenance, maintenance of horticultural features, and operation of the Deserted Village of Feltville.

Office of Cultural and Heritage Affairs: Designated as the County's official cultural agency with a focus on promoting public interest in arts, history & local heritage while ensuring all residents benefit from this rich multicultural environment we call home! The office provides programs and services that contribute to sustainable economic development, livable communities, civic engagement, and a vibrant quality of life for all residents. The office manages the Board of County Commissioners' HEART (History, Education, Arts Reaching Thousands) grant initiative, the Local Arts Program of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, and a re-grant program through the New Jersey Historical Commission.

2024 Accomplishments

Special Events: The Union County Department of Parks and Recreation is dedicated to developing and administering programs that facilitate the public use and enjoyment of County parks. Many of these programs are one-of-a-kind, or are offered on a larger scale than those offered at the municipal level, thereby drawing large crowds from all over the County. 2024 was a great weather year for programming with only two events impacted by rain. Every one of our programs are offered as low-cost or no-cost entertainment for all Union County residents.

The Union County Department of Parks and Recreation event team is committed to delivering quality programs to the public. In many instances, the team works hand-in-hand with communities and organizations to reach as many Union County residents as possible, bringing them recreational opportunities they would not have otherwise had the chance to enjoy.

Below please find a listing of events run by the events team in 2024:

- **Take Your Children to Work Day:** The Department of Parks and Recreation hosted a day in the Deserted Village of Feltville, located in the Watchung Reservation. Participants learned about the 300-year history of this unique site. The events of the day included a 1-mile long guided tour of the Village with a stop to play a game of Trundle the Hoop. Participants also took part in an archaeological investigation in a Revolutionary War-period cemetery, toured the Village's Visitor Center and had the opportunity to write with quill pens. They were also able to view murals painted in 1927 that are not normally accessible to the general public.
- **Touch-A-Truck:** On a beautiful Sunday in May, hundreds of young families flocked to Oak Ridge Park in Clark to explore, climb on and touch vehicles of all shapes and sizes. Vehicles from Union County's Public Safety, Public Works and Parks & Recreation Departments along with fire trucks from the Township of Clark rounded out this free event. Additionally, advocacy tables, arts and crafts for the kids, a disc-golf demonstration, food trucks, hayrides, music by DJ Nick and inflatable attractions rounded out the day's festivities.
- **Rhythm and Blues by the Brook:** This popular one-day music festival celebrating rhythm and blues was held at Cedar Brook Park in Plainfield. The 5th Dimension entertained over 3,000 people who headlined this free event. Supporting acts included The Company Men, Trusol, Freakwincey and DJ Bookeem. A classic car show, a health and wellness fair sponsored by Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, food trucks, activities for kids including inflatables and the Child's Play Challenge Course designed especially for them rounded out the event.

- **Summer Arts Festival:** Union County held four free concerts for its Summer Arts Festival in 2024. Two concerts, The Pink Floyd Project and 5 Against 1 (a Pearl Jam tribute band) were scheduled for Echo Lake Park in Mountainside. All were invited to participate in an hour-long yoga class for both of the Echo Lake concerts. Unfortunately, the 5 Against 1 concert was moved to Crossroads in Garwood due to inclement weather and the yoga class was cancelled. Two family concerts were held at Oak Ridge Park: The Little Mermen, a Disney themed concert, in July and Taylor Nation, a Taylor Swift tribute, in August. These free concerts were designed for families with young children featuring musical acts that appealed to a younger audience. Each concert had a larger scale than most Summer Arts Festival concerts as they featured advocacy tables, arts and crafts, face-painting, food trucks and inflatable attractions at each of these two events.
- **Family Fun and Flix:** Our popular free family movie series, Family Fun and Flix, continued this year in Warinanco Park on Tuesday evenings in July and August. Each week before sunset there was a dance party for the kids with singing, dancing and games. There were five scheduled Family Fun and Flix nights with one movie cancelled due to inclement weather. The four remaining movies drew an audience of over 1400 people.
- **Fall Festival:** The annual Fall Festival concert was held at Oak Ridge Park on Saturday, September 14th. The festival featured The Fabulous Thunderbirds as the headlining musical act with The Weight Band and Dead on Live supporting. The inaugural Union County Micro Beer Garden organized by the Department of Economic Development also took place at this event. The participating breweries were Climax Brewing Company, Lions Roar Brewing Company, Wet Ticket Brewing Company and Yale Brewery. Food trucks were also present.
- **Rolling Thunder:** Union County supports the Veterans non-profit group, Rolling Thunder, an organization dedicated to educating the public regarding veterans' issues. Warinanco Park serves as the staging area for this event as 750 motorcycles caravan from Warinanco Park to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Holmdel. This ride serves to remember the thousands of POW's and MIA's still unaccounted for.
- **Hispanic Heritage Month:** From September 15th to October 15th Union County ran a series of seven Hispanic Heritage Month events. In conjunction with the Commissioner's Office and the Department of Economic Development, the Parks and Recreation Department's event staff hosted three events: a movie night at Kawameeh Park in Union, a movie night at Washington Elementary School in Plainfield and Family Fun Day at Warinanco Park. Hundreds of people enjoyed these multicultural events.

- **Hayrides and Campfires:** Five hayrides and campfires took place in October. Four of them took place at Trailside Nature and Science Center in Mountainside and one was in Warinanco Park. Marshmallows and hot chocolate were served for all to enjoy as a musician performed songs and played games with the children. Over 1400 tickets were sold for this year's slate of hayrides and campfires.
- **The Great Pumpkin Sail:** On the day after Halloween, hundreds of families came to Echo Lake Park with their carved-out jack-o-lanterns to watch them float on the lake. A favorite of many, this sold-out event allows participants to watch their pumpkin set sail as they enjoy singing and dancing along with our entertainer, photo opportunities, hot chocolate and a cookie. Up to 2400 people can participate in this program.
- **Celebrate the Season:** The very popular Celebrate the Season event, which takes place at Warinanco Sports Center, sold out of 825 tickets. Participants have the opportunity to skate with Santa and then visit with his elves and Mrs. Claus. The \$8.00 admission fee entitles participants to skate rental, a two-hour skate session, hot chocolate, cookies, and a chance to meet Santa, Mrs. Claus, and the elves while listening to the sounds of The Celebration Singers.

2024 Programs	Attendance Totals
Bring Your Child to Work	60 People
Touch-a-Truck	2000 People
Rhythm and Blues by the Brook	3000 People
Family Fun & Flix:	
FF&F – “Wish”	Rained Out
FF&F – “Migration”	350 People
FF&F – “Elemental”	375 People
FF&F – “Trolls Band Together”	350 People
FF&F – “The Little Mermaid (2023)”	350 People
Summer Arts Festival:	
SAF Concert – The Little Mermen	1500 People
SAF Concert – The Pink Floyd Project	700 People
SAF Concert – 5 Against 1	100 People (Moved to Crossroads due to rain)
SAF Concert – Taylor Nation	2000 People
Fall Festival:	
The Fabulous Thunderbirds, The Weight Band, Dead On Live	2200 People
Rolling Thunder	750 Bikes
Hispanic Heritage:	
Family Fun Day	750 People
Movie in Kawameeh Park	65 People
Hayride and Campfires:	
H&C – October 4 th	178 Tickets Sold
H&C – October 6 th	300 Tickets Sold
H&C – October 11 th	300 Tickets Sold
H&C – October 13 th	300 Tickets Sold
H&C – October 18 th	300 Tickets Sold
The Great Pumpkin Sail	375 Tickets Sold
Celebrate the Season	825 Tickets Sold

Special Projects:

- **Major Park Development Projects**
 - Mattano Park, Elizabeth

- Vo Tech, Scotch Plains
- Homestead Farm, Oak Ridge Park, Clark
- Clark Reservoir, Clark
- Indoor Skating Center, Warinanco Park, Roselle
- **Fairy House Art Project:** In Conjunction with the 2024 Chairwoman's initiatives "Growing Together in Union County," the Parks Department held a Fairy House Art Project for students in grades 6th- 12th. We asked that applicants submit one 100% sustainable magical fairy house to be judged by a panel of professionals. The participating schools were honored at a reception at the Trailside Nature & Science Center, where our Chairwoman awarded a \$1,000.00 check award to the winner's art program. The houses are currently on display for all residents to visit at our Trailside Nature & Science Center.
- **Senior and Youth Swim:** The Union County Board of County Commissioners, in partnership with the YMCA, announced the return of free-swimming lessons for county youth and new sessions for seniors learning how to swim and interested in water exercise classes. The County of Union provided 40 youth and 13 adults with essential life-saving water safety skills this past summer. All swimming classes took place at the Walter E. Ulrich Memorial Pool. Classes met once a week for 8 weeks with a ratio of 1 instructor per six students.
- **Wheelchairs Initiative:** In honor of Disability Pride Month, the county announced new aquatic wheelchairs at our Wheeler Spray Park and Walter E. Ulrich Memorial Pool facilities. These allow residents to enter the water without damaging their own personal chairs and enjoy our park amenities.
- **Social Media:** This year the Parks Team worked on ways to drive residents to our events and facilities, from participating in viral trends to keeping residents current on what's happening in our parks. As a result, our Online Pool and Spray Park registrations skyrocketed.

Reservations: Thousands of individuals and groups use our parks throughout the year. Families, church groups, schools, corporations, and athletic teams are examples of those who utilize our park system. Reservable picnic areas had increased to accommodate the increasing demand for permits. Residents from all 21 municipalities also can participate in small or large private events of their choice, at a low cost, close to home. With artificial turf now installed on 16 fields, those fields have become more sustainable and usable year-round.

- **Maskers Barn (Deserted Village of Feltville, Berkeley Heights):** This venue is a popular choice for weddings, bridal/baby showers, fundraisers, art shows, bar/bat mitzvahs, and more. The rustic venue also hosts an Adopt-a-Park

Volunteer dinner, nature programming, staff meetings, yoga, Haunted Hayride, the annual Barn Dance for People with Disabilities, and other County events.

- **Reservation permits for picnics:** Due to the increasing number of picnic users and the convenient online reservation system; the picnic permits have increased. Also popular were the covered pavilions that could also be reserved.
- **Archery Range (Oak Ridge Park, Clark):** This facility opened in 2009 and continues in popularity. From April to October, 247 people ages nine and up participated in Group Safety Lessons. The range is open year-round, from dawn to dusk (users must pass a safety course or have proof of experience). The Archery Range utilizes general group lessons, private lessons, and practice shooting with bows, arrows, and targets for all archery range photo ID holders. Additionally, the range and crossbow certification courses are used for the deer management program.
- **Athletic Fields, Picnic Areas, and Public Special Events:** With 36 parks, plenty of space and amenities are available close by - whether you want lakeside relaxation or active adventure! When combined with playgrounds, walking, running/biking paths, lakes, fishing, boating, basketball, pickleball, volleyball, ultimate frisbee, disc golf, rugby, model airplane flying, and any number of other passive and active recreational activities, the Union County Park System allows County residents from all twenty-one municipalities to participate in the recreational pursuit of their choice, at a low cost, close to home.

2024 Permitted Event Totals	Number of Permits Issued
Walk-a-thons/Runs	51
Boy Scout Bookings	447
School Trips	49
Photo Shoots-Video	9
Fishing Derbies	9
Day Camps	3
Picnics	2,252
Athletic Fields	16,808
Other Events including weddings, exercise classes, church, rallies, reunions, festivals	38
Fireworks	5
Sport Tournaments	6
Archery Group Lessons	30
Archery Small Group Lessons	11
Archery New/Renewed ID's	343
General Fitness Class	1

- **Trailside Nature and Science Center (Mountainside):** Trailside had a productive year in 2024 both in attendance and new accomplishments. The facility welcomed approximately 67,252 visitors. The casual visitor number increased on the weekends by more than 7,000 since 2023. New programming, publicity and social media contributed to this increase. Trailside offered a diverse menu of educational programs throughout the year with over 11,000 participants of all ages and abilities.

Trailside Programs	# of Programs	# of Participants
Schools	85	4,998
Group Programs	73	1,988
Outreach	19	563
Children Workshops	34	599
Family Workshops.	17	312
Adults/Seniors	29	287
Summer Camps	38	526
Special Needs	20	388
Events	9	793
Room Rentals	13	735
Totals:	337	11,189

New Programming for Adults & Families: Art Workshops for adults included six instructional programs using acrylic paints. Adult Wellness Series included Forest Bathing, Meditation & Sound Bowl workshops. Dinosaur Workshops offered to families by *Dinosaurs Arise* in the fall.

Special programs for the Great North American Solar Eclipse – April 8, 2024: Offered a family presentation on the solar eclipse with presenter Paul Cirilo, a member of the NJ Astronomical Association, operating the largest public observatory in NJ. Offered children, seniors and families themed workshops the week before the eclipse and gave out free protective solar-viewing glasses to the public.

New Professional Art Show: Trailside hosted a 2 ½ month long professional Art Exhibition with famous watercolor artist James Fiorentino entitled, “A Glimpse into the World of Wildlife in Watercolors.” James is nationally known as a wildlife & portrait artist. His work has won numerous awards and can be seen in books & magazines.

Popular Summer Camp: Thirty-eight camps offered for ages 6-12 for seven weeks - 532 spots. On the first day of registration in March, 89% of the spots filled. New camp offered this year based on citizen science projects.

New Recycling Exhibit Room Remodel: In a partnership with the Bureau of Recycling & Planning and Parks, an upgraded 640 square foot exhibit space is being planned based on litter abatement, recycling and waste reduction. Funded by Clean Communities Grants, the educational exhibit will offer engaging, interactive elements that cater to different learning styles and people of all ages and abilities. Visitors will learn how to make a positive impact in their communities. Concepts in new exhibit to include; reducing negative environmental impacts, contributing to a “greener” sustainable lifestyle and raising awareness to help protect wildlife and natural habitats from pollution.

New Planetarium Project: Working with Colliers Engineering & Design Firm and the Union County Team on the design phase of Trailside’s Planetarium Project. New resource for residents will increase revenue and park use year-round. Each planetarium program, sponsored by the Union County Board of County Commissioners, will provide an exhilarating & inspiring experience using the latest projection technology. Design includes a large multi-purpose room and new lobby/front door next to parking lot.

Linden Public Schools: This fall, 487 fifth graders from seven different schools participated in a 2 hour-long “Living Systems” program. A total of seven visits to Trailside. The students began with a brief PowerPoint about ecosystems, then divide into smaller groups that rotate through four outdoor stations: food webs, plant producers, animal adaptations and habitats/wildlife populations.

Falcon Cam and Banding: Assisted State Biologist & Conserve Wildlife Biologist with a successful banding of four male peregrine falcons hatched on the Union County Courthouse roof top. Assisted with orphaned female peregrine falcon relocation to the courthouse roof.

12th Annual Wild Earth Fest Event – Largest crowd to date - 4,000 in attendance: Educational family event with live animals, demonstrators, table displays, children’s activities, food and music to promote conservation and ways to help the environment. New attractions included the NJ Fish & Wildlife Travelling Exhibit Van & the Bash the Trash Parade with families and children playing handmade recycled instruments.

Improvements to Exhibits and Facility Grounds:

- Created educational photo exhibit entitled, “Colors of Fall in the Watchung Reservation.”
- Upgraded 18-year-old wetland tank filtration system & added new species of live fish.
- New museum quality fluorescent mineral lighting installed in Discovery Room.
- New nature-themed benches, chairs and light table added to Discovery Room.
- Driveway/Circle in front of facility repaved.
- Staff replaced playground mulch, stone and plants in raised beds on Sensory Trail.

2024 List of Events Hosted at Trailside Nature & Science Center

Union County Departments and local organizations utilize the Trailside facility throughout the year requiring staff to schedule, coordinate and maintain the facility for each event.

Date	Program / Event	Department / Organization
Feb. - May	12 Yoga programs	Office of Persons with Disabilities
January 27	Trail Steward Meeting	Division of Park Planning
Feb. 15	Training	NJ Watershed Ambassadors
Feb. 17	February Festivities	Trailside / Parks & Recreation
March 3-9	Wilderness Disaster Training	University of Pennsylvania
April 16-June 23	Professional Art Exhibition	Visionary Art Incorporated
April 28	Wild Earth Fest	Trailside / Parks & Recreation
May 4	Astronomy Day	Amateur Astronomers Inc.
May 16 & 17	Teen Arts	Office of Cultural & Heritage Affairs
May 31	Awards Night & Projects	Union County 4H Club
August 13	Promotion Ceremony	Union County Police Department
August 19-23	Special Needs Camps	Office of Persons with Disabilities
September	Species on the Edge Exhibit	Conserve Wildlife Foundation of NJ
Sept. - Oct.	5 Yoga programs	Office of Persons with Disabilities
October 5 & 15	Invasive Plant Training	Rutgers Co-Op Extension
October 29	Fairy House Trail Initiative	Commissioner Chair Office
November 2 & 3	Mineral, Gem, Jewelry Show	NJ Mineralogical Society

Watchung Stable (Mountainside): Watchung Stable (Mountainside) affords hundreds of residents, ages 9 through adulthood, the opportunity to learn and

actively participate in lifetime equestrian sports and horse related activities. Additionally, it affords local residents who own their own horses the opportunity to house them close to home, and take advantage of the miles of bridle trails through the Watchung Reservation. Residents who simply want to experience riding a horse are welcome to do so through public and private trail rides, and of course, the barn is open to the public on a regular schedule to simply walk through.

- **Equines**

- Regular equine health and care included monthly assessment of horses and their capability of working in the program including their nutritional, exercise and veterinary needs. Vaccination, dental and de-worming program continues with high success rate with boarder and school horses together making a safer and healthier environment for horses. The necessity for the horses to receive EEE Vaccine in the fall was necessary due to the rise in mosquito borne illness in the area.
- We added six new school horses to the program, to replace horses in our program that are aging out or needing to be retired.
- All horses received new saddle pads.
- Boarder end is now full (fall 2024). There continues to be a long waitlist to board here.

- **Facility**

- In-house upgrades to the facility this year:
- Removed the underground storage tank and replaced with an above ground tank and a diesel pump.
- Fixed all the fencing in the paddocks.
- Removed all rotted wood boards and posts around the main ring area.
- Made a new “box” stall for an anxious horse so he could see out of his stall.
- Painted and refurbished 20 old horse jump rails to reuse in main ring.

- **Staff**

- With a lot of turnover to full and part time staff this year, we are again at a point where only one part time position is left open.
- We were able to hire four new instructors this year replacing some that were lost last year.

- **Programming**

- We continue to have to modify classes the entire year due to a ring closure. We had a very wet spring on the weekends causing many trail rides to be cancelled.
- Regular equine health and care included monthly assessment of horses and their capability of working in the program including their nutritional, exercise and veterinary needs. Vaccination, dental, and de-worming

- program continues with high success rate with boarder and school horses together making a safer and healthier environment for horses.
- Three horses were able to receive necessary dental work making them happier and healthier to work in the program.
- “Autumn” was retired this year after 10 years of service to our program.
- All horses received new feed buckets and new blankets.
- Boarder end was full by summer 2024 with a current waitlist.

Park Safety: Groomed all our artificial turf fields every quarter as needed

Two professional tree companies were contracted in 2024 to continue the removal and pruning of hazardous trees across various parks. By the end of November, approximately 850 trees were addressed, significantly improving public safety and the parks’ overall appearance.

Division of Park Maintenance/Bureau of Park Grounds:

Preserves, maintains, and improves County parks and facilities. Staff provides operational support to all recreational programs and events. Day-to-day tasks include grass cutting, athletic field maintenance, tree pruning/removal/planting, leaf pick-up, plowing, janitorial services, event set-up/break-down, and more.

- **Routine Maintenance:** All athletic ballfields were cut, lined, and dragged regularly. All bathroom facilities were serviced daily, including on weekends. All special events were set up and broken down by Park Maintenance staff. Fencing replacements and repairs were made on an ongoing basis.
- **Ulrich Pool (Rahway):** Completed in May 2024, a \$1.1 million Gutter replacement project involved the installation of a stainless-steel gutter system, replacing the original system from 1982. This upgrade significantly enhances the pool’s structural integrity and usability.
- **Pathway Maintenance and Repairs:** Ongoing pathway repairs were prioritized to address safety hazards and improve accessibility. In 2024, we repaved approximately 34,000 sq ft of damaged pathways in our County Parks, including Meisel, Echo Lake, Oak Ridge and Cedar Brook Parks.
- **Parking Lot Repaving:** Major resurfacing projects were completed at Galloping Hill service yard, Trailside Nature & Science Center, Warinanco flagpole parking lot and the Cultural and Heritage parking lot. Overall, approximately 7,500 sqft of parking lot surfaces were repaved, improving accessibility and usability.
- **AED Safety Project:** This project will install 50 defibrillation units across parks and service yards, underscoring our commitment to public safety.

- **Public Bathroom Renovations:** Renovations began in late Spring for bathrooms in Mattano, Rizzuto, and Madison Avenue Parks, providing much-needed upgrades to improve functionality and aesthetics.
- **Cedar Brook Park:** The basketball court was upgraded with a new court surface and improved modern equipment, offering a safer and more enjoyable recreational space for the community. The tennis court was upgraded and completed with new court surfacing.
- **Rutgers Avenue Park:** A new playground was installed at Rutgers Avenue Park in Hillside, replacing outdated equipment. A new safety fence was installed along the embankment to protect visitors from potential hazards while walking the nearby trail.
- **Warinanco Park:** Continuing the efforts from 2023, the Azalea Garden received significant maintenance, including the addition of 1,000 yards of mulch and ongoing plant treatments, enhancing its beauty and sustainability. A tennis court project was started with a projected completion date in 2025.

Division of Park Environmental Services:

- **Wildlife Management:** USDA Wildlife Services continued to provide services to manage Canada goose populations in Union County parks.
 - Harassment methods were used on 1,172 occasions to disperse 67,982 Canada geese from park property and avert the dropping of 34 tons of feces on County property.
 - An additional 2,589 geese were sighted but not harassed from parks.
 - USDA-WS staff searched 34 sites for goose nests and eggs, located 22 nests and treated 109 eggs to inhibit reproduction in 10 Union County parks.
 - Because of the success of combined efforts from harassment and nest and egg treatments, only 40 geese were found that could be removed during the annual summer molt-period roundup.
 - Through a shared services program, USDA-WS staff continued to assist the Township of Westfield, Linden Municipal Airport, Conoco Phillips 66 Bayway Refinery, City of Linden, and Suburban Golf Course with goose management activities on their properties.
 - USDA Wildlife Services staff also aided in dealing with woodchucks that were impacting the Henry S. Chatfield Memorial Garden in Warinanco Park, as well as pigeons that were causing damage at the Watchung Stable.
 - Raritan Valley Community College again conducted an aerial survey of deer in the Watchung Reservation from an infrared camera-equipped

drone. However, due to calendar and weather conflicts, only 65% of the park was surveyed.

