



**SOUTHERN
NEW JERSEY**
DEVELOPMENT
COUNCIL



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The Southern New Jersey Development Council proudly presents:

BUILDING SOUTH JERSEY'S WORKFORCE

Wednesday, April 5, 2023

Camden County Boathouse



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UNIVERSITY | CAMDEN

Senator Walter Rand Institute
for Public Affairs

Seeking Work in Southern New Jersey

**Southern New Jersey Development Council
Building South Jersey's Workforce**

April 5, 2023

Mavis Asiedu-Frimpong, JD, MPH, Director

Devon Ziminski, MS, Senior Research Project Administrator & Research Lead

Senator Walter Rand Institute for Public Affairs Rutgers University - Camden (WRI)

About WRI



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for Public Affairs

- Conduct **community-focused/informed research and evaluation** that **connect to public policy and practice** issues
 - Research to support decision-making in policy and practice
 - Qualitative expertise
- **Convene stakeholders** to make connections across research, policy, and practice
- Focused on **Southern New Jersey** and building **strong community partnerships**
- **Responsive to the issues of the day** in Southern New Jersey - transportation, workforce development, opioids, public health, education, etc.



Presentation Focus

- Project Partners & Background
- Research Design & Data Collection
- Findings
 - Bridging the Gap: Connecting Job Seekers and Employers - Overlapping Themes
- Recommendations
- Looking Ahead

Project Partners



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**CAMDEN COMMUNITY
PARTNERSHIP**

DRIVEN BY PROGRESS | FOCUSED ON EQUITY



**HELDRICH CENTER
FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

Research Questions

Three main exploratory research questions guided the project's methods:

1. *What are the unique challenges to labor force connection for job seekers and employers in Southern New Jersey and the City of Camden?*
1. *For individuals seeking work, what are the barriers to finding and securing a job?*
1. *For employers struggling to fill open positions, how can they connect with potential workers? What are current and future employer needs?*

Leading to: a basis for strategic conversations and solutions for future employment needs and challenges

Research Design & Data Collection

Job Seeker Interviews - 54 responses to screener survey, 31 contacted, 20 interviewed

Employer Focus Groups - 12 focus groups across broad cross-section: 41 participants from banking, construction, education, engineering, government, healthcare, manufacturing, retail, social service, technology, tourism, trades & utilities, transportation

- Data highlight **the overlapping themes** that arose in the research
- **Adds to the body of evidence around the experiences people have** in trying to find and keep jobs - builds on progress and supports targeted development of policy, programs, and initiatives **responsive to community needs**

Findings: Gaps & Opportunities

Interviews with Southern New Jersey and City of
Camden **Job Seekers**

&

Focus Groups with Southern New Jersey and City
of Camden **Employers**

**Bridging the Gap: Connecting Job Seekers and
Employers - **Overlapping Themes****

Continuous impact of COVID-19 on “how we work”

- Labor market shifts and unemployment
- Remote vs. in person; virtual vs. brick-and-mortar
- Technology access
- Home and work responsibilities

Southern New Jersey's unique landscape

- Transportation - 30-minute commute
- Industries in decline and growth
- Cost of living
- Data from coastal, southern & western SNJ counties

“I mean there’s just not a lot of jobs around here for everyone. Most of the jobs around here are at diners or the [dollar store]. The jobs that exist like industry jobs are like far away, so then transportation comes into play.” - **Job Seeker**

Mismatch between skills & available jobs

- Knowledge-based economy vs career ladder jobs
- **Middle ground:** Rise in skilled and specialty trades and occupations (such as CAD technicians, medical assistants, quality control specialists, carpenters)
- Promote locality-based middle-skill positions and acceptance of **transferable skills**

Soft-skill development

Across all industries:

- Interviewing skills, resume building, interview clothes
- Resume vs. in-person
- Appropriate work behavior / interpersonal conflict resolution
- Particularly relevant for customer service, hospitality, service roles
- Individuals to “have motivation” or to develop these skills vs. educational systems teaching these skills
- Some people do not have support networks and employers can provide training for soft skills

Employer advertisement & outreach

- Engage communities in **direct outreach to** promote job opportunities within a community
- Appropriate advertisement
- Understand community needs, offering tailored resources for job search processes and interview preparation

