

State of Connecticut

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act


Annual Report



Program Year 2022

July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023

December 2023



A Message from
the Connecticut Department of Labor
and
the Governor's Workforce Council

The State of Connecticut Department of Labor, along with the state's five Workforce Development Boards and other partners, successfully provided essential activities and services during Program Year 2022 through Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding. This WIOA Annual Report, for the period of July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023, provides details regarding a host of programs, advancements, and achievements. Across the state, employers and jobseekers alike benefited from the workforce development opportunities that were offered.

Innovative trainings, employment services, and education options that Connecticut made available with WIOA funds are highlighted in the report, and summaries from each Workforce Development Board are included. WIOA program data, costs, and outcomes are presented as well. Overall, the report shows that in addition to serving dislocated workers, youth, and adults, Connecticut provided remarkable activities and programs for veterans, individuals with disabilities, those recovering from substance use, and others, across the state.

Many of our achievements are the result of long-standing and well-established programs and partnerships. Our success over the years, however, is rooted in looking to the future and developing plans for new and innovative paths to growth for Connecticut's workforce and its economy. Whether it is through seeking novel ideas for projects or forming additional partnerships, we support and welcome options that may lead to advancement toward our goals.



Danté Bartolomeo
Commissioner
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Mark Argosh
Chair
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On the cover: Connecticut coat of arms, State Capitol, north entrance (photo credit: Mary Ziomek)

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Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) - Program Year 2022

The quality programs and services provided by the Connecticut Department of Labor, the Office of Workforce Strategy and the state’s five Workforce Development Boards (WDB) under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) throughout Program Year 2022 (PY22) demonstrate a commitment not only to meeting the employment, training, and related needs of jobseekers and participants, but to fostering growth and business options for employers. This Annual Report presents the many goals and positive results that were achieved through both new opportunities and programs with year-after-year success. Additionally, maintaining strong and effective partnerships, with various agencies and organizations from across the state, has been crucial for Connecticut’s workforce development strategies, as this report shows. Joint endeavors, bolstered by the sharing of ideas, a focus on continuous improvement, and the development of plans for moving forward, have resulted in key performance outcomes and provide a solid foundation for the future, to the benefit of Connecticut.

Office of Workforce Strategy (OWS):

Since the beginning of Governor Ned Lamont’s administration in 2019, one of his top priorities has been the development of “a nation-leading, accessible, and equitable workforce in Connecticut that is responsive to the needs of the 21st century economy.” To best achieve this, the Office of Workforce Strategy (OWS) was established in 2020 and tasked with creating workforce development policies, strategies, and goals. During PY22, OWS furthered its ongoing efforts and successes through partnerships with public and private stakeholders to develop, inform, and improve the state’s workforce ecosystem. Throughout the year, OWS continually collaborated with key WIOA partners, chief among them, CTDOL and the WDBs.

Also during PY22, OWS continued to develop its flagship initiative, Career ConneCT, a website dedicated to providing a path to free career training across various industries for unemployed and underemployed individuals, by recruiting, managing, and placing jobseekers into training and employment, and by offering a variety of targeted, data-driven, and employer-informed workforce training opportunities. Career ConneCT offers residents of the state access to a full suite of workforce services, including case management, supportive services, and other employment-related assistance. One particularly noteworthy component of Career ConneCT has been OWS’s investment in scaling up Connecticut’s nationally acclaimed Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative (MPI) which has been successfully administered by the Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board for years. The MPI has been expanded to multiple industries statewide with the help of OWS’s investment. This advancement is key to ensuring all interested residents have access to employment and training opportunities. OWS worked closely with CTDOL and the WDBs throughout PY22 to further this project and, given its success, the joint effort to advance MPI will continue in PY23.

In addition to the \$110 million in combined funding OWS secured to support Career ConneCT in PY21, Connecticut was awarded a Good Job Challenge grant for \$23.9 million in September 2022 by the Economic Development Administration (EDA). The grant-funded project, titled “Strengthening Sectoral Partnerships Initiative,” aims to train 2,000 individuals from underserved populations for placement into high-demand careers in manufacturing, information technology, healthcare, infrastructure, and green sectors while also strengthening Connecticut’s Regional Sector Partnerships. The grant closely aligns with Connecticut’s commitment to foster economic equity, inclusivity, and resilience, in collaboration with the EDA and regional partners.

Also during PY22, quarterly meetings were held by the Governor’s Workforce Council (GWC), which is the state workforce development board. In compliance with WIOA regulations, council membership equitably represents a variety of industries, labor organizations, and business sizes and types (non-profit and for-profit), and reflects a well-balanced consideration of race, ethnicity, and gender. To respond efficiently to a changing workforce climate and effectively integrate the leadership and guidance of GWC members, OWS established six GWC sub-committees: Industry Leadership; Sector Training; Education & Career Pathways; Workforce Systems Alignment; Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Access (DEIA); and Data & Accountability. These sub-committees are establishing data-based, short- and long-term goals, as well as a set of ambitious, but realistic, activities with a commitment to systemic alignment and continuous improvement.

Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL):

Employers and jobseekers alike benefited from several endeavors undertaken by CTDOL’s Employment Services (ES) Operations Unit throughout Program Year 2022 that resulted in various advancements and improvements to programs and services. At the same time, goals and priorities of the agency were met. Details of the accomplishments are described in the “Employment and Training” section of this report, but highlights of successes by ES staff include:

- CTDOL, in partnership with the New York Department of Labor, began transitioning to the data analysis phase of the evaluation study of the Unemployment Insurance Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA). The study, which serves as an essential tool for supporting continuous learning and program improvement, is designed to test a variety of promising RESEA service delivery strategies and interventions. Building new evidence on the effective interventions and their impact on UI claimants’ reemployment outcomes, including wages, are key components of the study.
- ES Operations began a substantial redesign of the RESEA module within ReEmployCT. Staff developed a robust set of business requirements for a new module that will enable CTDOL to expand the number of services provided to RESEA participants, ensure greater data integrity, and automate many manual processes within the program.
- The progress made in PY21 toward developing and implementing automation enhancements in CTHires for businesses requesting Work Opportunity Tax Credits (WOTC) was furthered during PY22. The system vendor, Geographic Solutions, and CTDOL have aimed to increase the processing and resolution of application requests and reduce backlog.

- CTDOL and Hartford Athletic, a professional soccer team, once again hosted the Hiring Expo. This second annual event, held on September 21, 2022, featured over 115 hiring employers, nearly double the number that participated in the first Expo in 2021. To prepare jobseekers for successful engagement with the employers, which represented various industry sectors and supported workforce diversity, American Job Centers offered Job Fair Readiness workshops. Given the success of this event, planning for the third annual Hiring Expo has begun.

CTDOL's Consumer Contact Center, which was phased in beginning July 8, 2020, is the cornerstone of the agency's customer service delivery for Unemployment Insurance (UI) services. Staffed by both intermittent and permanent agency personnel utilizing efficient, convenient technology, the Center provides a direct link to customers seeking guidance in filing a new or continued UI claim, information regarding unemployment, or answers to specific benefit questions. In Program Year 2022, the Center handled more than 806,000 claimant calls and cases, which represents a weekly average of 15,500. Staff assistance is available in a virtual format as well for claimant customers visiting CTDOL's six comprehensive American Job Centers (AJCs). A few of the topics customers requested assistance with included general claim status inquiries and issues, unpaid claims, identification verification, and assistance navigating the system. During the year, there were nearly 19,000 visits by claimant customers seeking assistance from Consumer Contact Center agents at the state's AJCs.

Years of preparation to modernize Connecticut's Unemployment Insurance system resulted in success with the launch of ReEmployCT on July 5, 2022. The new system provides integrated functionality for the Unemployment Insurance Division and replaced several unemployment systems used by the agency. It provides a single sign-on for claimants; features online assistance for claimants and employers which can help avoid mailing or faxing of documents; and reduces the number of times certain businesses must file their wage records. The system, which may be accessed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, also improves CTDOL functions by providing more comprehensive data about unemployment and reducing manual processing.

During PY22, CTDOL's WIOA Administration Unit provided continuous programmatic and fiscal oversight to ensure compliance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and its federal regulations. Monitoring of the WDBs was conducted, as was Data Validation. Emphasis was placed on thoroughly examining contracts, expenditures and invoices. Ongoing guidance was provided to the WDBs in the administration of the Eligible Training Providers List. Other responsibilities, including Rapid Response activities, WIOA Annual Report preparation, and technical assistance regarding reporting requirements were fulfilled by staff. Also, throughout the year, meetings were convened with the WIOA Administration Unit, the WDBs, and other partners to share the latest developments and plans.

Presented on the pages that follow are summaries that depict the planning and action that Connecticut's PY22 WIOA activity entailed. Essential components to goal attainment, such as partnerships; high-quality services; commitment to assisting jobseekers and the unemployed; and business engagement, were all part of the state's ongoing workforce development efforts. As a result of the collective endeavors undertaken in administering WIOA, the program year was a success.

State Evaluations, Oversight Activities, and Guidance

Compliance Monitoring

Compliance monitoring, as set forth in 2 CFR 200, “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards,” was conducted at three of the five WDBs during the period of July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023, in accordance with WIOA regulations at 20 CFR §683.410. The compliance monitoring of the remaining two WDBs was scheduled to be conducted. CTDOL’s PY22 compliance monitoring was conducted through Microsoft Teams options, emails, drop box set ups, and virtual meetings with the boards’ fiscal staff. Most fiscal monitoring exit meetings were conducted in person. The Jobs First Employment Services (JFES), which is the state’s Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, along with other grants supported and administered through CTDOL, are monitored during the compliance review, in accordance with contract requirements.

The annual WIOA compliance monitoring includes a review of financial management, consisting of financial reporting, cost allocation methodology, cash management, allowable costs, payroll controls, audit requirements, procurement, and property controls. In addition, WIOA active participant files are sampled and reviewed for eligibility verification for Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth.

All recommended corrective action from the PY21 monitoring review was completed and adequate controls appeared to be in place. Overall, PY22 monitoring review results showed that the three WDBs were in compliance with federal and state administrative requirements. Any findings were satisfactorily resolved and the WDBs made continuous improvements through the implementation of new policies and procedures during the program year.

Status of State Evaluation Activities

Pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes at Section 10a-57g(e), enacted in 2021, the Office of Workforce Strategy (OWS) is mandated to develop a plan to compile, analyze, and report on data for the purpose of assessing the performance of Connecticut’s workforce system. The resulting annual report will include the number of individuals served, demographic information, and outcomes achieved after completion of a workforce training program. Following a transition period, the report shall replace Connecticut’s Higher Education/Workforce Legislative Report Card (LRC), which CTDOL’s Office of Research has produced over the years and may be viewed at <https://www1.ctdol.state.ct.us/LRC/LRC2.aspx>. The most recent LRC, as of 2021, includes information on employment by industry and average wages of recent graduates of Connecticut’s public colleges and universities.