- **Habitat Management:** The Watchung Reservation Invasive Plant (WRIP) Strike Team volunteers continued to work bi-monthly, identifying, reporting and eradicating thousands of invasive plants in several areas of the park.
 - Over the course of 11 work sessions, volunteers showed up 60 times and worked at least 150 man-hours.
 - Eradication efforts at the Watchung Reservation Butterfly Meadow continued into 2024, with special focus on removal or treatment of invasive wisteria, aralia, mile-a-minute and mugwort.
 - Division staff and an Adopt-A-Park group cleared a barren area of the Watchung Reservation where the Berkeley Heights Environmental Commission will utilize a Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative grant to plant almost 100 trees, with provisions for watering and protection from deer browsing.
- **Aquatic Management:** This program strives to maintain control of nuisance macrophytes and algae within the 29 lakes, ponds and lagoons in the 34 parks and two golf courses of the Union County Park System.
 - The program focuses on managing submergent, emergent, and floating vegetation, as well as algae (both filamentous and unicellular). Treatments are tailored to the specific conditions of each waterbody, as the density, distribution, and persistence of these plants can fluctuate annually based on factors like water chemistry, weather conditions, and the composition of the aquatic plant community. In 2024, a total of 104 treatments were conducted across Union County waterbodies by a contracted vendor.
 - A contractor used a floating excavator to hydro-rake 2,190 cubic yards of vegetative waste from Briant Park Pond. After being allowed to dry in a holding basin on site, the waste was transported elsewhere for disposal.
 - The Clean-Flo inversion oxygenation and biological augmentation systems, previously installed at Briant Pond and Rahway River Park Lake, were activated in April, 2023. The system at Briant Pond was removed in March, 2024 to enable the hydrotaking project, while the system at Rahway River Park Lake remains operational but requires maintenance. Division staff assisted Clean-Flo representatives with routine system checks, including strainer and filter cleaning for both systems.
 - In 2024, a contracted vendor installed, maintained, repaired, and removed six aeration fountains across five lakes. These high-performance fountains are designed to provide aeration, circulation, and destratification, improving both water quality and the overall aesthetic of the lakes while

- enhancing the public park experience. Division staff also experimented with various filters and screens to prevent clogging of one aerator pump due to *Pithophora* (horsehair algae) and performed routine maintenance to clear any blockages.
- Division staff regularly cleared dams and culverts of obstructions and debris to ensure proper water flow and maintain public enjoyment of the waterbodies. Shorelines and waterways were also cleaned in preparation for County-hosted events.
 - As part of ongoing conservation efforts, staff initiated the routine removal of monofilament fishing line castoffs from Reel In and Recycle bins, which were installed at various lakes to encourage responsible fishing practices.
- **Volunteer Programs:**
 - The Adopt-A-Park Program was active again in 2024, with projects taking place in 20 of the County's parks, as well as in 9 different sections of the Watchung Reservation. At least 731 volunteers spent 1,693 hours on 78 Adopt-A-Park projects (43 groups and 35 individuals) throughout the Union County Park System. Volunteers collected 240 bags of litter and 67 bags of recyclables, as well as other trash and debris. They also weeded and mulched gardens, pruned and planted bushes, removed invasive plants, and cleared fire access points in the Watchung Reservation. There was great collaboration with staff of the Bureau of Recycling, who coordinate litter cleanups in our parks under the aegis of the New Jersey Clean Communities Program.
 - An Adopt-A-Trail Program annual meeting and orientation was held in January, and a second meeting was held in September. Fifty of the people who attended adopted segments of trail to care for. Trail Stewards work individually or in pairs, maintaining trail beds, controlling erosion, picking up litter and branches, and clearing drainage structures in the Watchung Reservation and other parks.
 - Meeting on the first Saturday of each month, at least 96 volunteers contributed 288 hours of service in the Watchung Reservation through the Saturday Trail Work program. They cleaned drainage ditches, built rolling grade dips, removed invasive plants from trail edges, repaired challenging sections of trail damaged by storms, and rerouted the Sierra Trail around the Deserted Village cemetery.
 - On April 6, the County co-sponsored the Operation WRIP event with the Patriots' Path Council, Boy Scouts of America. In three hours on a Saturday morning, 158 Scouts, leaders, Trail Stewards, Saturday Trail

Work participants and WRIP Team members contributed 474 volunteer hours to assist in the removal of thousands of invasive barberry and multiflora rosa shrubs in areas throughout the Watchung Reservation.

- The Adopt-A-Trail Chainsaw Crew removed 85 trees that fell across trails in the Watchung Reservation.
- A large number of Eagle Scout and Gold Award service projects were underway in 2024. Eight projects were completed, including:
 - Research, clearing, surveying, archaeological probing and marking of the original Colonial-era cemetery in the Deserted Village of Feltville, solving a decades-long mystery as to its actual location.
 - Construction of permanent benches at the pergola area at Masker's Barn in the Deserted Village, thereby improving the aesthetics, functionality and safety of the site.
 - Reconstruction of fencing, removal of invasive plants and installation of native plants in a deer enclosure along New Providence Road, Mountainside, in the Watchung Reservation. This enclosure helps illustrate the impact of a high deer population on a forest ecosystem, and will hasten regeneration of the forest as the deer density is reduced.
 - Creation of 20 map stations at key trail intersections throughout the Watchung Reservation. These map stations will guide hikers and assist in finding lost hikers.
 - Creation of plywood and plastic coverings on all of the windows of three houses in the Deserted Village of Feltville. These covers improve the aesthetics of the historic houses, while preventing vandalism and break-ins.
 - Creation and posting of geocaches at 14 historic sites throughout Union County, as a means of attracting new visitors to those sites.
 - Restoration and mounting of two dozen historic farm implements and antique tools in and around Masker's Barn in the Watchung Reservation, adding additional aesthetic charm for the 100+ events held there each year.
 - Landscaping improvements along the front of the Model Railroad Club building in Lenape Park, improving the visitor experience.
 - Eight additional Eagle Scout service projects are currently in the proposal and planning stage, with completion of most of them expected in 2025.
- **Trail Maintenance:** The 2-man Trails Crew continued work throughout 2024 to rebuild bridle trails, hiking trails and stream crossings in the 100-mile trail network of the Watchung Reservation.

- The Trails Crew completed reconstruction of the heavily-utilized Orange Trail in the Watchung Reservation, which once was a Colonial-period road but had been badly damaged by erosion. This trail is an important access to the center of the Reservation for maintenance and emergency response.
- The Trails Crew removed 77 trees that fell across trails in the Watchung Reservation.
- The 2-man Trails Crew placed 360 tons of crushed stone on trails to control erosion and improve the walking or driving surface.
- A new Ventrac 4250 tractor obtained late in 2023 was heavily utilized in 2024 by the Trails Crew, greatly expanding their abilities and effectiveness. The tractor includes attachments for loading and moving bulk materials like crushed stone and topsoil, trimming vegetative growth along trail edges and mowing down thick brambles of invasive plants.
- **Environmental Programming:** The Division of Environmental Services again conducted a drive-through Plant Swap & Shop, where residents could drop off invasive plants pulled from their yards and receive native plants to use instead. Sixty-eight people registered for the Plant Swap and several others came just to shop for native plants from a vendor. The event was staffed by County Parks staff. Members of the Master Gardeners of Union County opened their demonstration garden for the evening and conducted tours. The annual Woodcock Talk & Walk, led by expert birder Pete Axelrod, drew 11 attendees at a session in the Deserted Village of Feltville and 12 attendees at a session held at Lenape Park.
- **Deserted Village of Feltville:**
 - Maskers Barn in the Deserted Village of Feltville continues to be a popular choice for weddings, birthday parties, bridal and baby showers, fundraisers, art shows, high school graduations and proms, bar and bat mitzvahs and more. The rustic venue also hosts nature programs, County staff meetings, Four Centuries in a Weekend presentations, and the annual Adopt-A-Park Volunteers Recognition Dinner, and is the base of operations for the Haunted Hayrides. In 2024, Maskers Barn was in use for 118 days, hosting 88 events attended by nearly 10,000 people. The facility collected over \$33,000 in revenue.
 - About 2,000 visitors participated in the Four Centuries in a Weekend event at the Deserted Village in October, coming from as far away as London, England. The event included hayrides, apple cider pressing, quill pen writing, a staff-assisted photo spot, an archaeological box dig, old-fashioned children's games, and a campfire. Visitors also watched a woman in period costume carding and spinning wool, and met six costumed characters from the Feltville and Glenside Park eras of Deserted

Village history. The general store was open for visitors to buy cider, cookies, gourds and pumpkins, and nostalgic children's games and toys, and to view photos and artifacts that explain the Deserted Village's significance as an agricultural community, a mill town, a summer resort, and a county park.

- During the Four Centuries weekend, historian Priscilla Hayes gave a presentation in Masker's Barn about the land grants that enabled early settlers to occupy the area in the 1700's. In collaboration with Parks Department staff, Hayes posts stories monthly at www.FeltvilleFeatures.com that relate segments of the multi-faceted history of the Deserted Village.
- Haunted Hayrides were offered again over the course of three nights in early November at the Deserted Village of Feltville. This incredibly popular program provides historic interpretation of the site in a fun and memorable way. The 900 available tickets were again sold out. About half of the 90-member cast and crew are volunteers.
- Plans were drawn, per recommendations from the Strategic Plan for the Deserted Village, for construction of a parking area for Masker's Barn, which hosts more than 100 events each year. This will provide protection for the historic site and improve safety for users of the Barn.
- Construction plans and specifications were finalized to replace the cedar shake roofs on six of the Deserted Village cottages to protect the historic buildings.
- Plans and specifications were prepared for improvements to Masker's Barn. The 140-year old wood flooring in the Barn is deteriorating from powder post beetle infestation, and must be replaced. Work will also address the need for ceiling fans or exhaust fans to make the rental hall more comfortable for guests on days of high temperatures.
- **Encroachments:** In partnership with the County Counsel's office, Division staff investigated dozens of reported cases of encroachment onto County property, identified by the New Jersey Green Acres Program and the New Jersey Conservation Foundation (NJCF). The majority of encroachments in 2024 focused around the Clark Reservoir area.
 - Over 90 site visits were conducted County-wide, addressing various violations, including unauthorized parking, improper access by vehicles, illegally extended/enclosed yards for private use, and utility crews working on County property without proper notification. Some violations required intervention from the Union County Police Department (UCPD).
 - Division staff collaborated with UCPD on enforcement actions for encroachments and drone operations for monitoring activities.

- Division staff assisted the County Counsel with inspections and re-inspections, and collaborated with utility companies to ensure proper documentation for work or equipment storage on County property.
- **Horticulture:** Flower beds in the Henry S. Chatfield Memorial Garden in Warinanco Park were enhanced with additional plantings. A landscaping consultant who provides horticultural care for the Chatfield Garden recruited and supervised eight volunteers who transplanted and divided plants, and weeded, mulched, and straightened flower beds. A granite fountain was purchased, installed and fitted with running water in the Henry S. Chatfield Memorial Garden. This fountain replaced one that had been vandalized.

Office of Cultural and Heritage Affairs (OCHA):

- The Office of Cultural and Heritage Affairs (OCHA) promotes and develops public interest and participation in the arts and history, via wide-ranging programs that enhance the quality of life for Union County residents of all ages.
- Throughout the year, the Office presented varied exhibits of original artworks by Union County residents, displayed at the Commissioner's Gallery on the 6th floor of the Administration Building.
- The Office coordinated and presented the Teen Arts Festival, a comprehensive annual event open to middle schools and high schools in Union County. Held in May at Watchung Reservation, in and around Trailside, the festival was attended by more than 2,000 students, who participated in performances, critiques and an array of workshops — from drawing to drumming and dance. This lively event was extremely well-received by teachers as well as students.
- The Office managed and administered the HEART Grant program (History, Education, Arts Reaching Thousands), the Commissioners' initiative. With funding increased to \$175,000, the Commissioners supported diverse projects by 77 grantees.
- The Office administers the Local Arts Grant Program. Increased funding from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts enabled re-granting \$300,000 to 44 organizations for general operating support and arts programming.
- The Office administers the History Grant Program. With funding from the New Jersey Historical Commission, \$55,200 was re-granted to 17 organizations for general operating support and projects concerning local history.
- The Office hosted three online workshops for grantees and other nonprofits: Managing a Nonprofit was presented by Pat Bohse in June. AI for Nonprofits was presented by Scott Meyer in October. Combined live attendance was 126, while others viewed the recorded sessions. The Office also conducted a workshop to assist grant applicants.

- The Union County Senior Art Exhibit presented original artworks by 158 seniors, both professional and non-professional artists. The 6-week exhibit and a reception were held at Union College of Union County, NJ. The exhibit was also presented online.
- In celebration of Black History Month, the Office presented The Bob Devos Jazz Quartet at Hamilton Stage in Rahway. The concert incorporated narration about the Civil Rights movement, woven together with jazz.
- Marking the 200th anniversary of a landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision involving two residents of what is now Elizabeth, the Office presented a speaker program: *Gibbons v. Ogden: Its Continuing Importance 200 Years Later*. Presented at Union County Courthouse, the lecture was given by Dr. Edward Hartnett, the Richard Hughes Professor of Law at Seton Hall.
- In celebration of Women’s History Month, the office hosted a speaker event with Simone Wilson-Brito, an attorney at McCarter & English who is an influential DEI leader.
- At the Flag-Raising ceremony commemorating Juneteenth, the County announced a new memorial: “In Memoriam of the 1741 Project: Honoring the Lives Lost to Slavery as well as the Struggle for Freedom.” The Office was directly involved with research and design for this solemn memorial. The completed memorial signage was unveiled at a ceremony in November.
- Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month, the office presented Family Fun Day outdoors at Warinanco Park, with numerous performers, cultural organizations and food trucks on hand.
- During Hispanic Heritage Month, the Office also hosted a leadership lecture by Anna D. Martinez, Director at the Division on Women for the State of New Jersey. The event was held at Union College of Union County, NJ in Cranford.
- The popular two-day Four Centuries in a Weekend event, held in October, was a great success, offering docent-led tours, special exhibits and unique activities, all free to the public. 2024 was the 30th Anniversary of Union County establishing this event — the first history weekend of its kind in the state. We attained the highest level of engagement yet, with 39 historic sites participating.
- Several new History Trading Cards were published. Celebrating notable people and events in Union County history, the collectible cards are available for free.
- Publications relating to local history are printed and also posted on the county website. The Office introduced Spanish versions of several publications, notably the 70-page booklet, *Union County Across the Centuries*.
- Collaborating with OPI, the Office maintains a calendar of cultural events open to the public that are funded by the grants that the Office administers, posted on the County website.

Properties:

- **Galloping Hill Golf Course (Kenilworth):** Projected to hit 75,000 rounds for 2024 and will beat budgeted revenue by roughly \$50,000 for a total of \$3,460,000. Outings revenue increased year over year by 5% and accounted for an additional \$54,000 in revenue compared to the prior year. The facility continued championing player development and had three PGA junior golf league teams at Galloping Hill. The Hill Tavern has continued to perform well, hosting over 85,000 covers for the year. Galloping Hill Banquets returned to pre-pandemic form and will host over 360 events.
- **The Learning Center at Galloping Hill (Kenilworth)** This facility will surpass \$1,100,000.00 in total revenue for the fourth consecutive year. The relationship with the First Tee of Raritan Valley led to sellouts of all seven weeks of junior camps this summer and culminated with again hosting the state Drive, Chip and Putt competition. In addition to junior golf, the Learning Center is a regular host of Wounded Warrior golf education and special programming for special needs highlighted by the First Swing program in partnership with the County Commissioners.
- **Ash Brook Golf Course (Scotch Plains):** Ash Brook will host total rounds of 41,000 and will reach \$1,450,000 in total revenue. The clubhouse began renovations in July of 2024 with hopes of completion in early 2025. Summer junior camps ran for seven weeks and had nearly 100 participants.
- **The Shady Rest Golf Course (Scotch Plains):** Shady Rest Golf Course is owned by the Township of Scotch Plains and managed under a shared service agreement with the County of Union. For the 2024 season, Shady Rest is trending to surpass budgeted rounds by 16% and budgeted revenue by 19%. The property will exceed \$500,000 in revenue for the second year in a row. This push is continued from 3rd party reservation sites, which booked over 700 rounds.
- **Warinanco Sports Center (Roselle)** The Warinanco Sports Center continued its winter season at 23 weeks in 2024. We hosted over 3,000 skaters and 40+ youth ice hockey games. In the spring and summer of 2024, the facility hosted 6 new youth sports sessions as well as eleven camp sessions, hosting over 450 participants. In addition to camps, the turf was used by local groups for community soccer nights and creative events such as semi-pro Arena Football. The Clubhouse at Warinanco continued to be a hub in the Roselle, Linden & Elizabeth area for private events, as well as community events run by various County Departments including: Job Fairs, Health Fairs, Sheriff's Sales and the highlight of each year, Celebrate the Season (Skate with Santa) event with the

UC Parks Department and the UC Office of Persons with Disabilities and Special Needs Skate with Santa event.

2025 Initiatives

Special Events:

Union County Department of Parks and Recreation Department offers many unique programs and events designed to meet the needs of our constituents throughout the County. We strive to provide quality, well-rounded programs using Union County's beautiful parks and facilities to meet the diverse demographics of our population.

With economic uncertainty, people stay closer to home. In response, it is more important than ever to provide affordable recreational opportunities for those in our community, while at the same time, maintaining or increasing revenue to balance the increasing costs associated with providing those activities.

Going forward we will continue to market our programs in an effort to generate new customers from throughout the County and increase public awareness about the many parks, facilities, events and activities. In 2024 our concert series was very popular, with two concerts targeting young families. We hope to continue and expand on this trend. We will bring our movies to venues throughout the County and expand on our very popular Touch-A-Truck program. We will continue to grow our well-liked Rhythm and Blues by the Brook festival by expanding our vendor marketplace and escalating the children's area.

Watchung Stable: The facility plans to continue to increase program awareness, use and revenue by building on programs currently in place, exploring new ideas and improve upon facility needs including staff, grounds and horses.

The facility will undergo renovations that include:

- Renovation of four employee bathrooms combining them into two large bathrooms.
- Planning for the renovation of the fourth riding ring including re-grading the ring, adding drainage and new footing.
- A therapeutic riding arena and renovation of the upper parking area.
- Fix the indoor drainage by re-grading the black top and adding drainage in between indoor and the barn.
- Raise the sides of the manure shed to better contain its contents.

- Fix the back doors of the isolation facility to close it in and remove the old rotten doors.

There is a need to regrade and add footing to the main riding arena. Equine health and care plans include increasing the purchase of quality horses for our fully operational program, additional funds for 2025 are secured due to the cost of horses tripling since 2019.

We would like to hire more instructors, seek out therapeutic instructors and fill the last part-time position.

Create a competitive pay scale for our instructors- no increases have been given to the per diem instructional staff beside minimum wage increase which now puts them at minimum wage. Other facilities are paying instructional staff more than triple what our staff is being paid for quality instruction.

Program plans for Watchung Stable include:

- Riding program for people with disabilities. The program has received a \$30,000.00 donation toward the purchase of horses and equipment and two employees have been certified.
- Add more dates and times for trail rides for the public. We were overwhelmed by the number of participants wanting trail rides
- Including the Veterans program into our normal routine of classes in spring and fall. We need to have a fee schedule set for this program.
- Watchung stables 100th year anniversary will be in 2025. We would like to plan the entire year of celebration for this amazing accomplishment. We would like not just for current users to celebrate, but all of Union County to come out and enjoy this facility.
- Plans include an open house with activities including pony rides, petting zoo, rider demonstrations, barn tours, face painting etc.
- Celebrations at both spring and fall horse shows.
- Shirts to mark the 100-year celebration.
- Auxiliary would like to hold a cocktail party/dinner to mark the occasion with tricky trays and give away prizes.

Trailside Nature & Science Center:

Future Planetarium Project Initiative

- Build a state-of-the-art Planetarium Dome as part of the Trailside Nature & Science Center. This new resource will educate the public and increase revenue

and park use year-round. Each program sponsored by the Union County Board of County Commissioners will provide an exhilarating and inspiring educational experience using the latest video productions and projection technology.

- Space stations, returning to the moon and exploring Mars are in the news daily. A modern planetarium will provide a permanent, entertaining and educational visitor destination in Union County's largest park, the Watchung Reservation. There are no planetariums within 25 miles of Trailside and the new dome building can offer naming opportunities.
- This project will be a new source of revenue by charging with general admission. Costs for a planetarium show can run between \$15-\$30 per person. The advanced technology will require 2-3 staff to conduct the programs. A large meeting room included in the build can offer rental opportunities for corporate functions, special events, parties, etc.

Sensory Trail boardwalk project to address erosion:

- The Union County Sensory Trail was built in 2018.
- Areas on this popular, universal trail are severely eroded due to storms and rainwater.
- For four years, staff and volunteers replaced and tamped stone dust numerous times.
- Despite repeated efforts to control the issue, the trail continues to erode with each storm.
- The damage causes uneven walking surfaces and tripping hazards.
- A boardwalk trail, installed a foot over the eroded section, will provide a safe walking surface for people of all abilities and allow rainwater to flow underneath the structure.

Improvements to the Trailside Facility:

- Schedule a vendor to paint the classrooms, lobby, hallways, railings and staff area.
- Exhibit refurbishing - three floors of exhibits professionally cleaned, dusted and wiped down. The last time the exhibits were professionally cleaned was in 2019.

Division of Park Maintenance/Bureau of Park Grounds:

- **Pathways and Paving Overlay Project:** Building on the progress made in 2024, we plan to continue repairing and repaving park pathways and County parking lots. We are committed to actively monitoring and promptly repairing all pathways that are in poor condition, ensuring everyone can safely enjoy their

surroundings. Curbing of parking lots will also be addressed and studied for possible improvements.

- **Playground and Park Improvements:** Further investments will be made in modernizing and upgrading park playgrounds and recreational facilities. Improvement plans will also be made to address and upgrade our older tennis and basketball courts. Our overall objective is to provide enhanced recreational opportunities for all our park visitors.
- **Green Spaces and Beautification Projects:** Additional landscaping and beautification projects, including new plantings, mulching, and maintenance, are planned to enhance the visual appeal of all our County Parks.
- **Public Restroom Renovations:** Renovations will continue for additional park restrooms in 2025, prioritizing those with outdated fixtures or accessibility issues.

Division of Park Environmental Services:

- **Wildlife Management**

After four years of having Raritan Valley Community College conduct an aerial infrared drone survey of deer in the Watchung Reservation, that service will be expanded to include a survey of other parkland, such as Ash Brook Reservation in Clark, Elizabeth River Park in Hillside, or the Cushing Road area in Plainfield.