Removal of access barriers & focusing on job quality

- Lack of transportation and infrastructure in the region
- Inadequate or expensive childcare and/or housing
- Livable pay/wages and benefits
- Hour or day consistency

“Who is going to be able to work a full-time job, go to school, and do the [nursing school training] clinics when it’s an hour away?” - **Employer**

Equitable, flexible hiring & supervision efforts

- Specific education or certification requirements
- Various barriers of drug testing, background checks, criminal history reviews, certain experience requirements
- Targeted efforts to focus on hiring women, people of color, individuals returning from incarceration, individuals returning from caregiving
- Training for supervisors and employers on working with and supervising employees with various background experiences in providing **growth-oriented and supportive** workplace environments

Communication, feedback, & flexibility in the job application & hiring processes

- Lengthy and/or cumbersome application processes
- Lack of follow-up communication after application or interview (responsiveness and offering feedback)
- Biased automated resume screening processes
- HR staff needed

“Part of our strategy is to challenge hiring managers, that we are more descriptive not prescriptive on the posting. I need to do the audit; I have a feeling we are really being prescriptive. It is the right thing to do and will broaden our talent pool.” - **Employer**

Direct pipelines from education/training to careers; Pathways on the job

- Expanding early career awareness and education of career opportunities
- On the job training and growth, including cross-training
- Shifting from traditional occupational training to **referral models**
- Focus on transferable skills and opportunity occupations

State & federal policy barriers

- Current limits on hours able to work
- State and/or federal regulations
- Background checks, drug screenings, criminal history reviews
- Restrictive licensing and certification requirements
- Focus on outcomes (vs. number of people trained)

“ We are very unique here, and so many state programs have these little caveats. We have the need but we don’t always have the qualifications, and they [New Jersey Department of Labor] need to understand that.”