In addition to the aforementioned performance report, OWS has been working closely with CTDOL to create a unified reporting module in CTHires for reporting outcomes from Career ConneCT.

Administrative Review and Technical Assistance

Monitoring, evaluation, and technical assistance are integral oversight responsibilities of the CTDOL and are mandated by WIOA and other applicable laws and regulations. CTDOL’s WIOA Administration staff conducts annual program, data, and fiscal monitoring of the WDBs

and, throughout the year, offers technical assistance and performs administrative reviews to continually evaluate program components.

Additionally, the WIOA Administration Unit staff provides guidance to WDB staff, conducts Data Validation as required by USDOL, evaluates program activities for compliance with USDOL and CTDOL policies, and is available for consultation on program-related matters. Administrative reviews are also conducted and include, but are not limited to:

- Adherence to and compliance with USDOL ETA and CTDOL policies
- Eligibility for the WIOA program, including barriers and priority of service
- Performance outcomes for Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth participants
- WIOA outcome measures, including achievement of negotiated program goals

Programmatic monitoring, which was conducted remotely with each WBD in PY22, included a review of the boards' responses to CTDOL's monitoring tool, board presentations about program operations, and interviews with program staff, board subcontractors, and participants. The PY22 monitoring focused on changes and updates to the One-Stop System. In addition, numerous Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) providers from each board area were sent monitoring surveys to complete.

In continuing to support collaboration and communication within Connecticut's workforce system, the WIOA Administration Unit held periodic, remote meetings with the boards and other partners. WIOA staff also provided technical assistance to the WDBs, specifically, refreshers in case notes and follow up. In addition, WIOA Policy Manual updates were issued for the following:

- State Equal Opportunity Officer
- Youth Services and Activities
- Joint Validation Policy
- Incentives
- Performance Improvement and Sanctions Policy
- Request for Proposals (RFP) Youth Providers and Monitoring
- Youth Eligibility and Service Priority
- WIOA Invoice and Cash on Hand

During Program Year 2022, CTDOL's WIOA Administration Unit and Business Management staff attended professional development courses and events to improve skills and expand their knowledge base. A three-day, in-person learning opportunity, "Mastering Microsoft Excel Office 365: Levels 100, 200 and 300," offered staff comprehensive instruction in the fundamentals of Excel, including tips and essential shortcuts to rapidly generate text, numbers, and formulas; building and modifying charts; and advanced-level training in building pivot tables. Also, in January 2023, 20 staff participated in "Business Services Certification," an online course which focused on topics such as Engaging Employers, Rapport Building, Effective Communications, Motivating Employers, and How, When and Why to Follow-up. Additionally, two staff attended the National Youth Employment Coalition 2023 Summit in April and participated in workshops related to youth development, leadership, service delivery strategies and best practices.

Although the Opioid National Dislocated Worker Grant concluded on June 30, 2021, WIOA Administration reallocated PY22 Rapid Response reserves, as allowable under Dislocated Worker funding, to implement the hiring and supervision of Substance Use Peer Recovery Navigators for each comprehensive AJC. Services provided to participants with a current or

past history of substance use included, but were not limited to, employment assistance, specialized training, and support services. Navigators also provided support for the Employer Recovery Friendly Initiative.

In regard to Youth, CTDOL provided assistance to USDOL in presenting a two-day Youth Summit on best practices; CTDOL co-presented on substance use and mental health barriers to youth and successful strategies implemented through the local WDBs. In addition, CTDOL provided technical assistance to USDOL's Region 1 regarding RFPs for WIOA Youth 75% expenditures.

WIOA Participant and Employer Survey Results

During Program Year 2022, CTDOL utilized SurveyMonkey to gather customer satisfaction information from participants. Positive responses were received to the survey questions. The helpfulness of the AJCs' staff was noted, as was the ease of working with the staff.

The results of the participant* surveys were as follows:

- 100% were very satisfied with the services provided by the AJCs
- 99% believed the services exceeded their expectations
- 100% believed the services were very close to the ideal set of services

Satisfaction surveys were also made available to employers during PY22, through a combination of sources. CTDOL's WIOA webpage hosts an employer survey powered by SurveyMonkey. In addition, Connecticut's virtual one-stop delivery system, CTHires, includes an option for employer feedback. During PY22, a total of five surveys were completed by employers through SurveyMonkey.

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- 99% believed the services met their expectations
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Performance and Accountability

CTDOL's Performance and Accountability Unit is primarily tasked with the collection, compilation, evaluation, reporting, and distribution of performance and demographic data for state-funded and federally funded programs and services that are administered and delivered by CTDOL, in collaboration with its partners and subcontractors. The unit also provides technical support to those administering the various programs and services that include:

- Veterans
- Registered Apprenticeship
- Unemployment Insurance (UI)
- Foreign Labor Certification
- Wagner-Peyser Act
- Jobs First Employment Services (JFES)
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers

*Results are not intended to make any inferences beyond the survey's respondents.

- Connecticut Individual Development Account Initiative
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth)

To submit and generate required reports, the Performance and Accountability Unit utilizes the federal Workforce Integrated Performance System (WIPS). First, data extracts are generated for each report by Geographic Solutions, Inc., the developer of CTDOL’s web-based case management system, then the extracts are provided to the Performance and Accountability Unit. Prior to report certification by CTDOL to USDOL, the unit collaborates with program administrators to ensure that program data is reviewed and accuracy is confirmed. For its performance data, Connecticut utilizes in-state wage information as well as data from the State Wage Interchange System (SWIS).