- **Habitat Management**

Although the anticipated proliferation of the invasive spotted lanternfly did not occur in 2023 or 2024 as expected, the Watchung Reservation Invasive Plant (WRIP) Strike Team will work to remove smaller specimens of the invasive ailanthus trees from County parks and roads, leaving the larger trees for now to attract the insects to this preferred host tree, where they can be targeted with a systemic pesticide.

Up to 200 Scouts and leaders, with support from the WRIP team, Trail Stewards and Division staff, will again gather for a 3-hour work session in early April to remove invasive Japanese barberry and multiflora rosa bushes from the Watchung Reservation at a time when they are easily identifiable.

This Division will continue to support the Berkeley Heights Environmental Commission as they utilize a Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative grant to plant almost 100 trees in a barren area of the Watchung Reservation, with provisions for watering and protection from deer browsing.

With administrative support from the non-profit Resource Conservation and Development group, the United States Department of Agriculture will provide funding and technical support to fight the incursion of invasive plants in various areas of the Watchung Reservation, starting with the globally-significant Trap Rock Glades Natural Heritage Area.

- **Aquatic Management:** A contractor will again be utilized to ensure the continued operation and maintenance of aerator fountains in County lakes and ponds. Division staff will study the benefits of acquiring a Weedoo Workboat to facilitate maintenance operations by County staff of lakes and ponds, including the removal of vegetative waste and trimming or removal of trees and tree limbs.
- **Volunteer Programs**
 - An Adopt-A-Trail Program orientation meeting will be held in February to enhance training for existing Trail Stewards and recruit new Stewards, to get better coverage of the 100 miles of hiking and bridle trails in the Watchung Reservation, as well trails in Lenape Park, Passaic River Park, Ash Brook Reservation and elsewhere. Trail Stewards will be taught techniques and loaned tools for making their work easier in picking up litter and branches, cutting back vegetation, preventing erosion, and reporting downed trees on their adopted trails.
 - Eight Eagle Scout service projects that are currently in the proposal and planning stages are expected to get underway in 2025, with most expected to be completed by the end of the year.
 - Specifications will be written to replace the Division's step-van, affectionately known as "the Bread Truck". This vehicle is indispensable to transporting and safely securing tools and materials for Adopt-A-Park and Eagle Scout or Gold Award projects.
 - The Volunteer Recognition Event will be held again in March, with some private sponsorship. This event honors volunteers in the Adopt-A-Park, Adopt-A-Trail, Watchung Reservation Invasive Plants Strike Team, and Eagle Scout and Gold Awards service projects programs.
- **Trail Maintenance:** Additional attachments will be purchased for the recently-acquired Ventrac 4250 tractor, to expand the capabilities of the trail maintenance crew. Additionally, a dump trailer will be purchased to facilitate moving the Ventrac to project sites. The trailer can double as a vehicle for transporting bulk materials like crushed stone, topsoil and mulch.
- **Environmental Programming:** The popular Woodcock Talk and Walk will be repeated in March. Participants will learn about and then watch for this peculiar bird. The Native Plant Swap & Shop will be offered again in June, but will be more widely advertised to include new participants. Additional public programming related to trail maintenance, invasive plant management and wildlife management will be developed and offered.

- **Deserted Village of Feltville:** The cedar shake roofs on at least two Deserted Village cottages will be replaced to protect the historic buildings. Planning will begin for fabrication and installation of professional-grade exhibits in the Deserted Village Visitor Center in the Church/Store Building. The exhibits will use photographs, maps, artifacts and videos to explain the many periods of significance in the Village's history that spans four centuries. Emergency generators will be installed at Masker's Barn and the Church/Store Building, as well as the caretaker's residence, to ensure uninterrupted operation of public utilities and life safety systems during increasingly frequent power outages. Plans will be developed for events at the Deserted Village in 2026 and beyond celebrating the 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution.
- **Encroachments:** The County will acquire a drone, equipped with a camera, to assist in the investigation of encroachments by park neighbors onto County park land. The drone will also be useful in surveying conditions on lakes and waterways. A Division staff member will be trained and licensed to operate the drone.
- **Horticulture:** Kiosks have been built at the Henry S. Chatfield Memorial Garden in Warinanco Park and the Rhododendron Garden in the Loop Area of the Watchung Reservation. These kiosks provide an opportunity for people to memorialize loved ones through donations that get recognized with plaques. In 2025, the memorial program will be publicized, and expansion and improvement of the Rhododendron Garden will continue utilizing those donations. A landscaping contractor will be engaged to provide care of the hundreds of new plantings in the Azalea Garden in Warinanco Park.

Office of Cultural and Heritage Affairs (OCHA):

- Through the County Commissioners, the Office anticipates granting funds to 74 organizations and individuals for history, arts and education programs, through the HEART Grant.
- With funds for 2025 from the NJ State Council on the Arts, the Office anticipates re-granting \$300,00 to 44 organizations for arts programming, through the Local Arts Grant.
- With funds for 2025 from the NJ Historical Commission, the Office anticipates re-granting at least \$55,000 to 20 organizations for history programs, through the History Grant.
- The Office will plan events to commemorate the 250th anniversary of our nation's founding in 1776, to be celebrated across the USA during 2026: (1) A Kickoff event is planned for April 2025, to mark the 250th anniversary of the

Battle of Lexington, which kicked off the American Revolutionary War. (2) The History Coordinator will work with historic sites across the County to foster development of localized activities and events to celebrate Rev250, a state-wide initiative commemorating the American Revolution in NJ.

- The Office will expand the popular “Four Centuries in a Weekend” program, by working and liaising with the 30-plus historic sites across the county to develop and foster promotions, activities, outreach, volunteerism, and innovative partnerships to increase public engagement. Sites will be encouraged to develop programming that aligns with the state initiative Rev250.
- The Office plans to host a Plein Air painting event and workshop in September 2025 at Masker’s Barn in the Deserted Village.
- The Office plans to bring back the Employee Art Show in November 2025, showcasing original artwork by employees and their families.
- Recommendations from the Long-Range Plan will be implemented.
- The Office will work with other County offices, agencies, and the business community, to ensure that cultural resources contribute to sustainable economic growth.

Properties:

- **Galloping Hill Golf Course:** In 2025, Galloping Hill golf course will once again host the IMG and Hurricane junior golf tournaments continuing to establish the property for the true growth of the game. In addition to those events, Galloping Hill has been chosen for a record 12th time to host the New Jersey Public Links Championship. The facility will continue to participate in Folds of Honor, raising funds for wounded and deceased veterans’ families for secondary education. The property is expected to host 71,000 rounds of golf in 2025. Technology has also been added to the golf carts to allow customers to order food and beverage directly from their golf carts and pickup in the Hill Tavern.
- **The Learning Center at Galloping Hill:** Launching in early 2025, The Swing Suite at Galloping Hill will be the first of its kind simulator at a municipal golf course. Junior camps and clinics will have a continued focus for the Learning Center. We are also looking to add range technology to our Learning Center facility, which will increase participation for both the avid golfer and the recreational player. We will be adding technology to our programming, allowing visitors to order food from the Concession Stand at the Learning Center with their mobile devices.
- **Ash Brook Golf Course:** An Engineering firm was awarded to address the drainage issues at Ash Brook golf course, and we hope to share their plan and findings in the 2025 season. The County has also begun the process of a full

replacement of Ash Brook's irrigation system. The Ash Brook Golf Course will relaunch the Tavern at Ash Brook once facility repairs are complete in early 2025.

- **Shady Rest Golf Course:** This property will continue to host mini-golf birthday parties to drive community traffic to that experience. Shady Rest will continue developing creative programs to drive resident traffic, including adding additional golf leagues to our weekly calendar. This will not only increase rounds and revenue, but interest in the property.
- **Warinanco Sports Center:** We will focus on increasing the turf rental programming and events. The focus will be to create internal programs that partner with local coaches and teams but provide an approachable price point to the local community. Baseball, soccer, and lacrosse will be the leading sports.
- **Walter E. Ulrich Memorial Pool:** In KemperSports' first year of full operation, we plan to streamline processes and continue to grow daily fee attendance as well as partner with local groups and child/adult swim lessons during off-hours.
- **Wheeler Park Spray Park:** In KemperSports' first year of full operation, we plan to streamline processes and continue to grow daily fee attendance as well as partner with local groups and host special events during off-hours.

Department of Public Safety

Emergency Management

Medical Examiner

Police

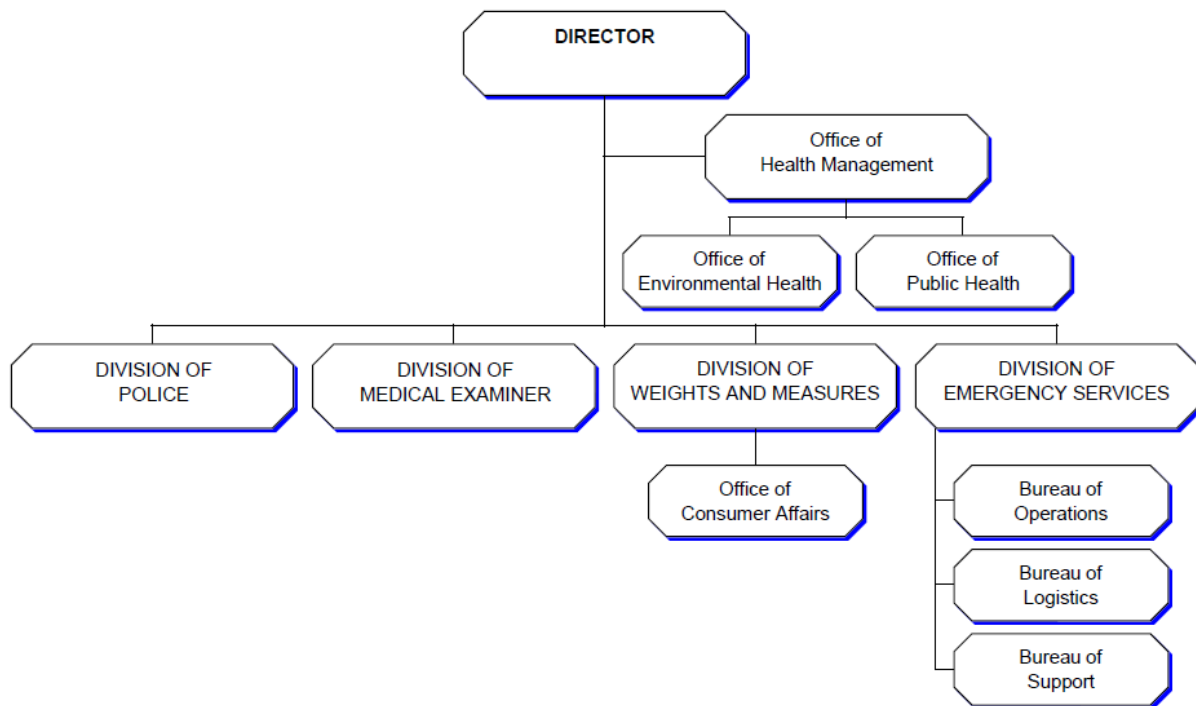
Weights and Measures

Office of Health Management

Office of Consumer Affairs

Organizational Chart

Department of Public Safety



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

Mission

The mission of the Department of Public Safety is to protect the residents of Union County through the effective and cost-efficient provision of both primary and ancillary public safety services. The six divisions of the Department of Public Safety include the County Police, Emergency Management, Health Department, Medical Examiner, Weights and Measures and Consumer Affairs. Each of these departments is dedicated to protect the residents of Union County in such diverse areas as criminal investigation, emergency response, health education and surveillance, seat belt education and consumer protection.

Programs & Services

Consumer Affairs

Aids consumers in making better purchasing decisions and facilitating the protection and assertion of consumer rights by staying actively involved in getting regulations enforced to protect Union County residents. This office educates senior citizens and young people, who are a large number of the spending/buying population. Retailers are made aware of New Jersey State Regulations governing the quality of service to consumers.

Emergency Services

Provides incident management support at local and county scenes to assist local governments in maintaining their National Incident Management Systems (NIMS) requirements. Emergency Services responds to and plans for emergencies through three bureaus:

Bureau of Operations

Includes three units -- Hazardous Materials (Hazmat), Emergency Medical Services (EMS), and Emergency Management (OEM).

Hazmat is a Type 1 Regional Hazardous Materials Response Team, as defined by the Department of Homeland Security Typing System. It coordinates and implements all necessary response, assistance, training and related services for the

identification of hazardous materials; also provides cleanup and disposal of hazardous materials.

EMS responds to medical emergencies throughout Union County to provide quality pre-hospital care. EMS is staffed by certified emergency medical technicians and maintains professionalism and expertise in the field of basic life support.

OEM mitigates, prepares for, responds to and aids recovery from manmade or natural disasters according to federal, state, and county guidelines.

Bureau of Logistics

Coordinates, manages and supervises multidiscipline all-hazards preparedness projects and initiatives; enhances the preparedness levels of first responders through equipment, regionalized planning and training; ensures the County's compliance with rules and regulations of the National Incident Management System; researches, applies for, administers and manages the State and Federal Preparedness Grants; and coordinates preparedness drills; is also the lead agency in the County's participation in the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI). The Northern NJ UASI is comprised of the core cities of Newark and Jersey City, and the surrounding response counties to include Union. It is the State's only UASI region which, since its inception in 2003, has received \$97 million in specialized Homeland Security Grant Funds.

Bureau of Support

Includes Technical Services Unit and Fire Academy.

The Technical Services Unit maintains radio infrastructures for Union County agencies including County Police, Prosecutor, Sheriff, Emergency Services, and Public Works. It also maintains countywide radio infrastructure supporting EMS Dispatch, mutual aid and fire mutual aid, and works with municipalities to coordinate NJ Interoperability Communications System.

The Union County Fire Academy began in 1997, partnering Emergency Services with the Union County Fire Chiefs' Association to enrich firefighter education. The combined resources enhance training for career and volunteer firefighters, with high standards to foster pride and professionalism. The Academy operates at our two Linden professional training grounds for classroom instruction and performance training, and provides outreach programs to municipal fire departments at other locations

Health Management: Plans and manages health related aspects of community response as a vital component of the countywide emergency preparedness and response system. The Office of Health Management includes the Bureau of Environmental Health and the Bureau of Public Health working in close collaboration.

Bureau of Environmental Health

Assures compliance with environmental health regulations, coordinates public employee occupational safety and health mandates, and implements the State Right-to-Know programs. Responsible for ensuring compliance with the County Environmental Health Act (CEHA) as regulated by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The CEHA work program includes compliance and enforcement in areas such as hazardous materials, air, solid waste, water, noise and underground storage tanks.

Bureau of Public Health

Responsible for managing the Local Information Network Communications System (LINCS) to enhance and integrate local public health agencies' preparedness for, response to, and recovery from acts of terrorism and other public health emergencies. LINCS is responsible for managing the regionalized and coordinated public health assessment, disease identification, and rapid response and containment of incidents that threaten public health. LINCS coordinates an e-information system supporting reporting, health data analysis and dissemination of information between the Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control, local health departments, health care providers and emergency responders. The Bureau also provides contracted shared service with the townships of Berkeley Heights, Hillside, Scotch Plains, and the Borough of Roselle for full or partial Health Officer responsibilities

Division of the Medical Examiner

This office conducts death investigations and scene visitations. A major responsibility of the Medical Examiner Office is to perform autopsies and external examinations when required. If an autopsy is not necessary to determine the cause, manner and mechanism of death, an external examination is conducted. The Medical Examiner investigates all deaths reported under the County's jurisdiction as mandated by New Jersey State statute. It also provides surveillance to detect "serial" crimes, natural epidemics and biological or chemical terrorism at the earliest stages.

Forensic Pathologists serve as expert witnesses for the prosecution in criminal cases and consult with family members to answer questions regarding the death of loved ones.

County Police

Provides efficient, cost-effective, and professional delivery of law enforcement and protection services on all County-owned properties, parks and facilities, using a variety of enforcement and crime prevention strategies. The County Police Department is an essential law enforcement support agency for Union County's homeland security defense. It provides specialized and unique law enforcement shared service programs and services benefiting local police agencies; it is State of New Jersey medium for managing and coordinating Emergency 9-1-1 activities for all municipalities in Union County and Kean University; fulfills requests for public safety awareness, information and education presenters by senior citizen groups, educational institutions, civic organizations, scouting groups, and public information mediums; and manages crucial law enforcement programs that directly contribute to the protection, safety and welfare of families and citizens throughout Union County. The Traffic Enforcement Unit, including the Weigh Team, safeguards the integrity of Union County's bridges and roadways to ensure compliance with passenger and commercial vehicle safety regulations.

Weights & Measures

Provides cost-effective weights and measures enforcement protection and services to businesses, government agencies and consumers. Reduces or eliminates fraud and unfair business practices against consumers; monitors and enforces proper use of measuring and weighing devices, such as gasoline meters, oil truck delivery meters and scales used in commercial establishments, through testing and inspection.

The Division audits for accuracy consumer packages offered for sale and Universal Product Code scanners for accurate pricing and labeling. Staff investigates consumer complaints regarding weighing and measuring violations; prepares summonses and prosecutes violators.

2024 Accomplishments

Consumer Affairs: Received and responded to 300 complaints filed, both electronically and telephonically, saving consumers \$141,889 in cash refunds and \$60,587 in additional value; Continued to monitor businesses for price gouging to make sure, they followed State laws.

Emergency Services

Continued to provide countywide EMS mutual aid coverage throughout Union County. Increased student enrollment in-service training program at the Union County Fire/EMS Academy. Supported our Fire Mutual Aid program and work with all 21 fire departments to ensure firefighter safety. Managed improvements to the new Fire/EMS Academy to support additional training needs for fire and EMS providers. Continued to maintain a stockpile of PPE to support COVID operations. Upgraded the resources of the Union County Hazardous Materials Unit by enhancing technology and detection capabilities.

Health Management/Public Health

Continued to provide local health services as per shared service agreements with Berkeley Heights, Hillside, Roselle, and Scotch Plains, and began local health services for Cranford. Provided mobile flu and vaccination clinics for Union County residents. Participated in a cooperative effort between the Union County Department of Human Services, Trinitas Regional Medical Center and Legacy Pharmacy Group to provide pharmacy assistance for eligible residents.

UCOHM/LINCS

Continued to represent county-level public health and Local Information Network Communications Systems (LINCS) in the Healthcare & Public Health Coalition Advisory Panel to assist in the coordination of efforts in the event of an emergency to share information and resources that will be necessary during public health emergencies. Other entities include members from county and state-wide workgroups such as the New Jersey Department of Health, New Jersey State Police

- Office of Office of Emergency Management (OEM), New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services, New Jersey Hospital Association (Third-Party Fiduciary), Healthcare Association of New Jersey, Home Care and Hospice Association of New Jersey, and more.

UCOHM/CEHA

Enforced environmental regulations as documented by the annual audit performed by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) in accordance with the County's grant agreements. Conducted compliance and enforcement investigations and inspections including: Air Pollution Program; Solid Waste Program; Pesticides Program; Noise Program; DEP Right to Know Program; and the Water Program.

Medical Examiner

This office continues its close liaison with the State Medical Examiner Office in an effort to provide improved service to the citizens of Union County and New Jersey.

The UCMEO Standard Operating Procedures has been updated and is available for review.

A presentation regarding the Medical Examiner's role in death investigation and the interaction of law enforcement was discussed with police recruits at the Stamler Police Academy.

This office has fully investigated 1102 deaths and perform 249 autopsies and 28 external examinations from January 1st through December 31, 2024. The UCMEO has investigated and autopsied 14 homicides and released or facilitated release of 825 deceased persons.

County Police

Entered into agreements with local law enforcement agencies to provide additional assistance with specialized training in handling an active shooter situation, suspicious package recognition and assisting with using less lethal devices when confronting Emotionally Disturbed Persons. The office is upgrading its IT infrastructure to protect against specialized threats, and to aid in the enhancement of protections and efficiency for expanding the Regional Dispatch Center.

Weights & Measures

Continued to monitor commercial businesses and tested in excess of 10,000 devices for accuracy. During this testing we inspected over 1,000 businesses and performed more than 20,000 scanner and commodity audits to ensure compliance with state and federal regulations.

2025 Initiatives

Consumer Affairs

Will continue to partner with retailers to increase customer service to consumers by providing them with more information about products and services; inform retailers of their responsibilities under laws spelled out in the N.J. Consumer Fraud Act; continue to implement new policies and inform businesses about the Notice of Investigation Findings, especially those using unfair business practices.

Emergency Services

Provide EMS units to satisfy the growing needs of pre-hospital care throughout Union County. Prepare the required 2026 Union County Hazard Mitigation Plan with our municipal partners. Continue to plan, prepare and respond to Hazardous Material Incidents outside the scope of our municipal responding agencies. Provide continued Mutual Aid Coordination for regional fire response.

Health Management

Continue to provide local health services to Roselle, Hillside, Scotch Plains, Cranford, and Berkeley Heights. Provide well child physical examinations for uninsured or underinsured infants and pre-school aged children as part of local health services agreements. Expand our pilot program for internal shared service with the Union County Department of Human Services to provide extended clinic services for eligible residents. Review Emergency Support Function #8 for Union County on emergency public health matters. Review Emergency Support Function #6 for Union County on Mass Care which includes emergency assistance, medical needs shelter, temporary housing, human services coordination and county animal rescue. Continue to work with the eight local health departments (representing all 21 Union County municipalities) to identify health areas of improvement and assist their capacity to respond. Continue to provide monthly blood pressure screening clinics in Roselle and Scotch Plains, and as requested in the community. Continue to assist local health departments in contact tracing/disease investigation, testing and vaccination efforts.

Continue to provide programs via the Chronic Disease Coalition by implementing evidence-based strategies and instituting Policy, Environmental, and System change strategies that support and reinforce healthful behaviors and lower the risk for chronic diseases. Continue to conduct inspections of retail food establishments located within county owned facilities, including temporary ones at events. Continue to expand the Union County Health Alert Network (HAN) to provide rapid distribution of public health information. This network is continuously maintained and updated to provide accurate information to appropriate recipients.

Medical Examiner

Continue process of obtaining provisional accreditation with the International Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners; continue to maintain the nationwide average of true turnaround time, which for most forensic cases, is within three months; continue mass disaster training exercises and drills for investigators provided by the state; continue to provide bereaved families appropriate interaction and assistance towards achieving closure.

County Police

Collaboratively with the County Prosecutor's Office and Sheriff's Office, integrate independent programs for at-risk persons into the ACCESS Union County initiative. Continue to share services with local and regional law enforcement agencies to assist in policing, traffic enforcement, and specialized investigations, including additional training programs protecting officers responding to the mentally ill and combative individuals.