- Employer

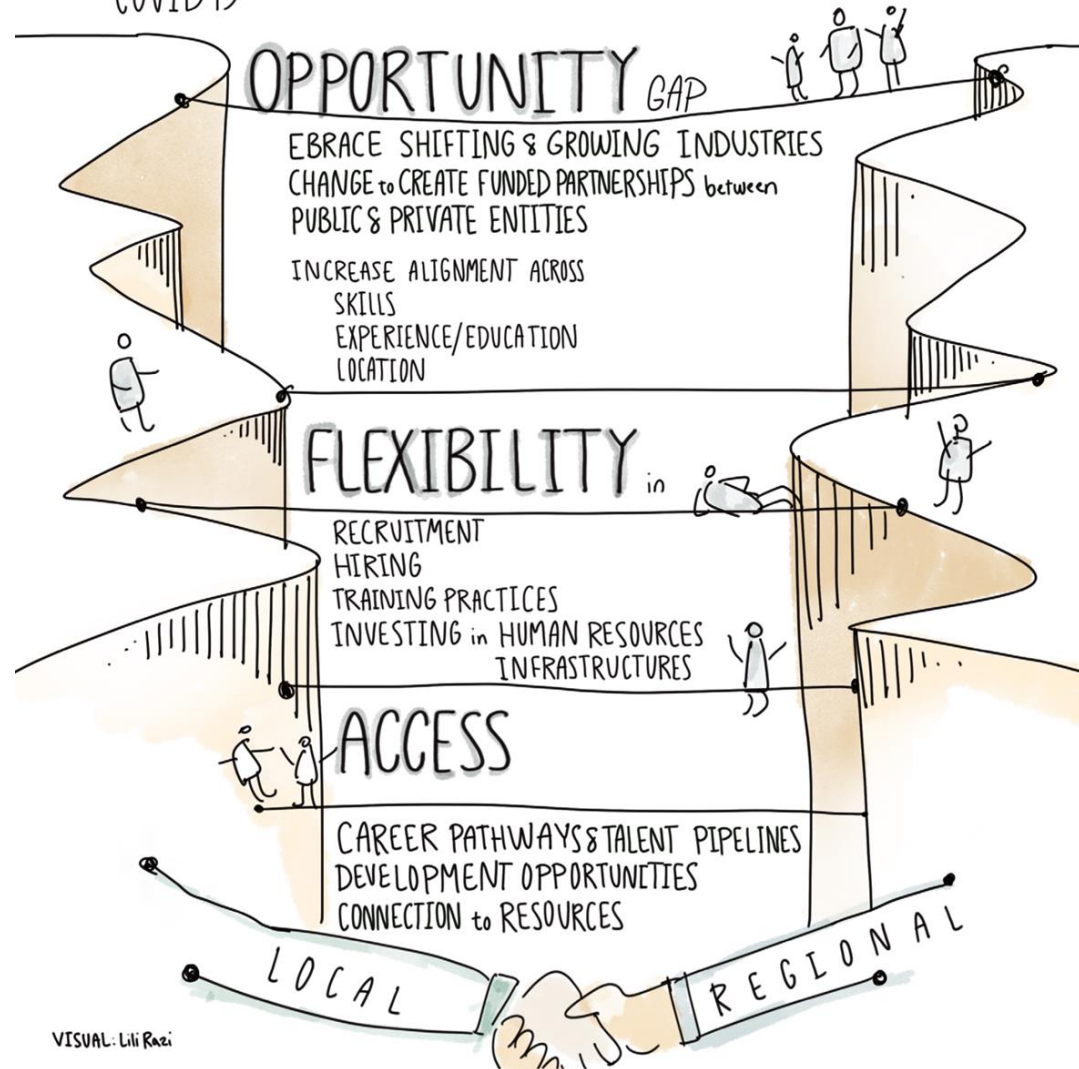
RECOMMENDATIONS & LOOKING FORWARD



COVID-19

JOB SEARCH
HIRING PROCESS

TECHNOLOGY ACCESS
IN PERSON COMMUNICATION



VISUAL: Lili Razi

Looking Ahead

- Continue to diversify industries and expand economic opportunities in our region
- Local and regional collaboration is essential to build upon progress, close gaps, foster sustainable partnerships, and create opportunity
- Future research
 - Future of Work in post-pandemic environment
 - Workforce development project/program evaluation

“I might put my kids in daycare at this current moment, but now I have all the resources I need to be able to have a job. I have a car. I have a support [person] that can watch our children. You know, I have everything I need. It's just opportunity.” - **Job Seeker**

Thank you



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WRI Leadership

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About WRI

The Senator Walter Rand Institute for Public Affairs (WRI) is a research center at Rutgers University-Camden that collaborates with community and university partners to conduct evaluations of programs and services, leverage data for action, and support the development of community-based initiatives. Using social science research methods ranging from data-motivated storytelling to complex statistical analysis, and guided by core values of curiosity and collaboration, the WRI specializes in transforming fractured data into actionable information. WRI supports Rutgers' mission of research, teaching and service by connecting the multidisciplinary expertise of faculty to regional problems, developing research and professional skills in students, and linking the resources of higher education to communities in Southern New Jersey.



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Workforce Development @ **Atlantic City Electric**

Workforce Development @ Exelon

At Exelon, workforce development is a people strategy targeted at enhancing a community's economic stability and prosperity. Our approach centers on economic empowerment and specifically addresses economic inequities in underserved communities where there is disproportionately high unemployment, low income and wealth gaps. Targets for Exelon's workforce development efforts include potential employees of Exelon, contractors of choice, and other community employers.



Addressing Inequities Through Workforce Development

- **Vision:** We will be a workforce development **pioneer**, providing **thought leadership**, championing **economic equity**, transforming our **communities**
- **Mission:** We are steadfast in our commitment to develop an **expanded, diverse talent pipeline** through **agile** workforce development **solutions** working with underserved **communities (internal and external to Exelon)**
- **Strategy:** **Ignite** STEM in young minds, **eliminate** barriers to economic empowerment, **equip** work-ready adults and youth for family-supporting careers and **engineer** new ideas in workforce development

South Jersey Utility Training Program Sponsored by ACE

- PHI invested \$6.5 million into Workforce Development initiatives, over six years, to expand job training and workforce development efforts that will improve employment opportunities in ACE's Southern New Jersey service area.
- The ***South Jersey Utility Training Program*** was launched in partnership with the South Jersey Workforce Development Board. It is a robust utility industry training program designed to create an entry-level pipeline of a diverse pool of utility candidates.
- The program is free and accessible in-person at Atlantic community college and across southern New Jersey.