As mandated by WIOA, CTDOL must collaborate with the Connecticut Department of Aging and Disability Services and the Connecticut State Department of Education for quarterly and annual reporting purposes. CTDOL previously established Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) for the exchange of data with these WIOA-required core partners and continues to share data as outlined in each respective memorandum. Each core partner transmits data to CTDOL via CTDOL’s PilotFish, a server with a collection of software tools that allows for the secure connection, translation, and transformation of data between heterogeneous systems. The parties to the MOU share both participant data of those co-enrolled in the core programs of each entity as well as wage and employment data for all participants, not only those co-enrolled. A unique identification number is assigned, via CTDOL’s MS SQL Server database, to represent each data entity (individual) instead of their Social Security number. The unique identification number, co-enrollment and wage information are returned to the core partners for inclusion in each agency’s respective federal report.

The Performance and Accountability Unit also gathers and provides data that is critical to both negotiating the establishment of the state’s WIOA performance goals with the WBDs and helping to ensure Connecticut is meeting those goals; prepares CTDOL’s section of the Governor’s Budget Narrative; supports various programs with Data Element Validation tasks; and designs surveys and analyzes their results for numerous CTDOL units.

Continuing Workforce Activities

CTHires

In addition to the numerous reporting responsibilities described in this report’s “Performance and Accountability” summary, the staff of the Performance and Accountability Unit also administer CTDOL’s web-based case management system, CTHires. An array of helpful options is offered to users of CTHires, including a job skills assessment tool; a format to create and send résumés and cover letters to employers; a job bank; a list of training providers; a job search tracker; a virtual job recruiter/job candidate finder; labor market information; and system email for communications between jobseekers, employers, case managers, and training providers. CTHires also collects required data for reporting on self-services and staff-assisted services for WIOA (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth), Wagner-Peyser, Trade Adjustment Assistance, National Dislocated Worker Grants, and Registered Apprenticeship Expansion Grants. Since the launch of CTHires in Program Year 2015, various components have been added to the system to integrate other programs, such as Foreign Labor Certification, JFES, the Work Opportunity Tax Credit program, and Registered Apprenticeship.

Rapid Response

The state Rapid Response (RR) Unit, in conjunction with local WBDs and other One-Stop partners, is responsible under WIOA Title I (20 CFR, Part 682, Subpart C) for carrying out rapid response activities statewide. Headed by CTDOL, the RR Unit reaches out to employers contemplating or experiencing layoffs and plant closings. Employers, affected workers, and their unions are provided information on layoff aversion, mass layoff/plant closing, unemployment insurance, WIOA, One-Stop employment services, and various labor laws. The RR Unit also makes referrals to, and coordinates services with, CTDOL units, other agencies, and programs for special intervention or supportive services applicable to dislocated workers and struggling businesses.

During the period of July 2022 to June 2023, the RR Unit made 159 initial outreach calls regarding potential layoffs and responded to 16 WARN notices affecting 2,106 workers. Additionally, RR staff made 62 presentations to 1,355 impacted workers. The presentations included seven WIOA information workshops and 24 webinars for workers from companies that did not avail themselves of Rapid Response services prior to layoff.

Additionally, 350 webinar invitations were sent to workers whose employers either declined pre-layoff presentations or who were identified by CTDOL after layoff as being part of a mass reduction in force. RR Unit staff also resolved 1,022 unemployment-related issues that were holding up Dislocated Workers' initial payments.

RR Unit staff continued its outreach initiative to target unemployed workers who were not part of a mass layoff but met the definition of a Dislocated Worker, that is, have been laid off or terminated; determined eligible for unemployment benefits; and unsuccessful in seeking employment for a minimum of four weeks. A total of 1,525 WIOA outreach letters were sent to workers who met that definition. Forty-three workers who were sent the WIOA outreach letter attended a WIOA information webinar, and 26 of those attendees were referred to WIOA program operators for enrollment.

CTDOL staff from both the Rapid Response and Trade Act Units jointly submitted seven TAA petitions on behalf of workers whose jobs were believed to be affected by increased imports or a shift in production to a foreign country. All submitted petitions have been in pending status since the termination provision under Section 285(a) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended, took effect on July 1, 2022.

Outreach Efforts by the Office of Research

Throughout PY22, CTDOL's Office of Research offered outreach activities, via both virtual and in-person formats, and provided detailed labor market information of interest to jobseekers, workforce development professionals who provide job search and employment assistance, and to education, government, and business leaders. The Office of Research also provided data and information to the Governor's Workforce Council and Office of Workforce Strategy. In addition, online presentations were conducted during the year, via Zoom or Microsoft Teams, for audiences including:

- Jobseeker groups;
- National Council for Education and Training;

- Business groups and Chambers of Commerce working to create jobs in Connecticut;
- Educational institutions helping their students with career planning, including the State Department of Education and local school district advisory boards;
- Staff from the Governor’s Office; and
- Workforce development organizations working with a variety of constituencies, including persons with disabilities and the second chance, or reentry, population.

The Office of Research planned and sponsored an in-person, all-day “Connecticut Learns and Works” conference for educators, counselors, employment and training specialists, and businesspersons interested in career and workforce development issues. The Office of Research also presented at in-person conferences, including one sponsored by the Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE) and another by the Home Care Association of America: Connecticut.