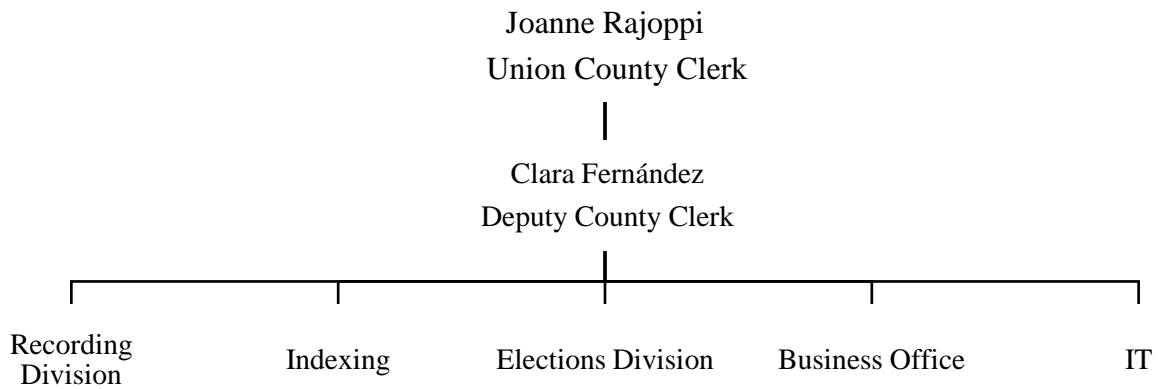
Weights & Measures

Continue to conduct inspections on commercial businesses to ensure accuracy of the devices. Will conduct scanner and commodity audits to make certain consumers are being treated fairly, businesses are compliant with state and federal regulations, and all required protocols are being met.

Office of County Clerk

Organizational Chart

Office of the Union County Clerk



OFFICE OF THE UNION COUNTY CLERK

Mission

The mission of the Office of the County Clerk is to provide the most efficient and expeditious delivery of services to our constituents in the areas of land recordings, elections, passports, business, veteran services, and naturalization records.

Programs & Services

The Clerk's Office performs a variety of services including the recording of all land documents in the county, election functions including the design and printing of all ballots for each election, mail to vote by mail voters, acts as a passport agent for the U.S. Department of State, and provides oaths to state commissioned public notaries. The office maintains a Record Room containing land records from 1857 to 1977. Records after that period are available online.

The Office also provides services for veterans including ID Cards, Gold Star Cards, Military Discharges and Peddler Licenses. Additionally, Naturalization and Petitions of Intentions from 1907 to 1986 are available for copying and research.

2024 Accomplishments

- Phases 4, 5 and 6 of major office renovation project, begun in 2021, were completed. A recording area, reception area, lunch, conference area and IT area, affording greater accessibility, now are being used.
- Two notary seminars were held for 100 residents.
- 2024 Primary Election ballot designed in office-block format as mandated for 2024.
- Continuation of all election materials countywide in Spanish.
- In-house scanning project of Deed and Mortgage books to provide greater online accessibility to records.

- Organized and initiated computerized Veterans Grave Registration Database first of its kind, including more than 40,000 veterans, with paper records provided by the Office of Veteran Affairs.

2025 Initiatives

Since the Veterans Grave Registration Database was not initiated until November 2024, the office plans an outreach program to veteran groups, historical societies and others to familiarize them with its many uses.

In the Elections Division, the office will sponsor a School Board candidate's seminar to assist with petition protocols and make the process more efficient.

In addition, the office will conduct a multi-media outreach program to all 2020 mail-in voters who have not voted in four consecutive elections as stipulated by New Jersey law.

Lastly, the Clerk will initiate a new ballot design for all 2025 ballots in an office-block ballot style as stipulated by a statewide judicial order. An outreach campaign will be undertaken to explain the new design to voters and alleviate voter confusion.

Office of the Prosecutor

Major Crimes Division

Investigative Division

Trial Division

Pre-Indictment Division

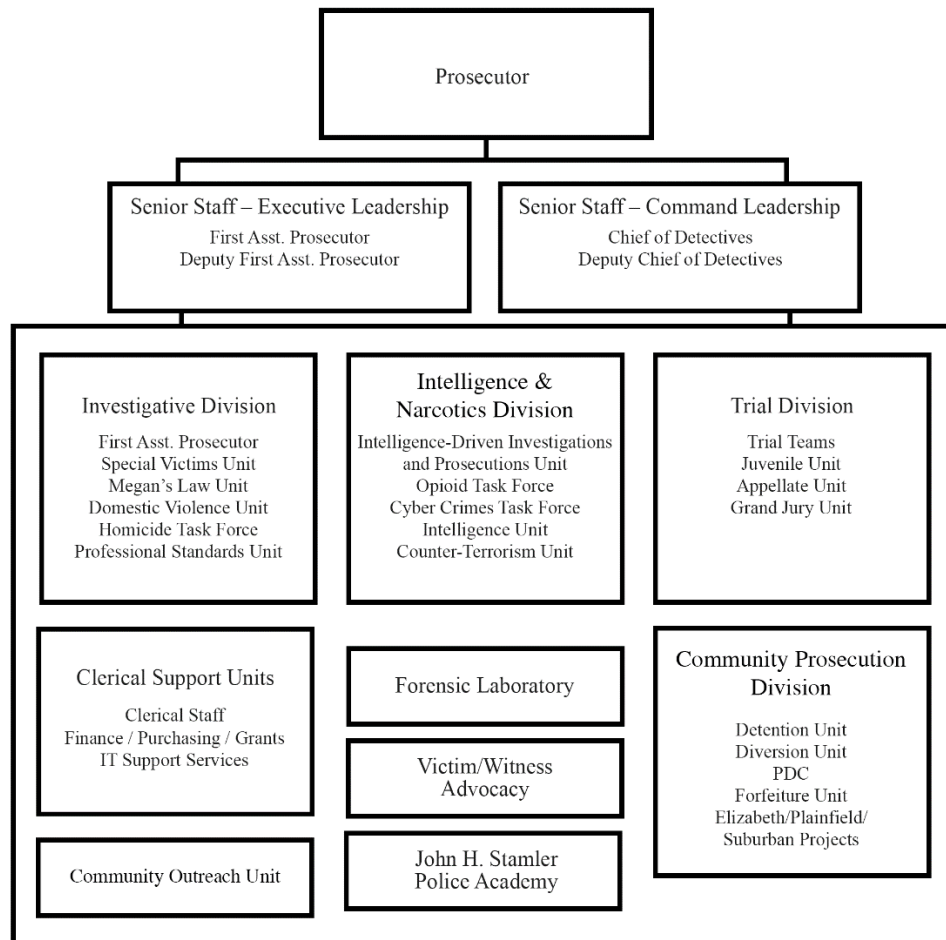
John H. Stamler Police Academy

Forensic Laboratory

Victim Witness Advocacy

Organizational Chart

Office of the Union County Prosecutor



OFFICE OF THE UNION COUNTY PROSECUTOR

Mission

It is the mission of the Union County Prosecutor's Office to allow the people of this County to live their lives without fear that their lives will be diminished by the acts of individuals who would betray the laws of a civilized society; to ensure that everyone in our society is free to live their life without becoming a victim of violence; to safeguard the liberty of each of our people; and to bring to justice those would cause harm to our people, our families, and our communities.

Programs & Services

Intelligence and Narcotics Division

The Intelligence and Narcotics Division focuses on using modern investigative and intelligence-driven techniques to both investigate and prevent the most serious crimes plaguing our communities. The Division is comprised of the Intelligence Unit, which uses specialized intelligence gathering and sharing to investigate illegal gang activity, criminal enterprises, violent crime, and pattern crimes; the Narcotics Task Force, which investigates individuals involved in the illegal distribution of narcotics; the Cyber Crime Task Force, which focuses on the intersection of crime and modern technology and provides computer forensic services to police departments countywide; and the Counter-Terrorism Unit, which is the county's primary investigating unit in terrorism related matters.

Investigative Division

The Investigative Division comprises several units made up of assistant prosecutors and detectives who work together to investigate and prosecute complex and serious crimes. Included within the Investigative Division are the Special Prosecutions Unit, which investigates complex financial crime, public corruption, elder abuse, the unauthorized practice of law and medicine, animal cruelty, arson, and other complex crimes requiring lengthy investigations; the Special Victims Unit, which investigates and prosecutes sexual offenses and the physical abuse of children; the Domestic Violence Unit, which works to break the cycle of violence endured by those victimized by those closest to them; and the Homicide Task Force, which investigates every homicide offense committed in the County.

Trial Division

The Trial Division partners with the police departments of each of our municipalities, as well as the Union County Police Department, the Union County Sheriff's Office, and the Kean University Police Department, to bring the cases investigated by those departments to trial. The Division includes seven trial teams composed of experienced trial attorneys who handle all stages of litigation, and a detective staff which partners with and continues the work of the various investigative agencies to ensure that all cases are trial-ready. Also housed within the Trial Division are the Juvenile Unit, which prosecutes juvenile justice matters; the Appellate Unit, which litigates all appellate matters arising out of the Office's activities; and the Grand Jury Unit, which ensures that the Grand Jury operates smoothly and efficiently.

Community Prosecution Division

The Community Prosecution Division is home to a number of units which specialize in guiding law enforcement investigations and newly charged cases through the initial court appearances in Central Judicial Processing, Detention and Plea Disposition Court as well as diverting cases from traditional prosecution to a number of different pre and post disposition diversionary programs. The Division is also responsible for a number of Firearms Safety related issues as well as overseeing Public Safety Initiatives and education related to mental health, special needs and community outreach.

Pre-Indictment Unit

The pre-indictment unit within the Community Prosecution Division is made up of Municipal Screeners, the CJP and Detention Courts and Plea Disposition Court ("PDC"). The Municipal Screeners are three experienced Assistant Prosecutors each of whom is assigned to assist municipal police departments with investigative needs, such as obtaining search warrants and Grand Jury subpoenas, charging decisions to ensure legally sound investigative decisions and follow up investigation to confirm that all necessary reports and evidence are available for ongoing prosecutions. The CJP and Detention Courts are staffed by three Assistant Prosecutors who review new arrests in preparation for the First Appearance Court, determine whether pretrial detention or release is appropriate under Criminal Justice Reform, recommend release conditions when appropriate as well as filing and arguing Detention Motions when a determination is made that the defendant poses a risk to the community or may not appear in court and comply with court orders. PDC Court is responsible for handling the initial plea negotiations for cases prior to indictment and referring cases for early disposition or diversion. The PDC team works closely with all other Pre-

Indictment teams to ensure that repeat offenders and crimes effecting the quality of life in local municipalities receive appropriate plea offers or are referred to the Grand Jury.

Diversion Unit

The Diversion Unit is made up of the Mental Health Section, Recovery Court and Pre-Trial Intervention and together cover a broad range of programs aimed at diverting individuals away from traditional prosecution who have special needs, substance abuse issues or are first time offenders as well as providing services and education to the community and to law enforcement. The Mental Health Section handles a variety of issues that pertain to individuals with mental health concerns and special needs that come in contact with the Criminal Justice System. The Assistant Prosecutor assigned to the Mental Health Unit oversees the Jail Diversion Program (JDP)/ Mental Health Court, the Veteran's Diversion Program (VDP), as well as handles the tracking and case management of those who have been found to be incompetent to stand trial or have been found Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity.

Community Response Unit

The Community Response Unit includes oversight of Alternative Responses, the Firearms Safety Section and Community Engagement. Alternative Responses include programs such as Crisis Intervention Team (CIT), ARRIVE Together, Mental Health First Aid, Special Needs Registry and Blue Envelope Program. The Firearms Safety Section reviews a variety of different issues related to community safety and firearms such as Extreme Risk Protective Orders (ERPO), Firearms Purchaser Identification Cards (FPIC) and appeals related to the denial of carry permits in order to determine if legal action is appropriate and represents the State in such legal actions. The Community Engagement Section participates in a variety of community events and outreach in order to foster the relationship between law enforcement, community partners and the community as well as educate the community regarding Alternative Responses and community resources and programs.

Forensic Laboratory

The Forensic Laboratory is a fully accredited laboratory that provides forensic analysis for all cases investigated by the Office, as well as any police agency in the County. Forensic scientists at the Laboratory use state-of-the-art equipment and techniques to process evidence collected during the course of criminal investigations – for instance, analyzing and comparing DNA samples and identifying controlled dangerous substances.

Victim Witness Advocacy

Victim witness advocates specialize in caring for the needs of the victims of crime, and help witnesses deal with the stresses of the trial process. The Unit provides comprehensive services to help crime victims deal with the financial, psychological, and physical effects of crime, and assists with the relocation of victims and witnesses whose safety is compromised by criminal actors.

The John H. Stamler Police Academy

The Academy provides a comprehensive and accredited course of instruction for new police recruits, ensuring that they are able to serve our community safely, effectively, and respectfully. The Academy also provides continuing education services for our many active officers, offering a wide range of courses on topics from computer forensics to interview techniques.

2024 Accomplishments

Public Safety:

In an effort to combat an increase in stolen vehicles, residential burglaries, motor vehicle burglaries, porch piracy and catalytic converter thefts, the Municipal Task Force deployed nine times this year. During the nine deployments, a total of 181 officers from 19 different police departments were assigned. The mission of the task force is to use real-time intelligence and increased manpower to deter criminal activity occurring throughout the County. The task force will be deployed when the Intelligence Unit identifies a spike or specific trend with the aforementioned crimes. Officers and detectives assigned to the task force will use intelligence and technology to deter and investigate the criminal activity.

The Union County Prosecutor's Office in conjunction with the Union County Police Chiefs Association, and Urban Areas Security Initiative, conducted table top exercises with municipal law enforcement agencies designed to test local law enforcement agencies' preparedness in the event of a mass casualty incident. All law enforcement agencies in Union County participated in individual table top exercises focused on an agency's ability to respond to a mass casualty incident as well as coordinate with the various entities that respond to mass casualty situations. The purpose of these exercises was to enhance the abilities of all law enforcement agencies in Union County to respond to a mass casualty situation.

To further address public safety, the Office's Counter Terrorism Unit conducted 57 security assessments and site visits at houses of worship, schools, hospitals and other

critical infrastructure sites throughout the County. The unit also investigated 94 Suspicious Activity Reports (SARs) in partnership with the New Jersey Department of Homeland Security and Preparedness and Counter-Terrorism Watch.

The Prosecutor's Office held a county-wide gun surrender event that took place in October. This surrender consisted of 100% participation from each municipal law enforcement agency at 18 locations throughout Union County and yielded in excess of 100 firearms including numerous handguns, rifles, and shotguns, an AK-47 rifle, sawed-off shotgun, five defaced handguns and a stolen handgun. This surrender also yielded in excess of 1,000 rounds of various types of ammunition and a large quantity of prescription drugs. The safe collection and removal of firearms from the streets of this County continues the Office's commitment to the reduction of gun violence, as well as accidental and mental health related tragedies.

In continuing to combat the narcotics trade and gun violence, the Office's Narcotics Task Force and Intelligence Unit executed 31 search warrants, made 38 arrests and seized approximately 1,000 grams of fentanyl, 39,135 grams of cocaine, 531 prescription pills, 22,700 grams of marijuana, 130 grams of pink cocaine, aka "tusi", \$133,676 in cash and 8 firearms. Many other investigations conducted in partnership with federal, state and local agencies resulted in the seizure of additional illegal narcotics and firearms.

In an effort to further investigations conducted by other units within the Prosecutor's Office, as well as local police departments, the Cyber Crime Task Force conducted 133 forensic examinations of digital evidence and collected video evidence from 97 locations. The unit also installed 8 covert cameras and 3 GPS trackers for investigations conducted by the Intelligence Unit and Narcotics Task Force. Additionally, the Internet Crimes Against Children Unit investigated 185 Cyber Tip line reports, resulting in several arrests.

In an additional effort to further investigations conducted by other units within the Prosecutor's Office as well as our local police departments, we continued the implementation of an Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) program, which included building a network of ALPR's that were strategically installed throughout the County. To date, ten ALPR's have been installed throughout the County, and eighteen additional locations have been selected to have cameras installed by the end of 2024. This initiative assists local law enforcement by building an ALPR network that uses overt cameras as a public safety tool. These cameras have the capability of capturing video images of activity occurring in the area of public safety hazards as well as public streets and highways. This program will help provide better public

safety, and further safeguard local communities from violence, as well as enhance the quality of life for those individuals who reside or visit those areas.

Increased Resources for Crime Victims and Victims of Addiction:

In partnership with recovery specialists, the Office continued the Operation Helping Hand 24-7-365 Program, which made Union County the first county in New Jersey to ensure that all suspects arrested for low-level possessory offenses involving heroin or other opioids would be offered face-to-face access to rehabilitative services at the time of arrest, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Throughout the year, the Office conducted pop-up tent events, and conducted several arrest-based operations, wherein individuals suffering from addiction could seek recovery services from our on-site recovery specialist partners at Prevention Links. Through these efforts, a total of 204 people were offered rehabilitative services this year. Further, Fentanyl test strips and Narcan kits were distributed to people that visited the tents. Throughout 2024 Union County law enforcement officers administered Narcan to 152 individuals, saving their lives from fatal overdose.

In a continued effort to combat the overwhelming presence of the dangerous opioid fentanyl, which was found to be present in 80% of the 51 fatal overdoses that occurred in Union County as of August 6, 2024, the Narcotics Task Force took steps to remove it from our streets and help those individuals that are addicted to the drug. In these efforts, members of the Task Force seized more than 1,000 grams of Fentanyl during their investigations.

The Office continued additional efforts to combat the opioid epidemic by hosting two drug take back days in collaboration with the DEA. During these events, members of the community were able to drop off unwanted prescription drugs for destruction at the Prosecutor's Office in Elizabeth. A total of 475 pounds of prescription drugs were turned in at these events, and later destroyed.

The Office hosted its 7th annual Race for the Children. This 5 kilometer run/2 mile walk, co-sponsored by the Union County Board of Commissioners and the City of Elizabeth, raises awareness for survivors of sexual abuse. This year, more than 180 runners participated in the event and over \$30,000 was raised for costs associated with treatment and services for survivors of sexual abuse.

Continuing Efforts to Enhance Police Training and Working with Members of the Community with Special Needs:

The Alternative Responses to Reduce Instances of Violence and Escalation (ARRIVE) program was expanded to further assist law enforcement officers and

individuals with special needs, leading to safer interactions and improved services for individuals suffering from mental health issues. This program is intended to assist those having a mental health crisis by obtaining access to care and treatment in a manner which reduces the risk of violence or use of force during interactions with law enforcement. The program was expanded by hiring an independent contractor to serve as the point of contact for all law enforcement agencies and to ensure policy compliance and progress reporting. Importantly, the first ARRIVE vehicle was put into service. This unmarked SUV with covert police lights is designed to ensure that appropriate vehicles are used on ARRIVE shifts to reduce stigma in accordance with the goals of the program. Further, the hours of the program were increased allowing for additional service opportunities. During the year Union County ARRIVE team members from municipal and county police departments attended numerous community events in order to spread awareness of the program.

In conjunction with the Union County Departments of Recreation and Human Services, various law enforcement agencies, numerous community organizations and businesses, the first Union County National Night Out for Everyone was held. This event was designed to ensure that individuals of all abilities could actively participate in meaningful interactions with law enforcement and emergency responders. The program featured sensory-friendly zones, accessible activity stations, and supportive tools and resources, allowing all attendees to engage fully. This facilitated meaningful interactions between the community and law enforcement, by building trust and understanding for those with diverse needs.

The Special Needs Registry was launched in Union County for residents with disabilities of every kind, including physical, cognitive, intellectual and those with mental health concerns. County residents with special needs can provide law enforcement with information regarding their physical or mental health needs, so emergency first responders will be better equipped to serve registrants in the event of a law enforcement response involving the individual or their address. Critical information such as sensory sensitivities or verbal and cognitive abilities can be included in order to alert police and enhance the quality of interaction by making this information known to law enforcement. Along with the roll out of the registry in 2024, members of the Union County Prosecutor's Office attended community engagement events to inform the community about the registry and assist people in signing up. Further, the Special Needs Registry was integrated into recruit training at the Police Academy as well as the CIT training course.

Rolled out in 2024, the Blue Envelope Program is geared towards fostering inclusivity and promoting safer interactions between law enforcement officers and individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The Program introduces a simple yet effective tool that contains essential information for drivers with Autism Spectrum Disorder. This includes a copy of their driver's license, vehicle registration, insurance details, and an emergency contact card. Additionally, the envelope provides clear instructions to drivers on how to navigate a traffic stop and interact with law enforcement officers in a manner that promotes clarity and safety. Blue Envelopes have now been made available at all law enforcement agencies as well as in many county hospitals and medical clinics. Training on Blue Envelope has been integrated into the police academy recruit instruction block as well as during CIT training. Blue Envelope information is provided by members of the Prosecutor's Office at every community event attended by the Prosecutor's Office.

The Union County Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) program hosted three 40 hour CIT trainings and graduated 105 new team members, including Fire, EMS and Dispatch workers. CIT training is a community partnership of law enforcement, mental health and addiction professionals, individuals who live with mental illness and/or addiction disorders, their families, and other partners working together to improve community responses to mental health crisis. CIT training is an invaluable training which provides law enforcement and their mental health partners with the de-escalation tools necessary when interacting with persons undergoing a mental health crisis.

Continuing to Build Public Trust and Increase Public Relations Between Law Enforcement and Members of the Community:

In an effort to encourage interest in law enforcement careers, ensure ample continued police presence throughout our communities, and to recruit more diverse candidates, the Prosecutor's Office, with the support of the Union County Board of Commissioners and Kean University, co-hosted a Law Enforcement Jobs Fair at Kean University in 2024. More than 90 different federal, state, county, and local law enforcement agencies, together with numerous diverse community organizations, actively participated in this event. Over 750 potential applicants attended the recruitment fair. Given the extraordinary success of this program in recruiting qualified diverse candidates to law enforcement careers, another Law Enforcement Job Fair is being planned for 2025.

The Union County Prosecutor's Office Forensic Laboratory adopted the Organization of Scientific Committees (OSAC) standards. Established a decade ago by the Department of Justice and the National Institute of Standards and Technology,

OSAC brings together experts from various forensic disciplines to develop consensus standards for best practices. These standards are essential for ensuring the reliability and accuracy of forensic testing. By implementing OSAC standards, the UCPO Forensic Lab is demonstrating its dedication to staying at the forefront of forensic science.

In April 2024 the Union County Department of Human Services partnered with the Department of Human Services and County Commissioners to host, “Growing Together in Union County-Alternative Responses for an Inclusive Community.” Designed by law enforcement, county agencies and community stakeholders, this panel discussion addressed the development of alternative and community responses to those with mental health challenges and disabilities. The group panels discussed programs such as Mental Health First Aid, Police Academy training, Crisis Intervention Team, ARRIVE Together, Blue Envelope, Special Needs Registry, Jail Diversion Program, and Lead.