ATLANTIC CITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Sponsored by ACE

- The **Atlantic City Infrastructure** was launched in partnership with the Atlantic City Government. It is a robust utility industry training program designed to create an entry-level pipeline of a diverse pool of utility candidates.
- The program is free and takes place at Carnegie Library
- The **ACIP** program also joins venture with Atlantic Cap Community College to facilitate teachings and curriculum.



Program Accomplishments

- The classes are filled with local talent, serving our communities, and partnering with local community-based organizations ensuring diversity and inclusion throughout.
- On average **75%** of graduates successfully pass the CAST test
- In 2022, **56** students completed the program, **19** passed the CAST test. **50** graduates received job offers with COC or ACE.
- **UPCOMING** – partnering with our meter install vendor, CCI, to fill needed roles.





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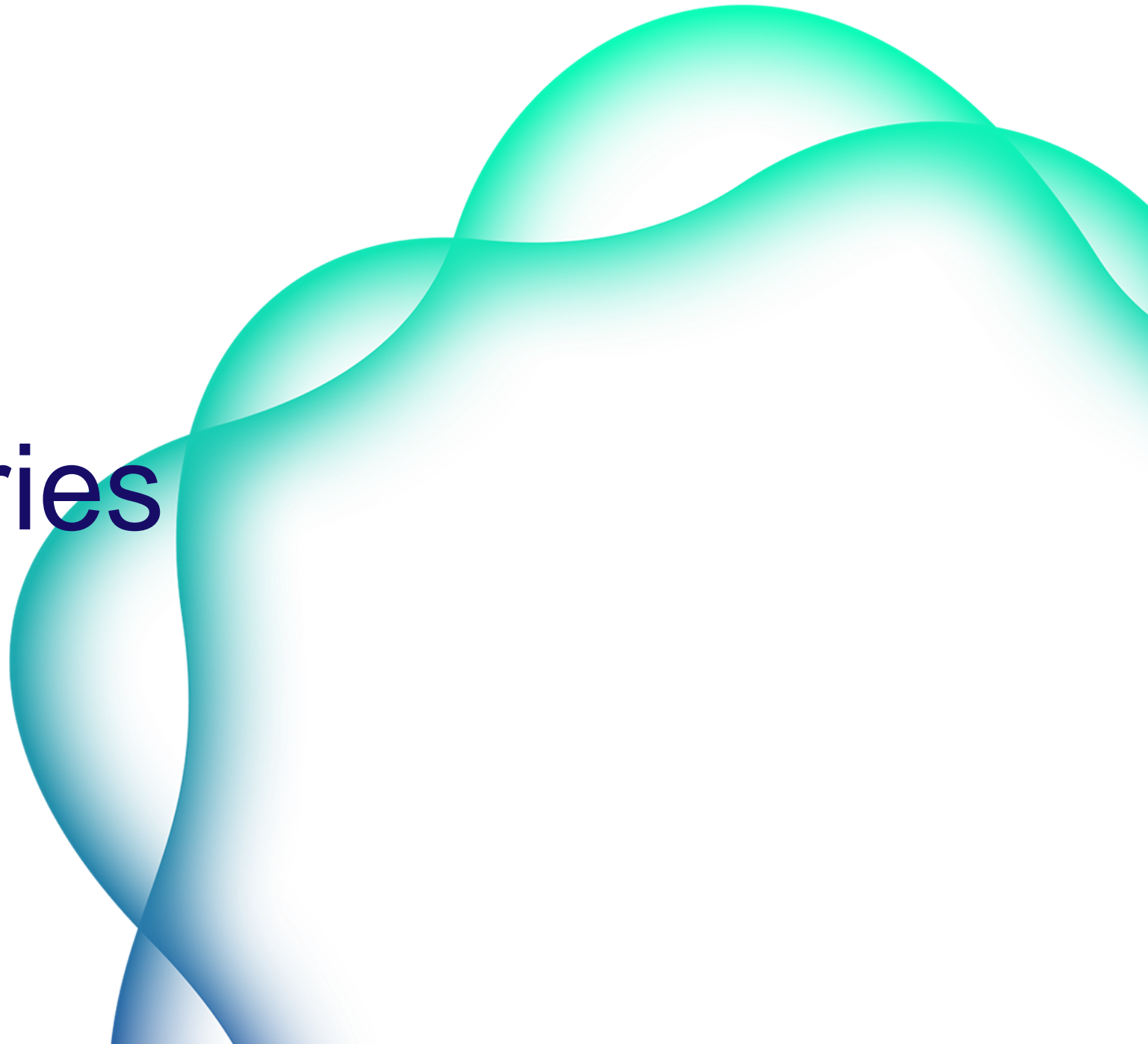