During PY22, the Office of Research continued to provide technical assistance to the WDBs for Help Wanted OnLine (HWOL) through an account Research administers. All WDBs have access to the jobs data on HWOL which is gathered from the monthly postings on thousands of Internet job boards, corporate boards, and smaller job sites. The Office of Research published various updates to HWOL on a weekly basis and comprehensive monthly reports with information on job postings by industry, occupation, and employer, for each WDB area.

The Office of Research also continued to provide weekly updates of Unemployment Insurance claimants by race/ethnicity, gender, age, education, industry, town, and previous wages. Data were provided statewide and by workforce area. WDBs and other partners were particularly interested in this information.

Employment and Training

Wagner-Peyser

CTDOL receives federal funding under the Wagner-Peyser Act to provide universal access to an array of employment services offered at AJC locations throughout Connecticut. These services, delivered both virtually and in person, include assistance with career choices and job search, referrals to jobs, reemployment services to claimants receiving unemployment insurance, and employer recruitment services to businesses with job openings. Additional resources that are available through the AJCs include computers with Internet connection, copiers, and fax machines, as well as résumé writing, interviewing, LinkedIn, and job search workshops. During PY22, a total of 9,141 Wagner-Peyser program participants received services (staff-assisted or self-service) through AJC offices, with 19,865 staff-assisted services provided statewide.

Reemployment Services for Unemployment Insurance (UI) Claimants

CTDOL provides a variety of federally funded reemployment services to UI claimants through the Unemployment Insurance Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (UI RESEA) program which serves claimants who are either profiled as most likely to exhaust benefits or

those receiving Unemployment Compensation for Ex-servicemembers (UCX). The goal of this program is to provide UI claimants early access to services provided by the AJCs that will help get them back into the workforce faster. The UI RESEA program also serves as a prevention/detection program for improper UI payments.

In PY22, the UI RESEA program was offline while CTDOL worked with consortium partners and the UI Information Technology Support Center (ITSC), a national collaborative between USDOL, the states, and local workforce agencies, to address technology barriers. To better serve UI claimants and meet the current and future needs of the program, CTDOL has established robust business requirements for a new UI RESEA module within the ReEmployCT system. Development of the module, with the latest enhancements, is expected to begin in PY23.

Business Services

To ensure the provision of a broad array of business services across Connecticut's five workforce development areas, CTDOL established the Business Engagement Unit (BEU) in the summer of 2022. With staff assigned to each comprehensive AJC in the state, and oversight provided by the unit's appointed director, the BEU assists businesses in meeting hiring needs and connects job seekers to employment opportunities. In addition to these two key responsibilities, the unit also offers the following through its targeted approach to business services:

- Customized recruitment events;
- Promotion of events through BEU's vast network of workforce and community-based partnerships;
- Review of employer applications for CTHires registration and, for approved businesses, assistance with CTHires registration, job postings and résumé screening;
- Information to employers regarding free labor exchange services;
- Referrals to resources and programs to support business needs; and
- Layoff aversion and downsizing support through Shared Work and Rapid Response programs.

The BEU also partnered with local organizations such as Chambers of Commerce, educational institutions, and non-profits to assist with several job fairs held throughout the state.

In PY22, a total of 954 business registrations were processed by staff into CTHires; employers posted 65,734 new Connecticut job orders; and 239,866 job orders were indexed from corporate websites. Business Services Specialists held 272 recruitment events with one or more employers represented. In addition, more than 7,150 services, including recruitment assistance, candidate referrals to job postings, business consultation, assistance utilizing CTHires, and referrals to additional support programs were provided to over 5,300 employers assisted by CTDOL staff during PY22.

Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)

WOTC, a federal tax credit available to employers, reduces a business's tax liability and is an incentive to hire individuals from certain target groups who face barriers to employment. USDOL and U.S. Department of Treasury, through the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), jointly administer the implementation of the WOTC program. USDOL, through the Employment and Training Administration, provides grant funding and policy guidance to the CTDOL and other state workforce agencies to administer the certification process, while the IRS administers all tax-related provisions and requirements. WOTC is one of several workforce development programs that promotes diversity in the workplace and access to jobs. During Program Year 2022, CTDOL processed a total of 58,653 WOTC applications from employers, of which 20,344 resulted in certification.

Serving Our Veterans

Connecticut's veterans receive reemployment services from trained staff at the AJCs throughout the state. Among the staff are representatives funded by the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program which offers specialized services to veterans. Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists provide intensive services and facilitate job placements to meet the employment needs of certain veterans and eligible spouses; those who have significant barriers to employment, or other characteristics specified by the Secretary of Labor, qualify for referral to a DVOP and may receive a jointly developed employment plan and individualized career services administered through case management. Local Veterans' Employment Representatives conduct outreach to area employers to assist veterans in gaining employment and facilitate the employment, training, and placement services for all veterans in the AJCs.

To connect more veterans with the AJCs, DVOPs conduct community outreach, engage with service providers and veterans' organizations, and collaborate with other agencies. Services for homeless veterans, for example, are typically provided jointly with grantees of the U.S. Department of Labor's Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP) or the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program. Veterans with service-connected disabilities who participate in the VA's Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) program also receive assistance from the DVOPs.