In conjunction with the Hillside Police and Recreation Departments, the Union County Prosecutor’s Office participated in the Kids’ Court Program. This program educates children ages 8-12 on the criminal justice system. Assistant Prosecutors, Defense Attorneys and Judges provide kids with an overview of the criminal court system and the steps in a criminal trial. Kids were assigned a role and participated in a mock criminal trial. The goal of the program is to educate children about how the criminal justice system works and expose them to possible future career opportunities.

The Union County Prosecutor’s Office Community Outreach Unit partnered with the Office of the Attorney General, the County of Union, local law enforcement agencies, and members of the community to host and attend approximately 46 events in 2024, an increase of 53% from 2023. The Unit also presented approximately 26 cyber-bullying school presentations. The Community Outreach Unit has been involved in numerous events celebrating and integrating with the community of Union County and offering information to those who wish to learn about our initiatives such as Special Needs Registry, Blue Envelope Program, ARRIVE Together, educational programs, fraud seminars and more.

2025 Initiatives

Initiatives the Union County Prosecutor’s Office will be pursuing throughout 2025 include:

Sponsorship and participation in the first ever Union County Expungement Clinic. The expungement clinic is designed to assist qualified individuals with a criminal conviction and/or arrests not resulting in conviction, to obtain an expungement of their criminal record. This could potentially lead to increased employment opportunities, improved housing options and qualification for some professional licenses for participating individuals.

The continued expansion of our Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) program, which will include installing of ALPR's at a minimum of ten additional locations throughout the County. The installation of these ALPR's will expand our network of ALPR's which will further assist local law enforcement. The continued expected outcome is to provide better public safety, and further safeguard local communities from violence, as well as enhance the quality of life for those individuals who reside in or visit those areas. Co-sponsors of this clinic will include the Union County Board of Commissioners, Office of the Public Defender, Union County Bar Association, Urban League of Union County, and various community partners.

Continued deployment and expansion of the county-wide Municipal Task Force with the mission of using real-time intelligence and increased manpower to deter criminal activity occurring throughout the County. The Task Force will continue to be deployed when the Intelligence Unit identifies a spike in specific crimes, such as stolen vehicles, vehicle burglaries, residential burglaries, porch piracy or catalytic converter thefts, and can be expanded to address other types of criminal activity when trends are identified. Officers and detectives assigned to the Task Force will use intelligence and technology to deter and investigate the criminal activity.

The Union County Prosecutor's Office in conjunction with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, New Jersey State Police, and Office of Emergency Management will be holding a training seminar for law enforcement and first responders involving best practices for running a family reunification center in the event of a mass casualty incident. This training is designed to educate first responders on the most efficient way to manage a reunification center by meeting the needs of the victims and their families while also safeguarding the integrity of the investigation.

Members of the Domestic Violence Unit in conjunction with the Union County Forensic Nurse Coordinator will seek to expand Domestic Violence training by holding various training seminars for community organizations designed to educate the population about the long-term risks of strangulation, including cognitive impairments, memory deficits, and emotional dysregulation. Advanced training will

also be developed for law enforcement officers who are the initial responders to Domestic Violence calls.

The Union County Prosecutor's Office will seek to expand the ARRIVE program by increasing the coverage hours and services available to those with special needs. Further, Union County is developing a Critical Response ARRIVE program for critical incidents and barricaded individuals which will integrate an ARRIVE mental health team to work in conjunction with Union County and Municipal Emergency Response Teams.

Expansion of the Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management Teams (BTAM) Program to prevent school violence. The program combines law enforcement, educators school administrators, and medical professionals, and trains them to work together to prevent school violence. The Counter-Terrorism Unit will be working with the Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) and the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security (NJOHSP) to implement a county-wide BTAM initiative.

In an effort to investigate child sexual predators, the Internet Crimes Against Children Unit will conduct undercover chat investigations to identify, arrest and prosecute individuals attempting to engage in sexual relationships with children on the internet. As members of the New Jersey State Police Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, our undercover detectives have been trained to conduct on-line chats with individuals involved in this type of behavior, and this initiative will allow us to protect our most vulnerable population from predators.

The Union County Prosecutor's Office will seek to expand the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) program by forming a coordination team to run both overall programming and training courses. The coordination team will include representatives from the Union County Prosecutor's Office, municipal and county law enforcement agencies and community mental health partners. The goal of the team is to expand the understanding of the CIT program and to improve training. Further, the CIT will seek to hold a Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) mapping workshop which is a process that helps communities identify ways to divert people with mental health and substance use disorders out of the criminal justice system. The SIM mapping process helps communities identify gaps in services and resources at each intercept point in the criminal justice system, and helps communities to develop local action plans to address these deficiencies.

Continue community outreach efforts by having Office representatives engage with members of local civic, nonprofit, educational, business, and religious organizations

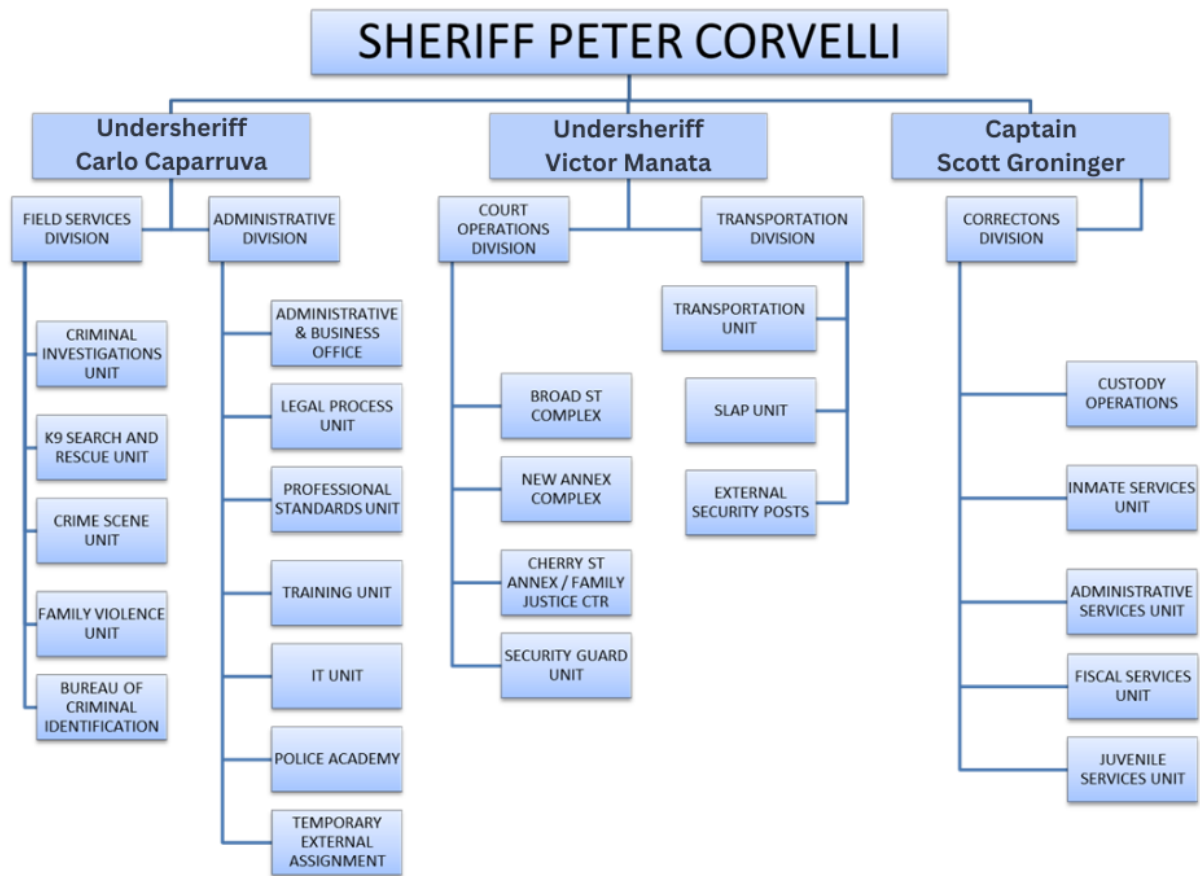
to speak publicly on a broad range of topics, including but not limited to bias crime prevention and awareness, youth engagement, cybercrimes, facility security, local crime trends, and substance abuse prevention and intervention.

Development of a program offering mock traffic stops to individuals with special needs. Community members will be able to sign up with law enforcement to receive a traffic stop instructional overview culminating with the special needs individual and a family member being “pulled over” by police officers. This will allow for individuals to prepare for encounters with law enforcement so they may be handled in a safe manner.

Office of the Sheriff

Organizational Chart

Office of the Sheriff



OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

Mission

The Office of the Sheriff is established by the State Constitution. The Sheriffs law enforcement functions are varied, but the primary objective is to provide coordinated services to the Union County Trial Court System that insures a safe County Courthouse environment and an uninterrupted judicial calendar. The advent of shared services has expanded this role to encompass the provision of specialized support services to other law enforcement agencies. The absorption of the Corrections Division and Juvenile Detention functions have added the responsibility of over sight of the corrections regionalization with Essex and Hudson Counties to the Sheriff's Office.

Programs & Services

- Court Complex and Building Security.
- Transportation of inmates.
- Service of civil and criminal process.
- Execution of domestic, juvenile and criminal warrants.
- Maintenance of criminal identification records.
- Enforcement of domestic violence orders issued by superior courts.
- Provision of search and rescue support services.
- Community education programs.
- Maintenance and responsibility of the Union County Pistol Range.
- Re-routing of non-violent offenders into S.L.A.P. (Sheriffs Labor Assistance Program).
- Provision of emergency medical response services within the Union County complex in Elizabeth.
- Support services to local, state and federal law enforcement agencies upon request.

2024 Accomplishments

UCSO

- Utilized ARPA grants to upgrade radio communications equipment, Body Worn Camera program, Courthouse Complex infrastructure, and Vehicle fleet;
- Utilized Body Worn Camera program to identify training deficiencies;
- Develop in-house training programs for CPR
- Bolstered Field Training program to ensure new officers are proficient;
- Conducted thorough agency policy/ procedure review. Updated/corrected current policies to comport with AG Guidelines;
- Continued increase in physical and operational security enhancements at courthouse complex and satellite posts;
- Continued successful partnership with Essex and Hudson counties to provide for secure confinement and intensive drug & alcohol rehabilitation for in-custody union county offenders.

Corrections

- Earned a 100% compliance rating on the NJ State Audit. 10th year in a row;
- Earned 100% compliance on the US Department of Justice PREA Standards;
- Expanded the Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation programs
- Expanded the Re-Entry program to further assist formerly incarcerated individuals with life's necessities upon their release
- Conducted thorough agency post order/ policy/ procedure review. Updated/corrected current policies to comport with AG and 10A policy guidelines;
- Continued successful partnership with Essex and Hudson counties to provide for secure confinement and intensive drug & alcohol rehabilitation for in-custody union county offenders

Juvenile Detention

- Maintained regionalization of juvenile operations with Essex County savings Union County taxpayers;
- Operated the Alternative to Incarceration program with Electronic Monitoring (GPS) without incident.
- Site visits to ensure contractual compliance with Union County Juveniles housed in Essex County

2025 Initiatives

UCSO

- Develop in-house training programs for Defensive Tactics;
- Enhance the Union County Sheriff's Office's operational security through technology advancements;
- Bolster relationships and trust within the community through positive interaction and office outreach;
- Work with Local, State, and Federal agencies to assist with providing necessary public safety services and address problems of crime and disorder;
- Maintain consistent review of office policy and procedure to ensure comportment with AG Guidelines and directives;
- Maintain a safe and secure environment at the Courthouse complex as well as satellite offices located throughout the county.

Corrections

- Increase opportunities for offenders to engage in intensive drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs;
- Expand the Medical Assistance Treatment (MAT) program;
- Expand our Re-Entry program services;
- Maintain over sight of the regionalization with Essex & Hudson County;
- Maintain Video Conferencing capability for Court;
- Continue to provide gold standard correctional services at a cost savings to Union County residents.

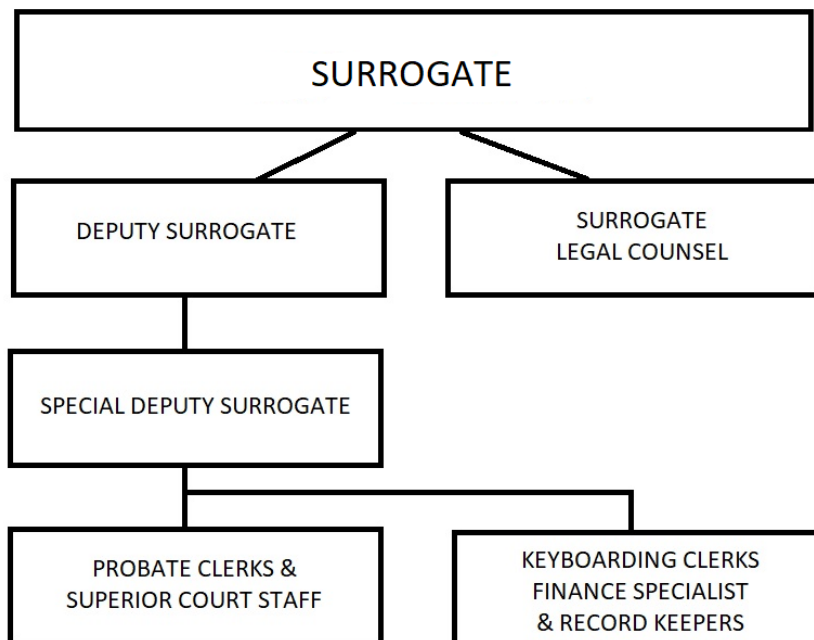
Juvenile Detention

- Continued safe care and confinement of juvenile offenders in Union County through agreements with Essex, Bergen, and Morris Counties;
- Increase offender participation in the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative to provide non-custodial supervision while awaiting Court disposition.

Office of the Surrogate

Organizational Chart

Office of the Surrogate



OFFICE OF THE SURROGATE

Mission

The Surrogate is a New Jersey Constitutional Officer serving in the dual role of Judge of Probate Court and Deputy Clerk of the Superior Court of Chancery Division, Probate Part. The mission of the Office of the Surrogate is to comply with the mandates of N.J.S.A 2:5-1 et seq. and 3B:1 et seq. as they relate to Wills, Administrations, Guardianships etc.; to be receptive to the needs of the people while serving them in the most compassionate, accessible, cost-effective and efficient manner; to provide outreach programs on a voluntary basis; and to educate the public with regard to the services of the office.

Programs & Services

- Administration: appointment of administrators for estates without wills, issuance Letters of Administration and permanent depository for related documents.
- Adoptions: responsible for all necessary procedural supporting paperwork pursuant to New Jersey Statutes and court rules, as well as the filing, review, and scheduling of all Superior Court Hearings in regard to adoption matters.
- Chancery Division, Probate Part: the Surrogate is Deputy Clerk of the Chancery Division, Probate Part and Surrogate's Court is the filing court for Probate Part actions, including actions to appoint a guardian, contested wills, and disputed administrations.
- Guardianships: appoint guardians of minors, issue Letters of Guardianship.
- Incapacity: Appoint guardians for incapacitated persons including children who have reached the age of majority (18) and need to have a guardian, usually a parent appointed. It is also the responsibility of the Surrogate to monitor and accept the annual reports of guardians in these cases.
- Wedding Services: Wedding ceremonies for Union County residents are performed by Surrogate Hudak.
- Surrogate's Intermingled Trust Fund (SITF): The Surrogate maintains and holds secure funds received by minors resulting from inheritance and lawsuits; monitors and invests funds until reaching the age of 18; periodic transfer of funds to minors as per court orders.
- Wills: Probate, issue Letters Testamentary, issue Letters Trusteeship, permanent depository for Probate related documents.
- Audits: Audits of fiduciary accounts ordered by the Superior Court

2024 Accomplishments

2024 was a year of change and innovation for the Office of the Union County Surrogate, including the launch of a streamlined website with an appointment reservations system. The chart below indicates the Surrogate's office served more than approximately 10,000 residents and non-residents in regard to certified documentation and probate matters.

Surrogate's Court by the numbers:

Online Appointments Scheduled in Elizabeth and Westfield	3,075	Release of Funds to Minors	117
Adoptions	63	Superior Court Filings - Incapacities	160
Audits of Fiduciary Accounts	15	Superior Court Filings - Probate/Other	263
Certificates Issued	12,198	Surrogate Probate/Administration Hearings	45
Court Appearances	453	SIFT Accounts Established	144
Probate Matters	3,878	Speaking Engagements	18
Record Searches	434	Trusts Established	143

E-probate (electronic file submission)

Union County began to receive electronic file submissions from attorneys and out-of-state pro se applicants for Probate and Administration matters, permitting a more convenient filing process.

Westfield Office

The Surrogate's Court opened a satellite office in the Union County Colleen Fraser Building, Westfield. After a six-month pilot program, the office expanded to a permanent, three days-a-week service. Clients are now able to schedule appointments through our website for in-person services Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. In 2024 this additional location completed 851 appointments on-site and continues to garner positive feedback from residents.

Online Appointments

Customers are able to schedule appointments for both the Elizabeth and Westfield offices via phone or the Surrogate's website, greatly decreasing wait times and increasing transaction completion rates. In 2024, clients scheduled 3,075 appointments using this service.

Adoption Day

The Union County Vicinage celebrated its 15th Annual National Adoption Day celebration on November 22, 2024. This year's event saw 11 children adopted in Union County. The Surrogate's Office coordinated logistics for the event, hosted a breakfast for participating families, and supported the court proceedings.

Community Outreach

In 2024 the Surrogate continued his speaking series entitled "Setting Your Intentions." Residents receive vital information during this presentation to make informative decisions for their future—topics range from estate planning to adult guardianships. Fifteen presentations were made to 840 residents.

In partnership with the Elizabeth Board of Education, the court hosted a webinar on guardianships focusing on parents of minors with developmental disabilities aging into adulthood.

Increased participation in community events, including events for families of individuals with development disabilities.

Participated in two Union County Senior Fraud workshops held in Fall 2024.

Record Digitization

In an attempt to modernize record keeping, the office has been dedicating in-house resources to convert decades old microfiche into digitized records to help with research and preservation.

Surrogate's Intermingled Trust Fund

The Surrogate's Court currently safeguards over \$19 million in funds for minors until they reach adulthood. In 2024, the Surrogate conducted a request for proposals and secured new agreements with four Union County financial institutions, in accordance to Court guidelines. These new agreements will secure record high interest rates for SITF beneficiaries.

Records Room Self-Service Kiosk

Installation of self-service kiosks for certified record searchers.

2025 Initiatives

E-Probate (Electronic File Submission)

Expansion of Union County electronic file submission to in-state applicants and attorneys for Probate and Administration matters.

Record Digitization

Continued conversion and archiving microfiche records dating back to approximately 1971. Explore feasibility of conversion of pre-1971 records to digital format.

Online Record Requests

Establish online records request platform for residents seeking Surrogate records and documents.

Community Outreach:

- Expand the “Setting Your Intentions” presentations pertaining to the importance of estate planning.
- Launch of a Guardianship Talk Series focused on the parents of children with developmental disabilities, providing critical guidance as their children approach adulthood.
- Partner with LGBTQ+ community stakeholders to host a webinar to provide updates to same-sex couples on matters involving estate planning and adoptions.

Surrogate’s Intermingled Trust Fund

Creation of an annual newsletter for the adult guardians of minors who have money invested in the SITF.

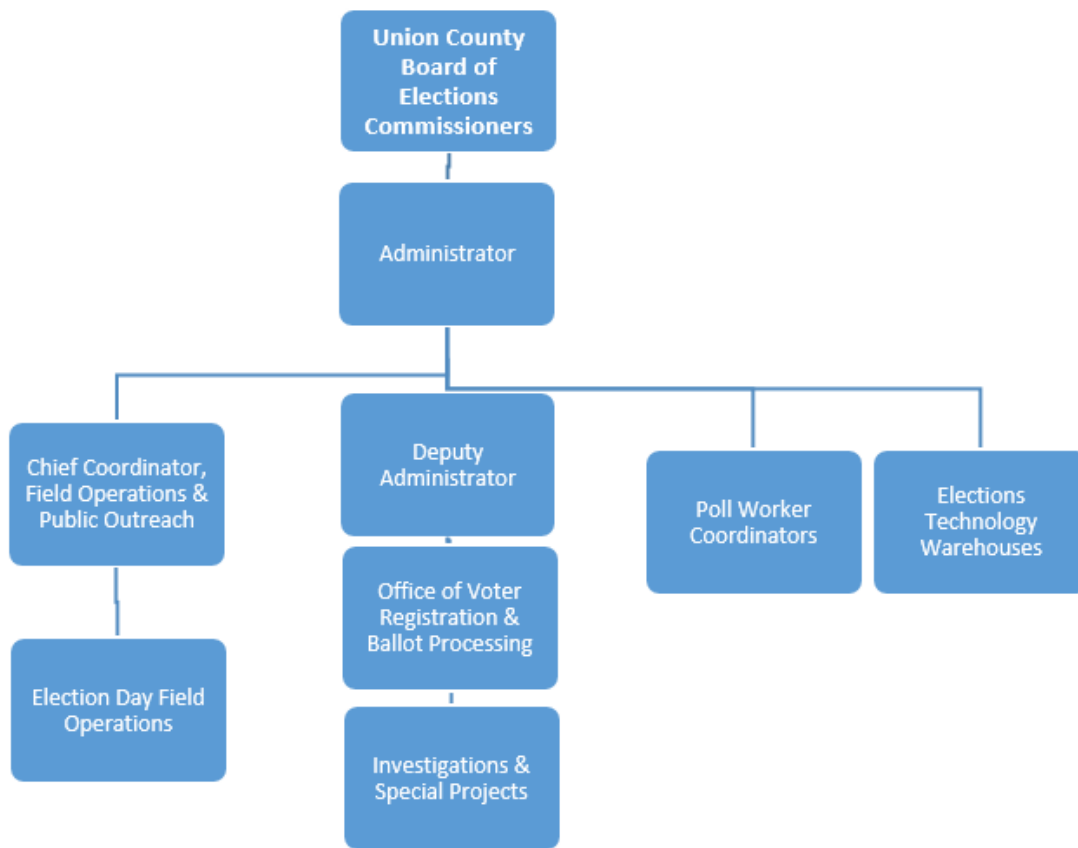
Wedding Services

Surrogate will offer monthly wedding ceremonies to Union County residents seeking to create a union and begin their family.

Board of Elections

Organizational Chart

Board of Elections



BOARD OF ELECTIONS

Mission

The Union County Board of Elections (UCBOE) is comprised of six members appointed by the Governor to serve a two-year term. Their primary responsibility is to ensure that all elections are conducted within strict compliance with all state and federal mandates with accuracy, integrity, transparency and efficiency.