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Success Stories





Thank you



Building New Jersey's Offshore Wind Workforce

4.5.23

NJEDA

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

New Jersey is an emerging hub for offshore wind



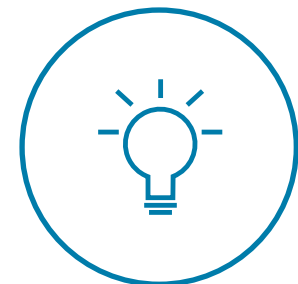
Strong **political commitment** and **central location**



11,000 MW of procurement over the next 20 years



Port and supply chain investments to support offshore wind & **novel transmission strategy**



Strong workforce, research, & innovation infrastructure

Awarded projects include valuable economic benefits for NJ

Ørsted's Ocean Wind I

- ▶ EEW monopile fabrication in Paulsboro, NJ
- ▶ \$15M to support diverse businesses in entering the offshore wind market and coastal resiliency projects
- ▶ Research initiatives with Rutgers University, Stockton University, and Rowan University

Ørsted's Ocean Wind II

- ▶ Nacelle assembly facility at NJ Wind Port and expansion of EEW monopiles fabrication
- ▶ \$2M to support Wind Institute and \$12M to support New Jersey Research and Monitoring Initiative
- ▶ \$8M to support diverse businesses in entering the offshore wind market and workforce development
- ▶ Partnership with Rowan University to investigate options for the integration of energy storage technologies
- ▶ \$1.5 million scholarship and career development program and \$200,000 financial assistance for electric customers

Atlantic Shores

- ▶ Nacelle assembly facility at NJ Wind Port and EEW monopiles fabrication in Paulsboro, NJ
- ▶ \$10M to support Wind Institute and \$14M to support New Jersey Research and Monitoring Initiative
- ▶ \$2M to fund OSW-specific testing equipment and support diverse businesses at Rutgers University Eco-complex
- ▶ \$4M workforce development fund, \$400K student scholarships at Rowan University, \$320K Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City's STEM programming, \$336K offshore wind summer programming for Rutgers University Future Scholars program

New Jersey is growing the offshore wind supply chain through its ports

Manufacturing

EEW is manufacturing **monopiles** at **Port of Paulsboro** and **nacelles** will be assembled¹ at **New Jersey Wind Port** with additional space for towers or blades in the future