Other JVSG partnerships include those with:

- The Department of Defense and Connecticut Military Department to assist both deploying and returning troops from the Connecticut National Guard and U.S. Armed Forces Reserves at Yellow Ribbon events and Soldier Readiness Program briefings, and
- The Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs' Stand Down event, an annual gathering for veterans who are homeless, chronically unemployed, or have difficulty adjusting in society.

During PY22, CTDOL's 548 JVSG participants included 529 eligible veterans. This figure (529) reflects 78% of the 679 eligible veterans who received employment and training services under Wagner-Peyser.

Jobs First Employment Services Integration in the American Job Centers

In partnership with the Connecticut Department of Social Services and the WDBs, CTDOL administers the Jobs First Employment Services (JFES) program which provides a host of employment-related services to recipients of Temporary Family Assistance (TFA), Connecticut's federally funded cash assistance program for low-income families under Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). The WDBs operate as intermediaries that subcontract with other organizations to provide direct services to JFES participants in AJCs around the state.

The JFES budget for this period was \$12,556,193 and a total of 2,535 JFES clients were served during the program year. During PY22, JFES staff participated in comprehensive Family-Centered Coaching training as well as Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training.

Job Corps

Job Corps offers low-income youth, ages 16-24 (no upper age or income limits for those with disabilities), the opportunity to receive academic and technical training in a variety of career fields, along with essential life and social skills, to promote independent, successful futures. This federally funded program, administered by the USDOL Employment and Training Administration, also provides residential housing for Job Corps students and intensive, wraparound service to support student achievement such as:

- Career and mental health counseling
- Driver education
- Basic health care
- Bi-weekly living allowance
- Annual clothing allowance
- On-the-job training
- High school diploma and high school equivalency attainment
- Employability skills training
- Job placement and retention
- Support services after graduation

During PY22, a variety of trades were offered at the two Connecticut Job Corps locations. New Haven Job Corps Center offered Building Construction Technology, Plumbing, and Carpentry (all pre-apprentice programs), Culinary Arts, and Certified Nursing Assistant. Trades available at the Hartford Job Corps Center included Insurance & Financial Services, Manufacturing Technology, and Clinical Medical Assistant. Career preparation and transition, credit recovery toward a high school diploma, and literacy and numeracy remediation were also offered at the Hartford Job Corps. All these offerings, supportive services, and the collaborative efforts of the WDBs, state and local agencies and organizations, Job Corps' program operators, and CTDOL, which has staff designated to provide support for the two Job Corps Centers, have resulted in Job Corps' on-going success in Connecticut. In PY22, more than 310 students were served through this program at the Hartford and New Haven locations.

Serving Individuals with Disabilities

CTDOL provides a number of workforce development options for individuals with disabilities and offers information to assist in meeting employment-related needs. For example, job search assistance and guidance on employment and training opportunities are available through the state's AJCs. Also, helpful resources are linked at www.ctdol.state.ct.us/gendocs/pwd.htm, a CTDOL web page that provides information for both employers and jobseekers on topics including assistive technology, tax credits, workplace accommodations, and disability employment initiatives.

In addition, CTDOL serves as a member of the Disability Focus Group. Other members include the Department of Aging and Disability Services, the Department of Developmental Services, State Department of Education, EdAdvance, and Adult Education providers. The group plans, organizes and convenes the Annual Conference on Serving Adults with Disabilities. This year's conference, held on April 28, 2023, was attended by 225 participants. Presentations on the topics of Ageism, Assistive Technology, Emotional Intelligence and Music Therapy were offered.

Workforce Development Boards

(Summary information has been provided by Connecticut's Workforce Development Boards.)

Northwest (Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board)

Regional Sector Partnerships

Since the Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board's launch of its Next Gen Healthcare Regional Sector Partnership (RSP) and re-launch of its Manufacturing RSP on March 31, 2022, those partnering in these efforts have met periodically to further refine objectives, identify regional needs, clarify solutions, and outline an action plan to share with public-support partners of community-based organizations. Over 30 healthcare leaders from the region participated in the health partnership and over 80 manufacturers participated in the Manufacturing RSP, making it one of the largest gatherings of manufacturing leaders in the region's history, with the goal of promoting employment growth in each sector. Representation from healthcare and manufacturing facilities from across northwestern Connecticut fosters equitable and inclusive access in addressing the needs of these two industries in the region. The goals of the partnerships are to focus on industry-identified priorities such as the expansion and improvement of local education and training programs; campaigns to promote awareness and interest in healthcare and manufacturing careers; strengthening of the talent pool; increasing the number of career-changing adults who choose manufacturing and healthcare; and advocating for regulatory and other changes to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of healthcare and manufacturing.

Northwest Construction Careers Initiative

The Northwest Construction Careers Initiative (NCCI) continued throughout Program Year 2022. This program partners local trade unions with private sector companies to encourage careers through apprenticeship and construction-readiness training in a variety of related trades.

NCCI program staff offered outreach and recruitment events both virtually and in person for residents of the Northwest region.

The NRWIB's reentry program, offering job-readiness skills with the opportunity for more training continued its success in PY22. As in past years, NRWIB collaborated with local trade unions. One example is the program's mutually beneficial relationship with International Union of Operating Engineers Local 478. The program helped participants find jobs with many private contractors looking to hire.

NRWIB also administered the Good Jobs Ordinance, the local hiring ordinance issued by the City of Waterbury that requires contractors working on Waterbury projects with a value of \$500,000 or greater to hire qualified Waterbury residents. Contractors are required to hire 30% residents and 10% minority. The board continued to offer OSHA 10-hour Training classes multiple times during the year, as the certification is mandatory for those who want to work in the construction field. In addition to OSHA training, NCCI offered training in environmental remediation, Heavy Equipment Awareness, basic CORE construction with plumbing, HVAC, and electrical courses.