The Right of Suffrage is a Fundamental Right. This Board guarantees this right by maintaining an accurate and inclusive registry of eligible voters and ensuring the voters' rights are enforced prior to and on Election Day.

Programs & Services

The Board provides election-related services to over 393,300 active and inactive voters registered in Union County, including:

Election Administration

- Administers fair and transparent Primary and General Elections, including effectuating early voting both of these elections
- Administers special school elections
- Performs post-election audits as required by law
- Administer runoff elections as required by law
- Conducts recounts as required

Voter Registration

- Processes new registrations
- Processes registration transfers both in and out of Union County
- Maintains a digitized signature verification system for poll book creation, petition challenges and mail-in-ballot verification
- Maintains a computerized system of all active and inactive voters in Union County
- Updates voter profiles as requested

- Performs voter registration system maintenance to ensure the profiles are clean prior to every election
- Removes deceased voters
- Removes disenfranchised voters
- Updates voter status to inactive confirmation when residency cannot be verified
- Conducts investigations when necessary

Poll Worker Management

- Hires, assigns, trains and pays approximately 1,800 district board workers for each Primary and General election
- Hires, assigns, trains and pays more than 50 election deputies to assist this office on Election Day
- Hires, assigns, trains and pays early voting super poll workers and poll workers
- Works to increase bilingual poll workers to assist Spanish-speaking or limited English proficient voters at the polling place

Public Outreach

- Provides, upon request, mock elections and demonstrations of the ExpressVote XL Voting Machines for students, civic groups, or any group requesting the same
- Educates social workers at nursing homes, assisted living facilities and rehabilitation centers on the proper way to assist voters in completing their mail-in ballots
- Works with local community organizations to provide voter education and awareness activities, including outreach to Spanish-speaking and limited-English proficient voters

Election Technology Management

- Maintains a fleet of 574 voting machines, 3 central vote tabulators for tallying paper ballots, 1,034 electronic poll books and over 200 Wi-Fi units
- Programs each election profile for both the voting machines and electronic poll books
- Partners with the County Clerk's Office and printing vendors in the preparation of paper mail-in and provisional ballots and machine ballots

Polling Location Management

- Works with the municipal clerks to identify suitable polling locations
- Coordinates with schools to minimize interaction between voters and students in schools which do not close on Election Day
- Ensures polling locations meet statutory requirements
- Ensures polling locations are ADA accessible

Election Technology Maintenance

As part of its responsibilities, the Board maintains, services, prepares, programs and coordinates the transportation of over 574 voting machines, 1,034 electronic poll books and 200 Wi-Fi devices for each special school election, municipal election, primary election, general election, and run-off election conducted within Union County, which includes early voting for both the primary election and general election.

The Election Technology team are all ES&S-Certified Technicians. The team programs each election profile and works with the County Clerk's office and the printing vendors to ensure mail-in and provisional ballots and the machine ballots are accurate before each election.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance

The Board cooperates with local, state, and federal agencies to ensure that the 161 polling sites throughout Union County are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Enforcement

The Board conducts investigations relating to questionable registrations to prevent voter fraud (including on-site inspections).

The Board maintains a file of all current and former residents of Union County convicted of indictable offenses and are therefore disenfranchised pursuant to statute.

The Board processes cancellations of registration for deceased residents of Union County.

The Board electronically transfers County registration information into a statewide registry file maintained by the New Jersey Office of the Secretary of State.

The Board maintains and upgrades all election maps for each municipality in Union County resulting from any district adjustments.

2024 Accomplishments

ADA Compliance

The Union County Election Board continues to ensure Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance at our polling places on Election Day.

While poll workers have received training on ADA compliance on Election Day, it is incumbent upon the municipality to ensure any temporary remedies required for compliance are in place on Election Day. Poll workers and master poll workers received revised, more in-depth training on the importance of ADA compliance on Election Day which included monitoring by the United States Department of Justice (USDOJ), checking to guarantee temporary measures are in place to ensure accessibility for disabled voters and their requirement to complete the necessary forms.

The Board moves polling places which were not ADA-compliant to accessible polling locations when necessary.

The Board continued to be proactive in advising voters of alternate, ADA-compliant entrances when the main entrance is not compliant, by adding the information to the polling place listing on the website and supplying the data for sample ballots.

Community Outreach

Public Outreach & Education

The UCBOE worked in tandem with the state, the county's public information office, and municipal clerks to ensure voters of Union County were aware of upcoming deadlines, election dates, opportunities to work as poll workers and changes affecting the 2024 elections specifically as it relates to changes in election district representation.

In 2024, the Board redistricted approximately 400 voters in Scotch Plains to alleviate crowding at the polls. These affected voters were notified of the change to their election district.

The UCBOE embarked on a vigorous campaign to recruit to poll workers for both the Presidential Primary and General Elections.

The UCBOE announced early voting ahead of the primary and general elections.

The UCBOE worked with community organizations to register bilingual poll workers to assist Spanish-speaking or limited English-proficient voters on election day.

The UCBOE administered the Winfield Housing Authority election.

Public Outreach to the Schools

In-person public outreach to schools recommenced and the UCBOE was invited to conduct election equipment demonstrations, mock elections and provide information on the voting process in New Jersey. The UCBOE hosted a mock election for the Hillside High School Student Council and Plainfield High School Student Council. The UCBOE attended civics engagement classes at Kean University to provide equipment demonstrations and information on the voting process.

The UCBOE communicated with all Union County high schools announcing National High School Voter Registration week prior to the close of registration for both the Primary and General elections.

Public Outreach to Nursing Homes, Rehabilitation Centers and Assistive Living Facilities

The UCBOE conducted outreach to nursing homes, rehabilitation centers and assistive living facilities to educate social workers and voters on the proper way to complete their mail-in ballot to ensure voters are not disenfranchised due to errors made by those assisting them. Further, the UCBOE was invited to assist with voter registration at several assistive living facilities.

Grant Awards

The Union County Board of Elections was awarded over \$2.3 million dollars in grant funds to administer the following elections and programs: Cranford Special School Election; Westfield Annual School Board Election; Special 10th Congressional Primary and General Elections which included early voting periods; 2024 Early Voting administration for the Presidential Primary and General Elections; and the Secure Ballot Drop Box Program

IT Infrastructure Upgrades

The UCBOE upgraded all desktops in the office as the warranty on the prior fleet was due to expire. Tests were conducted prior to the upgrade to ensure the new operating system was compatible with the State Voter Registration System.

New Jersey Association of Election Officials

The Union County Election Board continues to maintain its membership with the New Jersey Association of Election Officials (NJAEIO). The NJAEIO is a professional organization representing Election Boards and Superintendents of Election statewide. The advice from this organization is sought by legislators when drafting legislation and the Division of Elections when promulgating regulations. Additionally, this group is a resource for its members statewide to efficiently and effectively administer election laws.

In 2024, the Election Board Administrator, Nicole DiRado, was re-elected to the Executive Board of the NJAEIO, serving as the Recording Secretary. The Elections Technology Supervisor, Phil Powers, was re-elected to serve as a Regional Vice President representing Middlesex, Somerset & Union Counties in the organization. Representation from Union County is important in this organization when advice is sought to shape policy and regulations as they are being developed.

Registration, Elections and Audits

Voter Registration

The UCBOE maintains an active list of over 393,300 registered voters, including 25,420 new registrants in 2024. Maintaining the voter registration database is a very tedious task as it is an ever-changing list. Over 250,000 updates to our voters have been made this year which include new registrations, registration transfers, address

changes, name changes, political party affiliation changes, deletions due to deaths, inactive confirmations, signature updates and disenfranchisements. Voter update statistics represent the number of times current voter registration profiles have been touched to ensure our voter registry and voter history is current and accurate.

Union County Elections

The UCBOE successfully administered the following elections in 2024: Cranford Special School Election in January; Westfield Annual School Board Election in April; Primary Election in June; 10th Congressional Special Primary Election in July; 10th Congressional Special General Election in September; Scotch Plains-Fanwood Special School Election in September and the Presidential General Election in November.

Early voting was offered for both the 10th Congressional Special Primary (3 days) and General (9 days) Elections and the Presidential Primary (5 days) and General (9 days) Elections.

- The turnout for the Cranford Special School Election was 28%, or 5,419 of 19,059 eligible voters.
- The turnout for the Westfield Annual School Board Election was 18%, or 4,585 of 24,963 eligible voters.
- The turnout for the Presidential Primary Election was 12% or 45,736 of 372,763 eligible voters.
- 10th Congressional Special Primary Election was 7% or 8,671 of 131,520 eligible voters.
- 10th Congressional Special General Election was 8% or 10,576 of 134,111 eligible voters.
- The Presidential General and School Board Elections experienced a turnout of 63% or 244,439 of the county's 393,697 registered voters, voting in November 5th election.

With the exception of the Presidential General Election, voter turnout was low in 2024, and so goes the number of vote-by-mail ballots processed. The chart below represents the number of mail-in ballots processed by the UCBOE in 2024.

Election	Mail-in Ballots Processed
Cranford Special Election:	1,230
Westfield School Board:	1,816

Primary Election:	14,894
10th CD Special Primary:	3,273
10th CD Special General:	4,629
ScPI-FA Special School:	1,878
General Election	43,438
Total Ballots Processed in 2024:	71,158

Following 2020 Executive Orders providing for an extended time frame for which ballots received through the mail can be counted, the legislature adopted laws which codified the time frame. Specifically, ballots received through the mail within 48 hours without a post mark may be counted and any ballots postmarked on or before Election Day and received within 6 days can be counted. This statute provides for delays caused by the post office in delivering the mail.

Union County Early Voting

For the first time in the 2021 General Election, early voting was offered to voters in an effort to expand voting rights and accessibility to the ballot box in New Jersey.

In accordance with the statute, the UCBOE hosted 5 early voting sites countywide for the 10th Congressional Special Primary Election (July 12 – July 14) and the 10th Congressional Special General Election (September 8 – September 16).

Further, the UCBOE added an additional early voting location for a total of 8 early voting sites available to voters countywide in the Presidential Primary Election (May 29 – June 2) and the Presidential General Election (October 26 – November 3). The sites were located in Cranford, Elizabeth, New Providence, Plainfield, Rahway, Roselle, and 2 in Union. The administrator developed policies and procedures, crafted the security plan, purchased equipment and supplies, leased warehouse space and awarded service contracts in order to effectuate early voting in Union County. Sixteen super poll workers and over 170 poll workers were hired, assigned, trained and paid specifically for early voting.

Early voting was a tremendous success in the Presidential General Election. Voters complimented the ease with which they voted, the knowledge of the poll workers, the organization of the polling site and the length of time they waited in line. The policies and procedures designed to facilitate early voting in a safe and secure environment proved to be successful.

Early voting grant funding was awarded by the state.

Election	Early Voting Voters
Primary Election:	2,708
10th CD Special Primary:	497
10th CD Special General:	1,305
General Election:	72,657

Secure Ballot Drop Boxes

Executive Orders issued in 2020 required the UCBOE to install 13 secure ballot drop boxes for voters' convenience in returning their vote by mail ballot. The UCBOE installed 24 secure ballot drop boxes throughout the county. There is a ballot drop box in each municipality. Additionally, drop boxes were installed on the Kean University campus in Union, the Union County College campus in Cranford and a drop box was installed in front of the UCBOE main office in Elizabeth. The ballot drop boxes are ADA accessible, under 24/7 camera surveillance and available to voters 24/7. The UCBOE picks up the drop boxes and processes containers in accordance with guidelines promulgated by the New Jersey Department of State, Division of Elections. The bipartisan teams picking up the ballot drop boxes are escorted by officers in the Union County Police Department.

- The Springfield ballot drop box opened on January 2, 2024 for the Cranford Special School Election on January 23, 2024.
- The Westfield drop boxes opened on March 26, 2024 for the Westfield Annual School Board Election on April 16, 2023.
- All 24 ballot drop boxes opened on April 19, 2024 for the 2024 Presidential Primary Election.
- Drop boxes for the 10th Congressional District Special Primary Election were available starting May 31, 2024, which coincided with the Primary Election. The designated drop boxes for this election stayed open until Election Day on July 16, 2024.
- The ballot drop boxes for the Scotch Plains – Fanwood Special School Election were available starting August 5, 2024. The designated drop boxes for this election stayed open until Election Day on September 17, 2024.
- The drop boxes for the 10th Congressional District Special General Election were available starting August 5, 2024. The designated drop boxes for this election stayed open until Election Day on September 18, 2024.
- All 24 ballot drop boxes opened on September 20, 2024 for the Presidential General Election.

The secure ballot drop boxes provided a safe and direct alternative for delivery of mail-in ballots to the UCBOE.

Surveillance of the Secure Ballot Drop Boxes

As previously mentioned, each box is required to be under 24/7 camera surveillance once they are opened and ready to accept ballots through the recount deadline. Because there are so many cameras in place to monitor the drop boxes, there is one, consistent monitoring process for the ballot boxes. Post-election activities relative to the surveillance system include harvesting all the servers and downloading and archiving the video onto a secure server housed at the UCPD for a timeframe consistent with the state retention schedule.

Union County Board of Elections Tally Center

The UCBOE continued to maintain its tally center at the main office in Elizabeth. In the interest of continued transparency, a livestream feed which was started in 2020, continues with each election. The more voters can see of the process, the more likely they are to trust the process. The UCBOE livestreams the tallying of the ballots for each election through its zoom link.

Post-Election Audits

The Union County Election Board conducted its post-election audits of both the 10th Congressional Special General Election and the Presidential General election pursuant to N.J.S.A. 19:61-9 and guidelines promulgated by the New Jersey Secretary of State. The purpose of a post-election audit is to prove the accuracy of the electronic tally equipment when compared to the voter verified paper audit trail. The voter verified paper audit trail is inherent with vote-by-mail ballots and provisional ballots. Voting machines generate a voter verified paper audit trail which is reviewed by the voter prior to them casting their vote. The guidelines required a hand-eye audit of 2% of the batch units created for each congressional district.

The House of Representatives was the only contest audited for the 10th Congressional Special General Election. The contests audited for the Presidential General Election included US President, US Senate, the House of Representatives, one countywide contest (Union County Commissioners), and either mayor or town council/township committee.

The hand-eye audits were 100% consistent with the results tallied by the vote tabulators and voting machines thereby confirming the statistical accuracy of all election outcomes.

Spanish Language Election Program

The Union County Board of Elections and the United States Department of Justice entered into a Consent Decree in May 2023, solidifying a partnership to enhance the county's Spanish Language Election Program. The objective of the Union County Board of Election's Spanish Language Election Program (SLEP) is to ensure compliance with the United States Voters' Rights Act by implementing an effective minority language program for Spanish-speaking and limited English proficient voters. The UCBOE appointed a Spanish Language Election Program Coordinator (SLEP-C) and an Advisory Board to assist with these efforts.

The Board is charged increasing its bilingual poll worker workforce for every election in order to assist Spanish-speaking and limited English proficient voters and ensuring all information is available in both English and Spanish. SLEP accomplishments in 2024 include the following:

Outreach efforts to local organizations including student and teacher groups, and churches, and posting notices for bilingual poll workers in Spanish-speaking establishments and maintaining a presence at local street fairs and health fairs in locations where bilingual poll worker need is greatest.

Press releases were issued regarding the need for bilingual poll workers which have been transmitted to Spanish media outlets.

Paid advertisements on local Spanish radio stations.

Contacted county and local party chairs for assistance with hiring bilingual poll workers.

Worked with the Secretary of State's office and received a commitment from the state to increase paid media on Spanish-speaking radio and television for the recruitment of bilingual poll workers.

The SLEP-C has reviewed all supplies provided in the Election Day Supply Bag to ensure compliance at polling places on Election Day.

The SLEP-C has completed an in-office inventory of all voter and resident correspondence templates to ensure compliance with constituent letters. Correspondence is provided in both English and Spanish.

Published all legal advertisements required pursuant to election statutes in the Spanish newspaper circulating within the County of Union. Legal ads translated into Spanish continue to be posted on the UCBOE's official website.

Conducted a surname analysis in January 2024 in order to determine which election districts require a minimum number of bilingual poll workers. The day before each Election Day, each election district was staffed pursuant to the requirements promulgated by the United States Department of Justice.

Poll Worker interviews were conducted to ensure bilingual applicants are proficient in both English and Spanish.

Captions on the virtual poll worker training program continue to be translated into Spanish for bilingual poll workers and updated as changes are necessitated.

Distributed Poll Worker Needed posters and UCBOE Brochures.

Union County's Vote by Mail Processing System

UCBOE vote by mail ballot processing system has become more efficient with the redesign of the outer vote by mail envelope. The outer envelope of the vote by mail ballot has finally been redesigned to include a window envelope which allows the voter's identification number and bar code to be visible. The UCBOE purchased a camera and inventory system which attaches to the mail processing machine and captures each voter's bar code. All files and ballots are reconciled, then the file is uploaded into the SVRS. This process allows voters to see immediately on the Track by Ballot website, that their ballot has been received by our office.

Additional staff were trained on the equipment and ballot reconciliation process in 2024 to ensure timely intake of mail-in ballots.

Polling Locations

The Union County Election Board continues to seek suitable polling locations which are accessible to voters, ADA compliant and can accommodate all the new voting

equipment. Additionally, it is a priority of this Board to reduce the need to use schools as polling locations, and to urge school districts to close on Election Day, which is the preferable solution.

The UCBOE coordinates with 151 individual polling sites to administer accessible and convenient elections.

Poll Workers & Training

The poll worker pay increase together with the public's sense of duty during the Presidential Election resulted in well-staffed polling locations on each Election Day.

As part of the Spanish Language Election Program, the UCBOE conducted an outreach campaign to seek bilingual poll workers. Outreach included communication to the political parties, Union College of Union County, Kean University; distributing posters to local churches, supermarkets, municipal facilities, local businesses, and UC Parks facilities; and a significant paid advertising campaign including digital and radio outreach. Hundreds of new poll workers were hired in 2024, all of whom needed to be trained in-person which is required pursuant to statute.

In 2021, the UCBOE developed an online training platform for poll workers. The platform allows poll workers to take the training at their convenience and is available 24/7. The videos capture the new Electronic Poll Books, the Voting Machine and the processes for each facet of administering Election Day. While in-person training is required for first time poll workers, the virtual platform is very popular for new poll workers seeking additional training prior to Election Day. Further, seasoned poll workers can take their biannually-required training remotely.

Poll workers were trained on the new process for issuing provisional ballots in advance of the Primary Election. The process was piloted in the 2023 Westfield Annual School Board Election. Voters are now required to mark their provisional ballot on the voting machine prior to insertion in the provisional ballot envelope. This change was made in the primary in anticipation of election night reporting legislation which would require the UCBOE to report the number of provisional ballots issued on election night. In order to comply with the legislation, the provisional ballot voter needs to be processed in the Electronic Poll Book.

The online training was also updated to include a second set of training courses which provide Spanish subtitles for bilingual poll workers. This program was grant funded by the state.

The Union County Election Board conducted 38 poll worker training classes including classes for first time poll workers, early voting poll workers, early voting super poll workers and Election Day master poll workers. Finally, the Board hosted 18 equipment open houses allowing poll workers hands-on experience with the voting machines and electronic poll books without having to attend a formal training session. The open houses are very popular and well-attended.

Election Legislation & Its Continued Impact

Some new processes and guidelines put into effect to facilitate the election process during the global pandemic have been codified into election statutes, which will remain part of our election landscape going forward including early voting, election night reporting, ballot drop boxes and the signature cure laws.

Fortunately, the legislature did not enact any new legislation in 2024 during the Presidential Election cycles.

Early Voting

For the first time in the 2021 General Election, the state introduced Early Voting, expanding voters' rights in New Jersey. The county opened seven early voting sites countywide, allowing any voter to go to any one of the sites and cast their vote on their specific ballot. Sites are staffed and equipped to manage expected turnout. As it continues to grow with popularity, early voting will become an essential part of our voting culture.

Election Night Reporting

New legislation signed in 2023 requires Election Boards to report the number of ballots counted and the number of ballots remaining to be counted from Election Day through certification. In anticipation of the legislation being signed, the UCBOE changed the process for administering provisional ballots so poll workers could be properly trained ahead of the last. The statute requires provisional ballots issued on Election Day to be reported by municipality. The statute also required vote by mail ballots which have been counted to be reported on Election Day, as well as

the number of ballots remaining to be counted. This information must be updated daily from election night through certification.

Secure Vote by Mail Ballot Drop Boxes

The secure vote by mail drop boxes installed in 2020 will continue to be a part of our election process, available to voters as an alternative to mailing their ballots. Our process of secure transfer of ballots from the drop boxes to the office for processing will continue.

Signature Cure Law

For the first time in 2021, voters were able to cure signature deficiencies on their ballot. If a voter did not sign their certificate envelope or their signature did not match what is on file in the State Voter Registration System, the voter was provided an opportunity to cure their ballot. Voters have until 48 hours prior to certification to cure their ballot. The new law requires Board Members to meet regularly starting three weeks before Election Day. Finally, the Board is required to reach out to voters who did not respond to the letter with a phone call or email, if such information is available.

2025 Initiatives

ADA Compliance

The Board will continue to work with our local election partners as well as federal officials to ensure ADA compliance at all polling locations.

Early Voting

The UCBOE will continue to work with state and local partners to successfully administer Early Voting periods in the primary and general elections. The UCBOE will open 8 early voting sites throughout the county for the Gubernatorial Elections. Early voting was an overwhelming success in the 2024, especially in the 2024 Presidential General Election. The UCBOE is hopeful the trend will continue as voters realize the convenience and security of early voting.

Elections

The Board is prepared to execute the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Special School Election on January 28, 2025, the Westfield Annual School Board Election in April 2025, and the 2025 Gubernatorial Primary and General Elections, School Board Elections and any other special elections which may arise during the course of the year.

Election Equipment Upgrades

The UCBOE will seek to upgrade the voting machines. First, the back-up batteries in the voting machines, which provide power to the machine in the event of an emergency, need to be replaced. This is a tremendous task but will no doubt ensure continuity of operations in the event of an emergency at a polling location.

Additionally, the UCBOE intends to equip each voting machine with a light to illuminate the ballot card for the voter's review prior to casting their vote. It has been communicated that it is often difficult to read the ballot card while inside the privacy curtain. This project would certainly enhance voter experience.

Community Outreach

The Union County Board of Elections will be aggressive in urging residents to register early for the upcoming elections and to confirm their intended party affiliation ahead of the gubernatorial primary election.

The Board will also continue its outreach to rehabilitation centers, nursing homes and assistive living facilities in efforts to ensure residents are not disenfranchised. Outreach to schools will continue as an important lesson in government and civic participation.