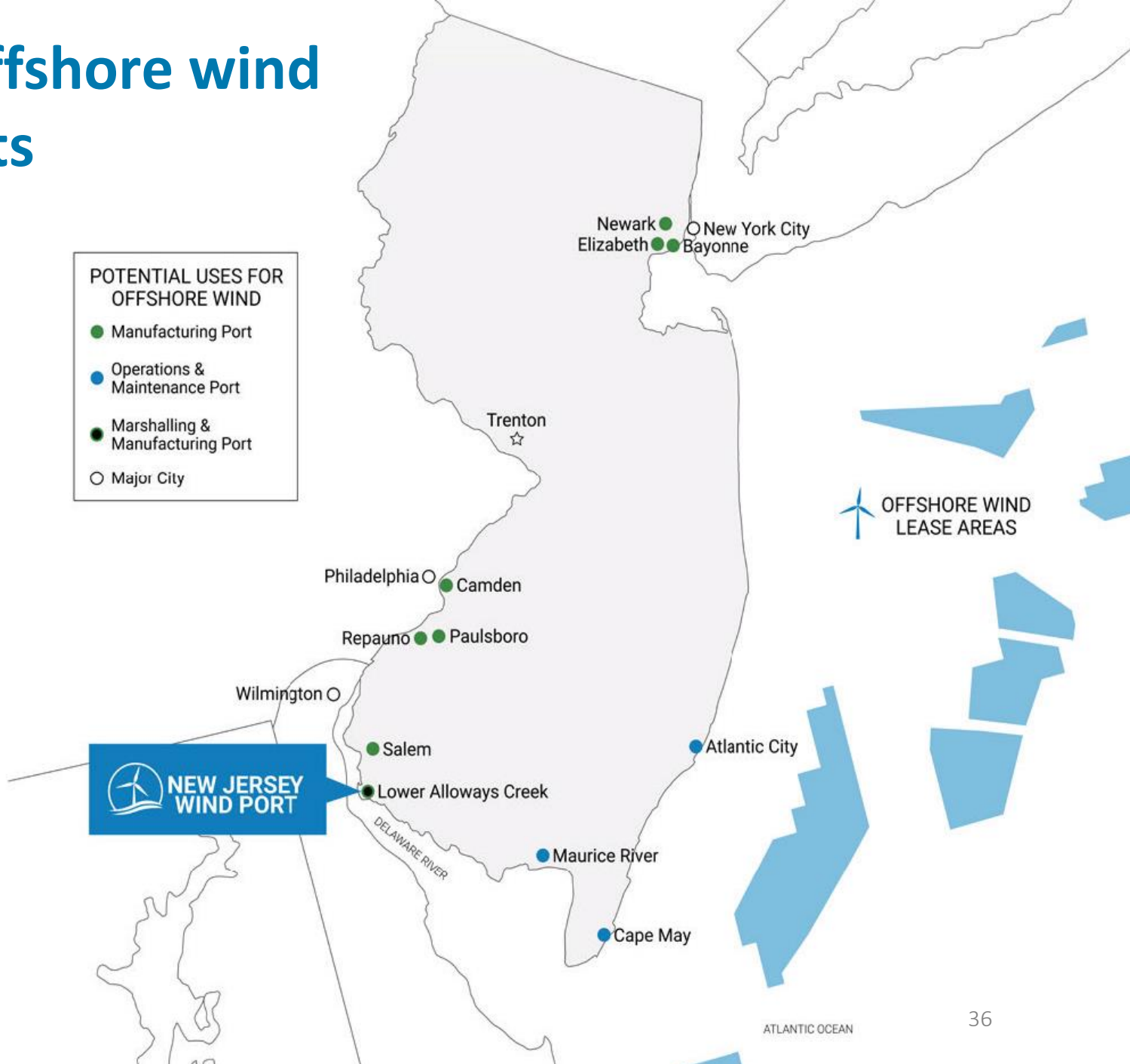
Marshalling

Ørsted and **Atlantic Shores** plan to marshal their projects at **NJ Wind Port**

Operations & Maintenance

Ørsted and **Atlantic Shores** selected **Atlantic City** as the site for their O&M hubs

1. GE and Vestas have both proposed nacelle assembly for Ørsted's Ocean Wind II and Atlantic Shores' projects, respectively