Ticket to Work

Ticket to Work is a voluntary Social Security program that assists recipients of SSI or SSDI benefits, ages 18 to 65, to obtain vocational counseling, job training through WIOA or other programs, job readiness, job referrals and other employment support services, free of charge. Authorized by the Social Security Administration as an "Employment Network," the NRWIB provided these services to 28 participants during PY22. To participate, individuals must currently be receiving SSI or SSDI, meet the age criteria, and be willing to work full time. While participating, disability medical reviews are deferred, Medicare/Medicaid benefits continue, and, if needed, program participants receive expedited reinstatement of benefits. The goal is for the participant to become self-sufficient and not dependent upon disability benefits.

Apprenticeship Connecticut Initiative - Manufacturing Your Future

During PY22, the NRWIB continued to serve as both convener and broker in facilitating the implementation and delivery of a broad array of initiatives focused on the region's priorities. NRWIB's Apprenticeship Connecticut Initiative program, for example, addresses the shortage of skilled workers in the manufacturing sector through a regional partnership of schools, including two community colleges, business associations, Chambers of Commerce, Manufacturing Alliance Service Corporation, and other local businesses.

Youth

During PY22, the NRWIB again delivered a comprehensive array of services focused on out-of-school youth within the Northwest Region. Training options, targeted toward youth with one or more barriers to employment, prepared youth to attain such goals as education at the post-secondary level, occupational skills credentials, and securing employment with career/promotional opportunities in the private sector.

A total of 41 out-of-school youth were served by Naugatuck Valley Community College (NVCC) and Northwestern Connecticut Community College (NCCC), long-standing vendors of NRWIB. Various NVCC and NCCC programs, funded by NRWIB, offered services focused on work-readiness skills and career exploration. Upon entry into each program, youth were assessed on their career path of interest. Based on the assessment, each program coordinator set up paid internship opportunities, either on campus or within the community. Additionally, youth attended workshops about leadership development, financial literacy, dropout prevention, tutoring, and study skills. While working toward an Associate Degree, youth could also attend training to earn an occupational certificate in areas such as customer service, security officer, paraprofessional, ServSafe, and early childhood education. The progress of program participants was monitored via semi-annual reviews and included updating each individual youth's service strategy, as required for each program.

NVCC and NCCC have continually met the measured performance outcomes for both credential attainment and measurable skills rates. For PY22, the combined credential attainment rate was 100%, while the measurable skills rate was 95%.

Southwest (The WorkPlace)

Dress for Success Mid-Fairfield County

Dress for Success Mid-Fairfield County (DFSMFC) is known for providing professional clothing at no cost to disadvantaged women, but the program is about more than a new outfit. Most DFSMFC clients have experienced homelessness, domestic violence, addiction, incarceration, long-term unemployment, or reliance on public support. Additionally, most of the low-income clients have numerous barriers to employment, including limited education, deficient work skills, and lack of work history. DFSMFC is ultimately about creating opportunities---for women in need to move ahead in careers, for employers to access the skilled workforce they need to thrive, and for communities to flourish.

Three activities are key to DFSMFC fulfilling its goals of providing both professional attire and targeted information, guidance, support, and fellowship to clients as they address difficulties they must overcome to reach their long-term goals:

- The Simply Suited program offers professional attire to women searching for employment and wardrobe development for those who are newly employed.
- The Professional Women's Group, a professional networking and learning community that meets monthly, offers a powerful and practical employment retention model for moving lower-income women towards self-sufficiency by addressing social and economic needs in relation to work, home, and community.
- Referrals to AJC locations in Stamford, Bridgeport, Ansonia, and Derby for career resources that help DFSMFC clients research, obtain and retain employment.

During PY22, DFSMFC served over 300 individuals. Thirty-five percent of referrals came through the AJCs. Sixty-eight percent received government-funded financial assistance. Almost

two-thirds were single mothers responsible for one or more children, more than two-thirds were minorities, and 100% were women living below the poverty line.

Platform to Employment

Platform to Employment (P2E) creates a pathway to opportunity for long-term unemployed job seekers by offering a five-week preparatory program that includes skills assessments, career readiness workshops, employee assistance programs and more. Career coaches work with participants to leverage their professional experience and develop effective job search strategies. All work readiness training participants have access to financial literacy tools and behavioral health services to help them understand and effectively address the emotional burdens and stresses associated with unemployment. Upon program completion, P2E helps participants find open positions at local companies and provides eight weeks of paid work experience.

During the year, 290 participants completed the P2E program. To acknowledge this achievement, The Workplace hosted a graduation ceremony on June 28, 2023. Over 80% of those who completed the program were placed in employment with an average salary of \$62,214.

Support Services for Veteran Families

The Workplace's Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program is designed to achieve housing stability and prevent homelessness among Veterans in southwestern and south-central Connecticut. Through short-term, focused intervention, SSVF helps Veterans and their families access and sustain permanent rental housing as quickly as possible, while facilitating access to services that will help them keep their housing. SSVF focuses on increasing income through employment and benefits while addressing the issues that can interfere with housing stability. Eligible families are provided with outreach, case management, and assistance in obtaining benefits from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and other entities, which may include healthcare services, daily living services, personal and financial planning services, transportation services, and housing counseling.