The Board will continue its public outreach campaign with respect to the Spanish Language Election Program in order to enhance awareness of the elections process to Spanish speaking and limited-English proficient voters and to augment the bilingual poll worker workforce.

The Election Board will send notice to all Union County voters affected by election district or polling location changes as necessitated by circumstances.

Grant Awards

The Union County Election Board will continue to seek grant awards to enhance elections security and ensure ADA compliance at our polling locations, in addition to awards to fund early voting in order to offset the county's financial obligation.

Legislative Compliance & Activism

The UCBOE will continue to work with the New Jersey Association of Election Officials, legislative leaders and the New Jersey Division of Elections as new election laws are being deliberated and ultimately become law to ensure compliance with all election statutes.

The UCBOE will continue to advocate for legislative changes which will enhance the voter's experience.

Outreach for the ExpressVote XL Voting Machines and Electronic Poll Books

The Union County Board of Elections will resume its voter outreach and poll worker education relative to the new ExpressVote XL Voting Machines and Electronic Poll Books. As the office responsible for the voting machines and executing a smooth election day, it is incumbent upon the Board to continue an aggressive voter education program.

Poll Workers & Training

The Board will continue to augment the poll worker workforce and increase bilingual poll workers with poll workers who are responsible, reliable and technologically astute.

The UCBOE will continue to revise and improve the online training platform as well as offer in-person instruction to new poll workers.

Finally, the voting equipment open houses are very successful. It is anticipated that many open house opportunities will be available for the 2025 election cycles.

Rutgers Cooperative Extension

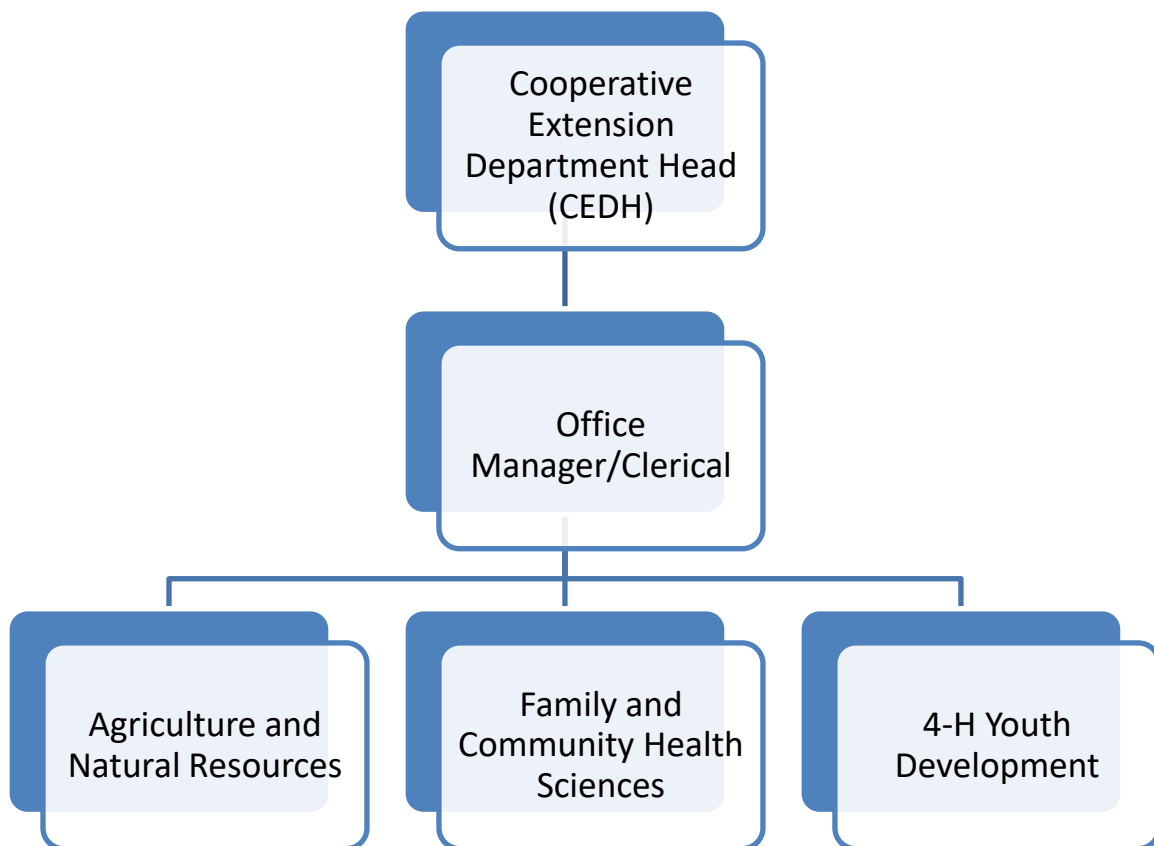
Agriculture and Natural Resources

Family and Community Health Sciences (FCHS)

4-H Youth Development

Organizational Chart

Rutgers Cooperative Extension



RUTGERS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION OF UNION COUNTY

Mission

The mission of NJAES Rutgers Cooperative Extension is to ensure healthy lifestyles; provide productive futures for youth, adults, and communities; enhance and protect environmental resources; ensure economic growth and agricultural sustainability; and improve food safety, food waste, nutrition and health by disseminating science-based knowledge through outreach programs.

Programs & Services

Agricultural & Natural Resources Department

Volunteer Master Gardeners and Environmental Stewards, trained by Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE), provide educational programs and services to residents of Union County.

Earth Day, Every Day Webinar Series continues to offer this free, public series in March, 2025. Recordings are now available online.

Invasive Species and Habitat Restoration initiative working with County Parks & Recreation to train volunteers to eradicate invasive plants as part of the WRIP Strike Force for the Watchung Reservation.

RCE welcomes a new NJDEP AmeriCorps Watershed Ambassador who will plan and implement projects focused on educating the public on protecting water quality and local natural resources.

Programs for the County, Municipal and Turf & Landscape Professional Industries

- East Asian Longhorn Tick: RCE continues to serve as a tick submission site for the NJ Department of Agriculture.
- North Jersey Ornamental Horticulture Conference provides turf and landscape professionals with research-based information to provide their customers with

environmentally sound lawn and landscape services. It enhances professionals ‘careers’ by offering licensing recertification opportunities.

- School IPM Coordinator Training: Over 476 professionals participated in state-mandated School IPM Coordinator training, including representatives from the Union County Educational Services Commission and several county school districts.

Family & Community Health Sciences Department

Health Equity, Diversity and Well-Being along with nutrition, diet and health are the focus of the Family & Community Health Sciences (FCHS) Department. FCHS provides on-line and in-person workshops, publications, and learning opportunities combining research and practical advice including healthy meals to reduce the risk of chronic disease, improved awareness of environmental health issues and food waste, food safety, health literacy, health finance, and the importance of lifestyle changes for optimum wellness.

- Wellness Wednesdays with FCHS NJ, a weekly, one-hour free educational on-line series of wellness programs, emphasize the need for behavior change to improve the health and quality of life of individuals and families.
- The Small Steps to Health and Wealth™ book, classes, newsletters and on-line programs emphasize health and financial management goals which is part of a nationwide program supported by NIFA/USDA. The book is being updated for a third edition in 2025.
- The Union County Chronic Disease Committee of the North Jersey Health Collaborative works to provide on-line needs assessments, conferences and county-wide committees to address important issues of obesity and chronic disease prevention in Union County and New Jersey.

4-H Youth Development Department

- The 4-H Program provides youth with the knowledge, skills, and motivation to function effectively in a global society.
- Youth develop positive attitudes, competencies, and skills through 4-H clubs that are critical for employment and effective citizenship.
- 4-H programs include: Leadership Development, the Master Tree Steward Program, the Summer Science Program, and Life Skill Development weekends, conferences, and camps.

- 4-H facilitates science and horticulture training for afterschool providers and provides programming for Union County Parks Department, and the Union County Shade Tree Department.

2024 Accomplishments

Agriculture and Natural Resources

The RCE North Jersey Ornamental Horticulture Conference- 63rd Anniversary

Rutgers Cooperative Extension has offered a three-day professional symposium for landscape professionals for 63 years. As the industry has changed, Extension has been there to keep horticulture industry businesses and county/municipal employees educated about best management practices and enabled them to keep their professional certifications. Each year Extension Agents, Specialists, Rutgers Plant Diagnostic Lab Professionals and representatives from the NJ Department of Environmental Protection and the industry, provide professionals with information they use to improve their horticultural practices.

91% of the 2024 Symposium participants (263 professionals)

- indicated they will make more informed pest management decisions
- 84% of the participants who have attended previous symposiums reported they practice Integrated Pest Management
- Participants have been able to maintain 213 professional certifications

School IPM Coordinator Training

- Madeline Flahive DiNardo is on the team of Rutgers, NJ DEP, and industry professionals and the NJ Association of Designated Persons, who offer this free, state-mandated program to all school districts in NJ.
- During the 23-24 school year, 574 school professionals, including administrators, facility and grounds managers and staff from Berkeley Heights, Fanwood, Hillside, Plainfield, Scotch Plains, and Rahway attended the training.

Rutgers Master Gardener Program

- The Master Gardener volunteer training program was held as a hybrid virtual and in person course January – May 2024 with 30 Union County residents participating in the program. This Master Gardener cohort has contributed 661

hours of service since they starting the training program and five have earned the status of Certified Master Gardener (60 hours).

Rutgers Master Gardener Service Projects in 2024

Eighty-five (85) Master Gardeners reported a 5,519 hours of volunteer service for calendar year 2024 as of November 2024. These efforts average to about 65 hours per volunteer reporting.

The dollar value of these volunteers' contribution to the county is \$195,924.50. According to the Independent Sector, the value of volunteer efforts is \$35.50 per hour for New Jersey. <https://independentsector.org/resource/value-of-volunteer-time/>

- The Master Gardeners continue to update their public website: <https://mastergardeners-uc.org/>
- The annual Spring Garden Fair was held at the Demonstration Garden at Trailside in May 2024. The fair was attended by over 1,000 gardening enthusiasts!
- The Master Gardener Newsletter continues to be published on monthly basis. Educational Master Gardener continuing education meetings have been held virtually.
- The Garden Helpline responded to 340 inquires as of November 2024. Consumers were glad to consult with our volunteers on their home gardening endeavors! It is our hope that with capital improvements to the 151 Grant Street site, and support from the office of public information, we will be able to bring our outreach numbers back to our average of 1,000 inquires annually pre-pandemic.
- Master Gardeners recycled over 500 pounds of plastic through the TREX recycling program. As a result, a new bench made of recycled plastic has been received for the demonstration garden in Trailside.
- The “Introduction to Horticultural Therapy” committee was glad to be able to offer their “hands – on” horticulture classes again. In 2024, the program was offered at Garwood Seniors and Senior Spirit in Roselle.

Trailside Greenhouse and Demonstration Garden

- The “Sharing Garden” committee donated over 1,000 pounds of fresh vegetables, small fruits and herbs to local food pantries. The agencies Master Gardeners partner with serve anywhere from about 15 families to 200 individual clients.

Some of the agencies distribute the fruits and vegetables, others provide mobile meals, still others cook on site for their clients.

- The Master Gardener Docents offered tours of the demonstration garden during Wild Earth Fest and to a Girl Scout troop studying pollinators. Community organizations are welcome to request guided tours of the demonstration gardens.
- Our “Gardening with Children” volunteers collaborated with the Union County Parks Department Summer Camp program at Trailside to deliver 6 sessions in the demonstration garden. Each session had a theme that the Master Gardeners created including hands-on activities related to the topic for the campers to enjoy. There were 82 campers participating.

Environmental and Natural Resource Management Initiatives

Native Plant Propagation and Donation

- Native plants support birds, bees, and are vital for local food webs and ecosystem services. Agent Michele Bakacs continues to partner with Middlesex County Extension to propagate native plants that support pollinators and increase habitat for wildlife. Volunteers help grow plants from seed and local organizations can apply for donations for their habitat conservation projects. 150 plants were donated to organizations in Union County in 2024.
- Michele worked with Cranford to implement their Eco-Friendly Yard program for residents last Spring funded through a Sustainable Jersey grant. Close to 70 residents watched a 30-minute video on sustainable landscaping practices for protecting the watershed and then received native plants for their yards. [The recording is available here.](#)

Watchung Reservation Invasive Species Strike Force

- Agent Bakacs continues to coordinate with Union County Parks on invasive species management in the Watchung Reservation
- In 2024, 15 volunteers spent over 120 hours removing invasive exotic plants along trails and meadows in the Reservation that are outcompeting native plants. These plants include invasive shrubs, trees, and vines such as barberry, winged burning bush, angelica tree, and bittersweet which are overtaking the Reservation and threatening ecosystem health.
- Michele initiated a new series titled “Invasive Species of the Month”. The purpose of this series is to highlight those organisms that are non-native to New Jersey and cause economic or environmental harm, or harm to humans. Thus far,

8 invasive plants have been covered that can be found in Union County parks and properties and are available at <https://envirostewards.rutgers.edu/tag/invasive-species/> The series goes out to over 4000 recipients.

- Michele taught over 660 landscapers and Extension volunteers invasive plant management including proper pesticide applications for forest health and native plant ecology for sustainable landscaping. For example, she taught at the January NJ Nursery and Landscaper Association Total Pro Expo in Edison.

Rutgers Environmental Stewards Volunteer Program

- The program was a hybrid of online and in-person learning focusing on enabling volunteers to take action to protect the environment in their communities. Over 80 Stewards participated in the state-wide program in 2024 contributing over 1,814 impact hours on environmental projects in their communities.
- Michele helped pilot an Advanced Forest Stewardship program focusing on training volunteers, county personnel, and contractors of forest health and management. This hybrid class took place over 4 days including one day spent in the Watchung Reservation with 15 participants.

Rutgers Earth Day Every Day Webinar Series

- Agent Bakacs and co-workers continued the popular “Earth Day, Every Day” weekly webinar series. The series focused on steps that everyone could take while at home to protect the environment.
- 2024 programming focused on climate change and included “The Winds of Change: Environmental Impacts from an Altered Climate” and “The Elements of Natural Resources”.
- Over 1100 people participated in this programming with an additional 1000 people watching the recordings available online at <https://envirostewards.rutgers.edu/Earth-Day.html>.

NJDEP AmeriCorps Watershed Ambassador

- RCE of Union County is the host organization for the NJDEP AmeriCorps Watershed Ambassador for the Arthur Kill watershed management area (known as WMA 7). This area includes the following watersheds: Rahway River/ Woodbridge Creek, Elizabeth River, Piles Creek/ Morses Creek, and part of Newark Bay.

- The goal of this program is to promote watershed stewardship through education, direct community involvement, and monitoring the health of our waterways through conducting stream assessments.
- Kaitlyn Pinto, our September 2024 - July 2025 Ambassador, is targeted to complete 1700 hours of service and accrue 500 volunteer hours by the end of her term.
- Examples of her service include tabling with macroinvertebrates and the enviroscape, educational presentations, and organizing citizen science projects with students.
- The ambassador facilitated a native seed planting and trail maintenance day at Ernest L. Oros Wildlife Preserve in Avenel with Woodbridge River Watch. The ambassador presented biological assessments and macroinvertebrates for Westfield High School AP Environmental Science classes and is planning a road salt monitoring initiative at Cranford High School. The ambassador has organized a forest restoration project with the Garwood Green Team. She has attended local environmental commission meetings to plan partnership projects.

Family & Community Health Sciences (FCHS) Department

Wellness Wednesdays with FCHS

- *Wellness Wednesdays with FCHS* webinars were offered on Zoom and will continue through the Rutgers Cooperative Extension state website.
- FCHS and RCE is located within the Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Sciences. These free programs, offered since 2019 focus on a variety of health-related topics including food, nutrition, finances, food safety, food waste, physical activity, healthy homes and healthy lifestyles. The 45-minute programs are presented on Wednesdays at 12:30 pm on Zoom and are free to the public. <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/online-event-series/wellness-wednesdays.php> Programs are archived so they can be viewed at any time.

Small Steps to Health and Wealth™

- Dr. Karen Ensle, FCHS Educator/Department Head and Dr. Barbara O'Neill, Financial Specialist, co-authors of *Small Steps to Health & Wealth™* continue to provide health and finance messages that are updated monthly on the county website.
- During 2024 posters were presented at one state and one national professional conferences.

- The Small Steps program includes adult and youth curriculums, webinars, challenges, podcasts, a blog, tweet chats and was cited by USDA-NIFA as “a nationwide Extension Program with impact.”
- The *Small Steps to Health & Wealth*[™] book is being updated and the 3rd edition will be available in 2025-2026.

Healthy Family Meals

- Dinnertime is a time of respite from the business of everyday life. Sharing the day’s activities is an important part of children’s social and emotional development.
- Research has suggested family meals promote healthful dietary intake in youth and reduce obesity during childhood and adolescence. The Department of Family and Community Health Sciences is committed to families sharing healthy meals. <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/family-meals>. The website offers: Easy, fast, meal ideas, recipes, Facebook live food videos, food safety tips, conversation starters, webinars, fact sheets, and other free resources.

Get Moving, Get Healthy NJ with FCHS

- FCHS programs encourage healthier eating and improved physical activity for NJ families through multidisciplinary health promotion programs.
- The FCHS Educator provided zoom classes for Jewish Family Services, Provident Bank, Union, Mercer County and Westfield libraries, AARP of Linden and several Elizabeth agencies.
- *Visions* quarterly newsletters include reliable health-related topics including chronic disease and obesity prevention topics.
- Several free weekly “Healthy on the Job” and “Healthy at Home” newsletters are available from our FCHS Workforce Wellness and Get Moving, Get Healthy FCHS programs. For more information contact kensle@njaes.rutgers.edu .

Rutgers E-College On-line Classes

- In 2024, the RCE Department Head taught 47 undergraduate juniors and seniors in the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences (SEBS). A three credit “Wellness Behavior” course continues to generated funding for statewide Cooperative Extension use. The course is required as part of a certificate program in FCHS for undergraduate students.
- Course evaluations ranged from 4.4 – 4.8 out of a 5.0 scale. This course continues to be taught twice a year and is part of the FCHS Department, 18- credit

Community Health Outreach certificate program for undergraduate students at Rutgers.

Membership on Local Boards

- RCE Department Head Dr. Karen Ensle is a member of the Union County Chronic Disease Committee of the North Jersey Health Collaborative; the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee of the Gateway Family YMCA, and a member of the Strengthening Families Initiative Stakeholders Committee. Meetings since the beginning of 2022 have been on either Zoom or in person. A full-day sponsored Curriculum Connections conference was offered to school professionals with Ensle presenting a session on *Climate Friendly Eating*. Participants rated the session as excellent with evaluations from 74 school professionals rating the presentation 4.7 out of 5.0 scale. Attendance at this state-wide conference included FCS teachers, administrators and allied health professionals along with FCCLA teens.

4-H Youth Development

4-H Science Ambassador Program

Bringing science education for out-of- school time.

In 2024 4-H offered science programming at the Union, Elizabeth, Plainfield and Rahway libraries. Topics presented were engineering and the scientific method. Programs were well attended with over 150 students participating.

Assisting with the library programs were five 4-H Science Ambassadors. Ambassadors in 2024 were Maria Chaves from Elizabeth; Josiah Phillipe from South Plainfield; Basil Glacken from Westfield; Immanuel Muhammad from Plainfield; and Anika Jolly of New Providence. These ambassadors spent the week of July 8th through 12th at Rutgers University being trained for this outreach program. They also explored various research projects being done at Rutgers.

4-H Clubs

Developing life skills in youth through a nationally recognized youth development program. The 4-H program has been in existence since the early 1900's and today has over 6 million members nationwide. The 4-Hers – stand for their pledge... I pledge my head to clearer thinking; my heart to greater loyalty; my hands to larger

service and my health to better living for my club, community, country and my world.

- 120 Union County youth from grades 1 through 12 participated in twelve 4-H clubs in 2024. Each club focused on a specific interest area of youth such as sewing, cooking and engineering. The majority of the clubs meet at the Colleen Fraser Building in Westfield. Two clubs met at the Union County Archery Range at Oak Ridge Park and the 4-H Gardening Club met at the Master Gardener's Greenhouse in the Watchung Reservation.
- Club members developed leadership and communication skills through participation in various club activities, community service, and serving as club officers.
- 4-H service activities for the year were: tree plantings at Oak Ridge Park, sandwich making for St. Josephs' Social Service Center in Elizabeth, grocery sorting at NJ Foodbank in Hillside, and assisting with 4-H Public Presentation Night and 4-H Project Night.
- Adult Volunteer Leaders are screened and trained by the 4-H Agent to facilitate the clubs. Adult volunteers are taught how to use a hobby to teach youth team-building, communication, and decision-making skills. There are currently 20 active adult volunteer 4-H Club leaders in Union County.

4-H Public Presentation Night 2024

Improving communication skills in youth. This program was held at the Union County Magnet School on March 22nd. Forty 4-H members participated along with their parents. Youth gained confidence in public speaking and ten volunteer judges provided feedback to the youth.

Union County 4-H Camp Programs

Helping youth develop life skills and outdoor education skills. Thirty-five Union County youth participated in programs held at the Lindley G. Cook 4-H Camp in Sussex County during 2024. The camp is located in Branchville, NJ.

Environmental Awareness and Protection

Educating youth about the community forests in Union County

- Educating youth about trees is the role of the 4-H Master Tree Stewards. Thanks to these 20 adult volunteers, over 1,800 children in Union County learned about

trees. The Master Tree Steward volunteers completed 20 hours of training provided by 4-H Agent, prior to teaching children.

- Master Tree Stewards also judged poems that children submitted to the Union County Commissioners' Arbor Day Poetry Contest.
- The Master Tree Stewards helped train youth in tree planting and care as part of Union County Commissioners Arbor Day Tree Program.
- In 2024, the Tree Stewards visited classrooms in 19 municipalities and taught children about tree identification, biology, and ecology. Educating youth about trees is crucial to the future of our environment. An end-of-program evaluation indicated the Rutgers/4-H Class results on Tree Appreciation were: 71% of students said they were less likely to damage a tree, 90% said they were more likely to take better care of trees around their homes, 86% said they were more likely to take better care of the trees around their schools, 70% said they will observe trees more closely, 69% said they are more likely to plant a tree, 98% said they learned that there are many different kinds of trees, 84% said they were more likely to stop others from damaging trees, 78% said they want to learn more about tree care and planting, 83% said they will tell someone about what they learned.

Union County Commissioners' Arbor Day Tree Program

- Working together the 4-H and the Union County Shade Tree Advisory Board implemented the *Union County Commissioners' Arbor Day Tree Program*. The objective of this program is to increase youth's appreciation for trees by planting and caring for one tree. To this end, the program provides free trees to schools to plant for Arbor Day.
- In 2024, one hundred trees (Redbud) were distributed to public and private schools in Union County. Fifteen schools attended a training session on tree care planting. Trees were purchased with funds from the Union County Commissioners'.