Wind Institute for Innovation and Training



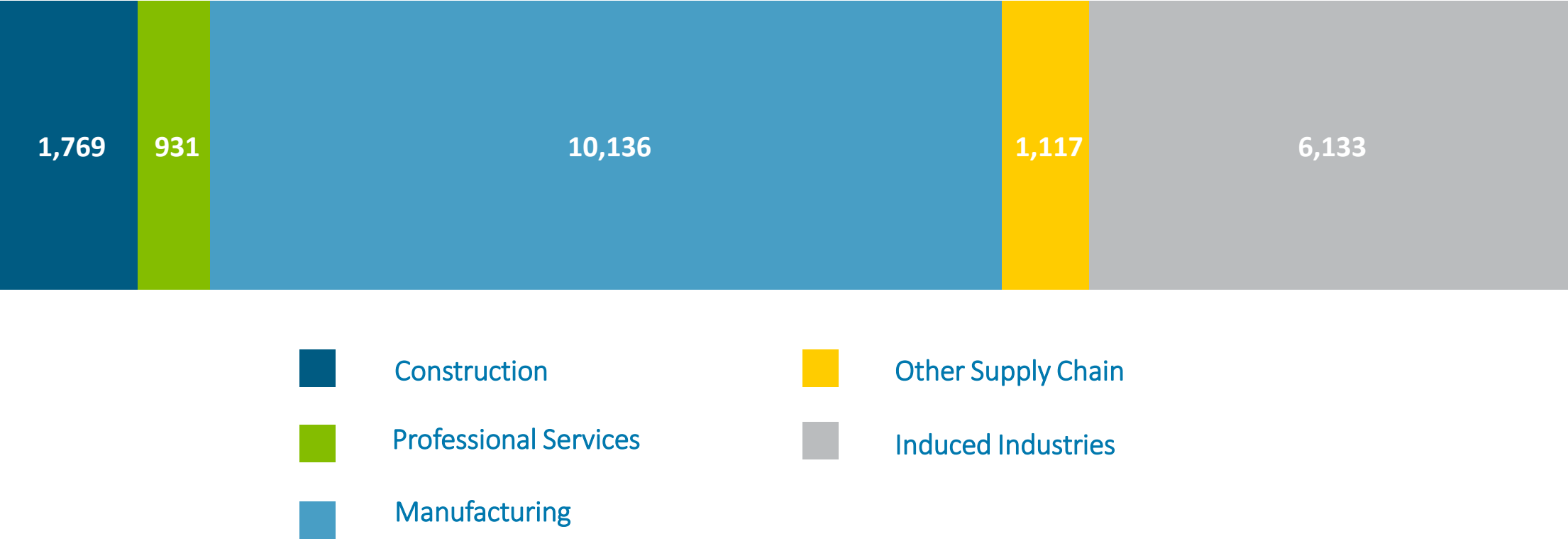
ACCELERATE DEVELOPMENT OF A
ROBUST AND DIVERSE OFFSHORE
WIND WORKFORCE



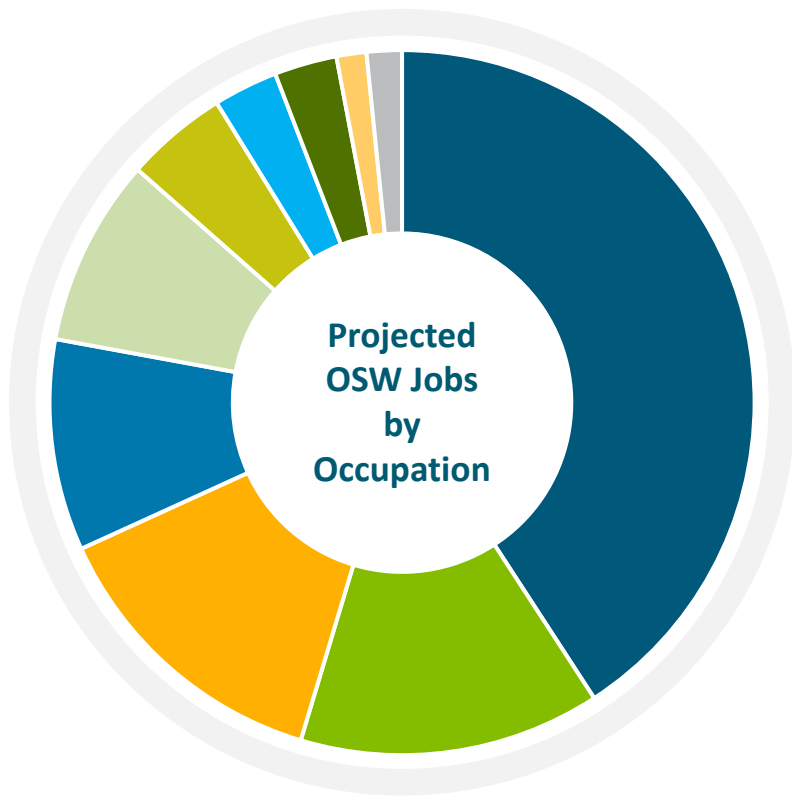
CHAMPION RESEARCH AND
INNOVATION THAT UNLOCKS
MARKET POTENTIAL



In 2030, offshore wind is projected to generate 20,000 new jobs in several industries to serve NJ projects and capture segments of regional demand



40% of projected offshore wind jobs in NJ will be production occupations, followed by installation/repair, transportation, and construction



Production Occupations: 40.8%



Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations: 13.8%



Transportation and Material Moving Occupations: 13.6%



Construction and Extraction Occupations: 9.7%



Management Occupations: 8.6%



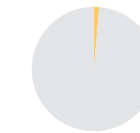
Office and Administrative Support Occupations: 4.7%



Architecture and Engineering Occupations: 3.0%



Business and Financial Operations Occupations: 2.9%



Sales and Related Occupations: 1.4%

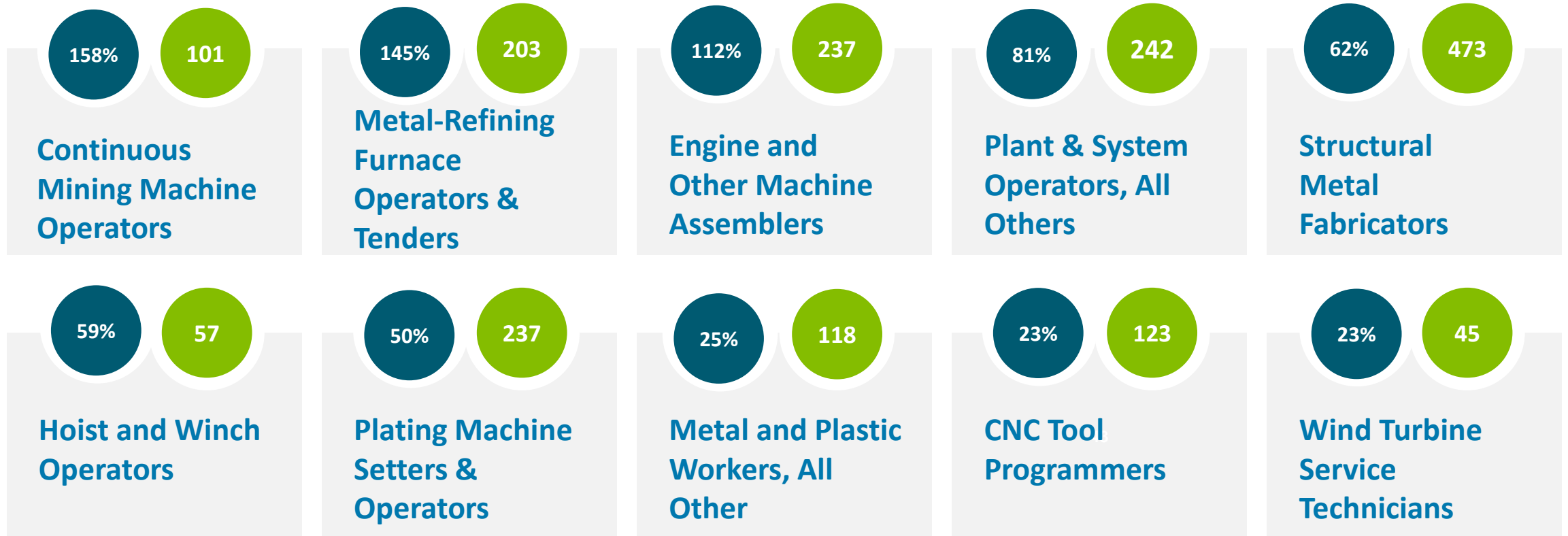


All Other Occupations: 1.6%

Top 10 highest growth occupations by average number of jobs needed each year through 2035



Top 10 highest gap occupations by percent above 10-year baseline and FTE jobs needed each year through 2035



Wind Institute Education and Workforce Programs Underway

- ▶ Coordinate and partner with education institutions from K-12 to four-year universities to prepare New Jersey offshore wind workforce
 - Offshore wind **activity book** for K-6 grade students
 - KidWind **K-12 offshore wind curriculum**, teacher training, ReCharge Academy in Atlantic City
 - Wind Institute **Fellowship Program** with Rutgers, Rowan, MSU, NJIT, Stockton, Princeton, Stevens and Seton Hall
- ▶ Partner directly with industry to address workforce needs
 - Work with EEW and vocational technical schools in South Jersey (Gloucester, Salem, and Camden counties) to expand **welding and painting programs**
 - Rowan College of South Jersey **wind turbine technician training** under development
 - Atlantic Cape Community College **GWO Basic Safety & Sea Survival** facility in progress
- ▶ Identify and address emerging workforce gaps and opportunities
 - OSW **Workforce Gap Analysis** Study
 - Currently reviewing applications from **OSW Workforce & Skills Development Grant Challenge** for programs that address workforce gaps and focus on overburdened communities



Thank You!