Improving Union County's Community Forest

- 4-H Youth worked with the Union County Disc Golf employees to plant \$2,000 worth of trees at Oak Ridge Park in Clark. (Disc golf is played much like golf. Instead of a ball and clubs, though, players use a flying disc. The sport was formalized in the 1970s and shares with golf, the object of completing each hole in the fewest strokes or, in the case of disc golf, fewest throws).

2025 Initiatives

Agriculture and Natural Resource Management

Annie's Project

- The “Annie Goes Online: Farm Management at your Kitchen Table” course is available to residents engaged in farming or interested in becoming a farmer. To access the course, contact Madeline Flahive DiNardo at flahive@ucnj.org. Madeline is the new state coordinator for the state program and plans to do a needs assessment of local agencies, professional organizations and community gardeners and farmers to develop future programs that meet the production information and business management needs of farmers.
- A \$69,000 grant proposal was submitted to the USDA Extension Risk Management Education program in November 2024. Awards will be announced in Feb. 2025. If funded, “Networks to Reduce Risk: Annie's Project Builds Viable Farms in Urban and Rural NJ” will feature field trips to urban and rural farms, farm safety demonstrations, and the Rutgers Food Innovation Center value-added production facility featuring commercial kitchens and processing equipment. There will be a five- week online course featuring speakers on: land availability and leasing agreements, farm transition planning, marketing value added farm products, agritourism, insurance, and emotional wellness. The goal of the program is to give urban and rural farmers opportunities to network with fellow farmers and service professionals such as the USDA Farm Service Agency and agriculture service who provide crop and farm insurance along with potential distributors for their farm products.

Community Gardening

- RCE will continue working with schools and community organizations by providing information on establishing and maintaining community gardens.
- The Community Gardening curriculum will continue to be offered as on-line classes via the Rutgers NJAES website, www.njaes.rutgers.edu.

Greenhouse Facility at Trailside Nature and Science Center

- The greenhouse provides growing space for the “Sharing Garden” and other Master Gardener projects such as the flower bouquets for distribution at food pantries and horticultural therapy programs. The 4-H horticulture club also uses the greenhouse to learn how to grow houseplants and vegetables.

- The greenhouse will be used as a classroom for Master Gardener students, people with disabilities and the general public. Plans are underway in cooperation with the County Engineering and Parks Departments to improve the garden site for accessibility. We look forward to expanding our programming efforts for people with disabilities.

Integrated Pest Management Education Programs

- Integrated Pest Management (IPM) education programs for School IPM Coordinators, County public works, parks and golf course employees, and arborists, turf, landscape professionals will continue to be offered. These programs place an emphasis on the reduction of pesticide use on county, commercial and residential properties.
- The North Jersey Ornamental Horticulture Conference will be held as three, full day in-person sessions at County College of Morris in January 2025.

Rutgers Master Gardener Program

- The Master Gardener Class of 2025 will begin in person at the Trailside Nature and Science Center beginning in January. Union County will be participating in a new Rutgers Master Gardener training curriculum pilot program.
- The Master Gardeners Garden Helpline, (908) 654-9852 and email mastergardeners@ucnj.org. will continue to operate.
- Gardening lectures will be held at the demonstration gardens and greenhouse facility for the general public.
- “Docent Tours” of the demonstration garden will be offered to community organizations. Tours of the gardens will be led by trained Master Gardeners.
- Continue to manage the native plant nursery and donate plants to local organizations for habitat conservation projects.
- Rutgers Environmental Stewards program will again be offered online, in the evenings to attract more participation starting in late January and running till May. The Advanced Forest Stewards program will be offered in the fall.
- *Earth Day, Every Day Webinar Series* continue to be offered to the public as a series in March, 2025. Recordings are available online.
- Invasive Species and Habitat Restoration initiative will continue to be offered by Bakacs. She will continue to work with County Parks & Recreation to train volunteers including trail Stewards to eradicate invasive plants as part of the WRIP Strike Force for the Watchung Reservation.
- NJDEP AmeriCorps Watershed Ambassador planned projects include: stream assessment trainings with Kean University, rain garden installation in Cranford, and tabling presentations for the South Mountain Conservancy pollinator

meadow restoration project. She has collaborated with local organizations and schools to conduct stream assessment trainings with students and girl scouts and will continue these in 2025.

Family & Community Health Sciences (FCHS)

Nutrition Education for Adults and Seniors

The FCHS Educator Ensle will continue to support nutrition, finance and wellness education sessions for adults and seniors through collaboration with Rutgers and Montclair State Dietetic Internships, College of St. Elizabeth, and Aramark students. Practical hands-on training is offered through local pantries, senior sites, and community groups.

Get Moving, Get Healthy NJ with FCHS Initiative - Health Equity, Diversity, and Well-Being in New Jersey

FCHS continues to offer on-line Zoom or Webex workshops such as the “Aging with Good Health in Mind”, “Top Ten Food Safety Myths”, “Healthy Snacks for Adults and Teens”, “Keeping Your Home Healthy”, “Blue Zone Diets”, “Mediterranean Diet”, “DASH Diet”, “Small Steps to Eating Well and Moving More”, “Improving Family Meals”. “NEW Dietary Guidelines for Americans”, “Physical Activity for Mature Adults”, “Functional Foods for Life” and chronic disease prevention classes.

NJ Empower to Prevent Diabetes Prevention Program

A FREE, yearlong CDC FCHS diabetes prevention program is being offered through a virtual format on Zoom. Trained CDC Lifestyle Coaches help participants to adapt and maintain healthy eating, physical activity and coping with changes to prevent the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes. A total of 16 weeks of zoom classes and 10 bi-weekly monthly maintenance sessions keep participants on-track. If interested, contact Dr. Ensle kensle@njaes.rutgers.edu and she will assist you in getting enrolled. Classes run continuously throughout the year on a grant from NJ Department of Health.

Balancing Health, Budget, and Lifestyle Education Programs

Provide programs for consumers on “Eating a Balanced Diet on a Balanced Budget,” “Healthy Eating On-the-Run,” and “Small Steps to Health and Wealth” to assist consumers in making healthy financial and food choices for improved health, savings and debt reduction. Provide programs with emphasis on reducing food waste, food insecurity, climate change along with programs on mindful eating to

build healthy habits and reduce stress.

Functional Foods for Life Educational Series

Provide programs that emphasize the research and health benefits of consuming foods and beverages high in phytochemicals such as tea, chocolate, mushrooms, coffee, berries and fruits/vegetables.

Health Equity and Well-Being

- Provide continued support to agencies, schools, county and city governments for training and supporting local wellness policies and food policy councils to limit foods high in fat, salt and sugar, especially for limited resource populations. Provide training for developing wellness policies/programs for diverse groups that promote healthier food intake, physical activity and healthy lifestyles.
- Decrease high healthcare costs, and support food security in ending hunger through an emphasis on equity and building new partnerships. Continue to build diverse partnerships in the community to help encourage a culture of health and policy changes in Union County.

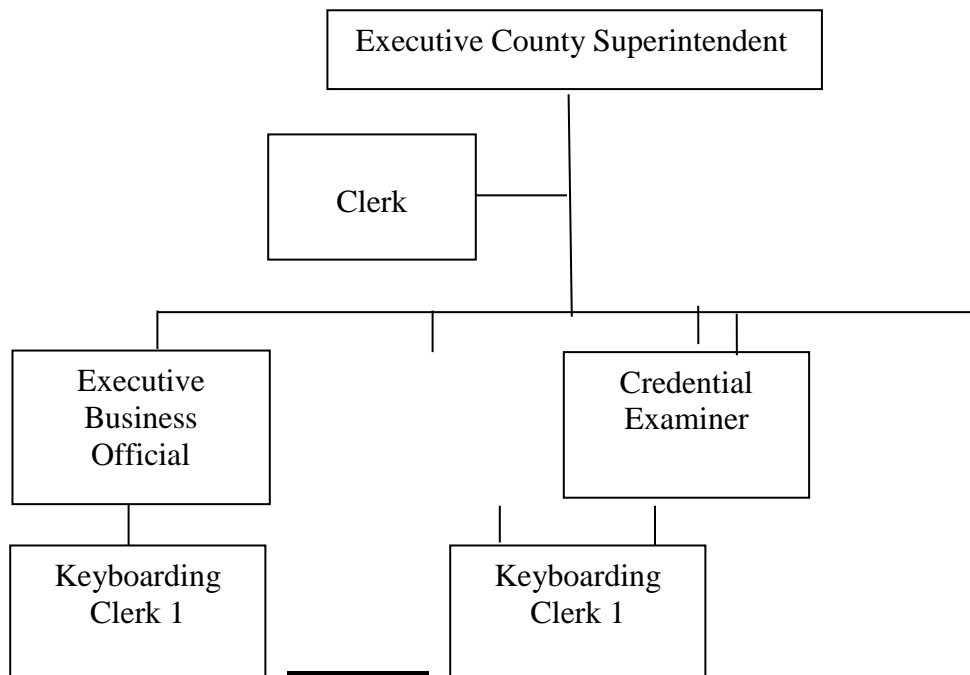
4-H Youth Development

- The 4-H Master Tree Steward Program will reach 3,000 youth.
- The 4-H Summer Science Program will recruit 10 new teen volunteers and reach over 100 youth.
- The 4-H Club Program will add an additional First Grade Variety Club and continue to recruit new leaders as needed.
- 4-H will coordinate at least three countywide activities for all 4-H youth.
- Youth enrollment in the 4-H Club Program will increase by 10%.
- Public Presentation Night participation will increase by 5%.
- At least 45 Union County youth will attend 4-H Summer Camp.
- Continue regional teen conference participation for youth.
- Recruit 10 new Master Tree Steward adult volunteers.
- Involve 1,000 youth in tree planting.
- Provide guidance along with the Union County Shade Tree Advisory Board on offering the yearly poetry contest.
- Continue to work with other county and school groups to plan and implement the Union County Arbor Day Tree Program sponsored by the Commissioners.
- Continue to search for an indoor location for the Union County 4-H Archery Club.

Superintendent of Schools

Organizational Chart

Superintendent of Schools Union County Office of Education



UNION COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

The Office of the Executive County Superintendent Union County Office of Education

Mission

The County Offices of Education are the focal point of general support, oversight and routine communications between local districts and the NJ Department of Education central offices.

The County Office is led by an Executive County Superintendent and has a core staff, which includes an Executive County Business Official, a County Education Specialist and a County Child Study Supervisor, and county office support staff.

Programs & Services

- perform onsite evaluations of school districts every three years in accordance with the NJ Quality Single Accountability Continuum (NJQSAC).
- review and approve district budgets.
- review and approve district administrative contracts.
- review and approve district transportation contracts.
- inspect school buildings to ensure compliance with health and safety codes
- issue county substitute certificates.
- conduct special education program reviews.
- provide technical assistance to school districts, boards of education and parents on a variety of topics; and support districts in responding to questions.
- respond to community, legislative and parental concerns.
- assist Department divisions in securing required data.

a. Review all school budgets of the school districts within the county, and may, pursuant to section 5 of [P.L.1996, c. 138](#) ([C.18A:7F-5](#)), disapprove a portion of a school district's proposed budget if he determines that the district has not implemented all potential efficiencies in the administrative operations of the district or if he determines that the budget includes excessive non-instructional expenses. If the executive county superintendent disapproves a portion of the school district's

budget pursuant to this paragraph, the school district shall deduct the disapproved amounts from the budget prior to publication of the budget, and during the budget year the school district shall not transfer funds back into those accounts.

b. Keep informed as to the management, methods of instruction and discipline and the courses of study and textbooks in use, the condition of the school libraries, and the condition of the real and personal property, particularly in respect to the construction, heating, ventilation and lighting of school buildings, in the local districts under his general supervision, and make recommendations in connection therewith.

c. Advise with and counsel the boards of education of the local districts under his general supervision and of any other district of the county when so requested, in relation to the performance of their duties.

d. Promote administrative and operational efficiencies and cost savings within the school districts in the county while ensuring that the districts provide a thorough and efficient system of education.

e. Based on standards adopted by the commissioner, recommend to the commissioner, who is hereby granted the authority to effectuate those recommendations, that certain school districts be required to enter arrangements with one or more other school districts or educational services commissions for the consolidation of the district's administrative services.

f. Recommend to the commissioner the elimination of laws the executive county superintendent determines to be unnecessary State education mandates, other than the categories of laws set forth in section 3 of [P.L.1996, c. 24](#) ([C.52:13H-3](#));

g. Eliminate districts located in the county that are not operating schools on the effective date of P.L.2009, c. 78 (C.18A:8-43 et al.), in accordance with a plan and schedule included in the plan submitted to and approved by the commissioner.

h. No later than three years following the effective date of sections 42 to 58 of [P.L.2007, c. 63](#) ([C.18A:7-11](#) et al.), recommend to the commissioner a school district consolidation plan to eliminate all districts, other than county-based districts and other than preschool or kindergarten through grade 12 districts in the county, through the establishment or enlargement of regional school districts. After the approval of the plan by the commissioner, the executive county superintendent shall require each board of education covered by a proposal in the plan to conduct a special

school election, at a time to be determined by the executive county superintendent and submit there at the question whether or not the executive county superintendent's proposal for the regionalization of the school district shall be adopted. The question shall be deemed adopted if it receives a vote in accordance with the provisions of [N.J.S.18A:13-5](#) . If the question is adopted by the voters, then the regional district shall be established or enlarged in accordance with chapter 13 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

i. Promote coordination and regionalization of pupil transportation services through means such as reviewing bus routes and schedules of school districts and nonpublic schools within the county.

j. Review and approve, according to standards adopted by the commissioner, all employment contracts for superintendents of schools, assistant superintendents of schools, and school business administrators in school districts within the county, prior to the execution of those contracts.

k. Request the commissioner to order a forensic audit and to select an auditor for any school district in the county upon the determination by the executive county superintendent, according to standards adopted by the commissioner, that the accounting practices in the district necessitate such an audit.

l. Visit and examine all of the Union County schools, from time to time, under his general supervision and exercise general supervision over them in accordance with the rules prescribed from time to time by the State board.

m. Permit a district to submit to the voters a separate proposal or proposals for additional funds pursuant to paragraph (9) of subsection d. of section 5 of [P.L.1996, c. 138](#) ([C.18A:7F-5](#)), only if: (1) the district provides the executive county superintendent with written documentation that the district has made efforts to enter into shared arrangements with other districts, municipalities, counties, and other units of local government for the provision of administrative, business, purchasing, public and nonpublic transportation, and other required school district services; (2) the district certifies and provides written documentation that the district participates in on-going shared arrangements; or (3) the district certifies and provides written documentation that entering such shared arrangements would not result in cost savings or would result in additional expenses for the district;

n. Promote cooperative purchasing within the county of textbooks and other instructional materials.

- o. Coordinate with the Department of Education to maintain a real time Statewide and district-wide database that tracks the types and capacity of special education programs being implemented by each district and the number of students enrolled in each program to identify program availability and needs.
- p. Coordinate with the Department of Education to maintain a Statewide and district-wide list of all special education students served in out-of-district programs and a list of all public and private entities approved to receive special education students that includes pertinent information such as audit results and tuition charges.
- q. Serve as a referral source for districts that do not have appropriate in-district programs for special education students and provide those districts with information on placement options in other school districts.
- r. Conduct regional planning and identification of program needs for the development of in-district special education programs.
- s. Serve as a liaison to facilitate shared special education services within the county including, but not limited to direct services, personnel development, and technical assistance.
- t. Work with districts to develop in-district special education programs and services including providing training in inclusive education, positive behavior supports, transition to adult life, and parent-professional collaboration.
- u. Provide assistance to districts in budgetary planning for resource realignment and reallocation to direct special education resources into the classroom.
- v. Report on a regular basis to the commissioner on progress in achieving the goal of increasing the number of special education students educated in appropriate programs with non-disabled students.
- w. Render a report to the commissioner annually on or before September 1, in the manner and form prescribed by him, of such matters relating to the schools under his jurisdiction as the commissioner shall require.
- x. Perform such other duties as shall be prescribed by law.

Any budgetary action of the executive county superintendent under this section may be appealed directly to the commissioner, who shall render a decision within 15 days

of the receipt of the appeal. If the commissioner fails to issue a decision within 15 days of the filing of an appeal, the budgetary action of the executive county superintendent shall be deemed approved. The commissioner shall by regulation establish a procedure for such appeals.

Nothing in this section shall be construed or interpreted to contravene or modify the provisions of the "New Jersey Employer-Employee Relations Act," P.L.1941, c. 100 ([C.34:13A-1 et seq.](#)), or to limit or restrict the scope of negotiations as provided pursuant to law, or to require an employer to enter into a subcontracting agreement which affects the employment of any employee in a collective bargaining unit represented by a majority representative during the time that an existing collective bargaining agreement with the majority representative is in effect.

Each executive county superintendent shall, on or before December 1 of each year, furnish to the board of chosen freeholders of the county a statement of the amounts estimated to be necessary to be appropriated for the ensuing year for:

- a. the compensation of his clerical assistants.
- b. the supplying of furniture, supplies and equipment for his office.
- c. printing.
- d. traveling and other expenses incident to the conduct and the performance of his official duties of his office incurred by him.

The board of chosen freeholders shall fix and determine the amounts necessary to be appropriated for such purposes and shall appropriate the same accordingly.

The commissioner shall appoint an executive county business official to serve in the office of the executive county superintendent of schools for a term of three years. The executive county business official shall assist the executive county superintendent in the performance of the superintendent's duties pursuant to [N.J.S.18A:7-8](#) , and perform such other duties as determined by the commissioner.

Based on criteria developed by the commissioner, the executive county business official shall be subject to a performance assessment at least once during the three-year term. The business official may be re-appointed on the basis of a satisfactory performance assessment.

A local school district may apply to the executive county superintendent of schools to have school district services including, but not limited to, transportation, personnel, purchasing, payroll, and accounting, assumed by the office of the superintendent. If the executive county superintendent determines to assume a service, a fee may be assessed the school district for the service. The executive

county superintendent of schools may utilize county special services school districts, jointure commissions, and educational services commissions to provide services to local school boards.

2024 Accomplishments

The Union County Office of Education has created an open-door policy with Union County districts to assist them in all aspects of education. Our open-door policy helps us work with our districts to ensure the long-term success of our students by assisting them in providing each child with educational equity and access to high quality education.

Our goal is to ensure every child in and out of school, we will continue to make strides for education by offering support and leadership to our districts. Our team strives to strengthen teaching, leading and learning, and increase focus on educational success for all students.

2025 Initiatives

The Union County Office of Education, along with the New Jersey Department of Education, support our schools, educators and districts to ensure all our students have access to high quality education and achieve academic excellence.

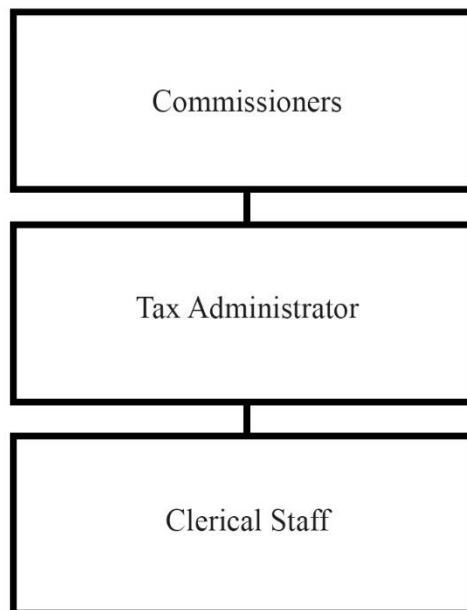
There are many positive changes to the New Jersey Department of Education; they are proven to be a successful part of the Education system. We work with all districts within Union County making sure they act according to the Fiscal Accountability Regulations and continues a full cycle of Quality Single Accountability Continuum.

As always, we focus on the changes required to code and law.

Board of Taxation

Organizational Chart

Board of Taxation



BOARD OF TAXATION

Mission

The Mission of the Tax Board is to secure the taxable value of all property in the County as prescribed by law in order that all property shall bear its full and just share of taxes.

The Union County Board of Taxation, a state agency with countywide jurisdiction, serves as an agent for the Director of the Division of Taxation; is the first line supervisor of the municipal assessor; is the custodian of the tax lists and other official records; and is the first formal level of appeal from the municipal assessor.

Programs & Services

Mandated

Supervise municipal assessors; equalize municipal assessments for apportionment of County Taxes; calculate municipal tax rates; certify Added & Omitted Assessments; publishes County Abstract of Ratables, Provide SR1-A data and other mandated reports to the Division of Taxation; hear and determine property tax appeals from regular and added assessments.

Prepare public records and make them available to the public, including tax lists; SR1-A sales ratio study.

Non-Mandated

Provide assistance to municipalities, in cooperation with the Department of Administrative Services and by then-Freeholder Resolution in 1986.

Provide on-line computer capability to all 21 municipal assessors' offices at no charge, including the printing of all tax lists, extended tax duplicates, tax bills, assessment notices, senior citizen post-tax year statements, tenant rebate notices, and various other lists or reports as required.

2024 Accomplishments

In 2024 the Union County Board of Taxation received 1,076 tax appeals. This was a decrease of 8 appeals from 2023. The number of appeals remained the same in 2024 as a result of an ever appreciating real estate market. The number of appeals filed electronically was at 83% our highest amount since beginning the online appeal system. The Board also received 20 added assessment appeals which it also heard and adjudicated. Once again, the Tax Board was able to successfully conduct all of its tax appeal hearings virtually for our 21 municipalities. Providing a safe and convenient way for tax payers to be heard.

Also in 2024 the City of Elizabeth implemented its first revaluation since 1976. By all accounts the revaluation went smoothly.

This year the Board also ordered the Townships of Hillside, Scotch Plains and Union to conduct revaluations. The Board will continue to monitor their progress as they move through the process.

Lastly, the Tax Board processed 7,713 deeds in 2024. This was a decrease of about 22% from 2023. A strong real estate market continues to keep prices elevated and supply at historically low levels.

2025 Initiatives

In 2025, the Union County Board of Taxation anticipates the number of tax appeals to remain around 2024 levels.

The Board will continue to monitor the recently ordered revaluations for the Townships of Hillside, Scotch Plains and Union. Providing assistance and guidance where necessary.

The Board will also consult with its online appeal vendor to make several improvements to the appeal filing system. Thereby making it easier to navigate and more user friendly for the tax payers of Union County.

As always, the Board will continue to review assessments in all municipalities and order revaluations when required.

Lastly, the Tax Board is always striving to improve upon its technology infrastructure and work processes in order to meet its statutory obligations to provide fair assessments and service to the residents of Union County.