Shallow Subsidy, a new SSVF service for veterans enrolled in SSVF's Rapid Rehousing or Homeless Prevention projects, provides rental assistance to the households of veterans with either very low or extremely low incomes. Under Shallow Subsidy, SSVF grantees provide rental assistance payments to landlords on behalf of the households for a two-year period. Rental assistance is at a fixed rate every month, regardless of changes in the household's income or monthly rent. The expectation is that sustained support will expand housing options and increase the veteran's ability to meet other costly living expenses. By the close of Program Year 2022 (PY22), 20 veteran households were receiving Shallow Subsidy.

Additionally, the VA awarded The Workplace a four-year grant through a collaboration with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development - VA Supportive Housing. Activity under the grant began in PY22 with the hiring of a Housing Navigator who is tasked with identifying permanent housing for Veterans. Funding also includes landlord incentives worth up to two months of rent for leases of at least one year, tenant move-in support worth up to \$1,000 for leases of at least one year, and expanded eligibility by raising the income threshold for SSVF enrollment to 80% of Area Median Income.

Youth

To help young adults become self-reliant members of the community, develop the insight and confidence needed to impress potential employers, and stay competitive in the workforce, the WorkPlace offers CareerHub, which coordinates youth programming. During PY22, CareerHub's staff secured subcontractors to deliver training that would result in the acquisition of a credential, thereby enhancing the skill level and employment prospects of participants. Also, throughout the year, CareerHub's knowledgeable workforce specialists helped participants discover career interests and work toward attaining the skills needed to gain employment.

Upon being determined eligible for WIOA-approved training opportunities, young adults between the ages of 16 to 24 receive assistance in choosing and preparing for a career they can be proud of. Every participant receives individualized attention and services tailored to meet their needs and goals. Services provided include career and job search coaching, occupational skills training, GED exam assistance, support creating a résumé, and job placement services.

The results this year were significant. The program served 89 participants in PY22 and staff achieved 100% of their goals for employment, employment retention, credential achievement and measurable skills gain.

Eastern (Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board - EWIB)

American Job Center Services

In PY22, although the number of customers that visited the eastern AJC increased, the preferred method of service delivery continued to be virtual. For many customers that lacked transportation or experienced continuous daycare issues since the pandemic, the virtual option was a good fit. Additionally, while both in-person and virtual workshops were offered by EWIB during PY22, all at no cost to jobseekers, attendance was more positive with the virtual workshops. EWIB has moved toward offering more in-person WIOA Orientation Workshops, but a virtual option will still be available for those who have difficulty traveling to the AJCs. Also during PY22, to support the needs of eastern Connecticut customers, the list of workshops continued to grow:

- Exploring CTHires
- Getting Started with Google
- Powerful Job Search Emails
- Computer Assistance for Job Seekers
- Getting Started with MS Word
- Computer Basics
- Skillup CT Metrix Learning

Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative

The Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative (MPI), an award-winning workforce program managed by EWIB and other partners, continued its remarkable growth. During Program Year 2022, a total of 800 individuals received training and, as of June 30, 2023, MPI had placed over 3,700 individuals in jobs since the program's inception. This was accomplished by raising the baseline of competencies in jobseekers and aligning those skills with jobs in demand by manufacturers. With a curriculum designed by manufacturers and academia, the MPI's success is also attributable to its strong partnership of more than 30 stakeholders, including the Eastern

Advanced Manufacturing Alliance which designed and implemented the program. Electric Boat, for example, furthered its rewarding partnership with MPI throughout the program year and, to meet the company's ongoing hiring needs, EWIB scheduled 78 classes during PY22. For MPI in total, over 800 people were trained in PY22.

Healthcare Pipeline Initiative

The Healthcare Pipeline Initiative (HPI) has been modeled after the MPI program to train individuals interested in healthcare careers. EWIB's Healthcare Navigator guides customers through an orientation reviewing in-demand healthcare fields and appropriate trainings. The Healthcare Navigator also refers customers to EASTCONN's Healthcare Careers Seminar which sets customers up for success prior to training. While many HPI customers were referred by WIOA Workforce Advisors, EWIB ran a few classes in partnership with regional high schools and New London Adult Education in PY22.

Upon completion of the healthcare training, the customer either moves up in the current healthcare career or is connected to a job developer who will assist the customer in finding a healthcare career opportunity based on their training. EWIB anticipates partnering with other regional high schools to provide more training to students interested in pursuing a healthcare career in the upcoming program year. EWIB also has been actively working with the area's Healthcare Regional Sector Partnership to connect employers to HPI and potential hires to fill their healthcare program needs.

Youth

Youth Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative

The Youth Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative (YMPI) is an extension of the Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative (MPI) described above. The YMPI offers the potential for a career pathway for high school graduates who have chosen to enter the job market instead of college. EWIB continued to grow partnerships with regional high schools that worked toward embedding the YMPI curriculum into their existing educational offerings. In the five years since its establishment, the YMPI has placed 191 high school graduates into jobs. The program has received strong support from the participating schools' administrators and youth participants. As planned, EWIB expanded program activities into elementary and middle schools to further grow interest in YMPI programs across eastern Connecticut. Additionally, EWIB collaborates with community partners to provide career exploration and job fair events for the YMPI students. These events provide opportunities for students to engage with manufacturing employers to help determine who they would most like to work for.

Connecticut Youth Employment Program - Summer Youth Employment Program

In partnership with EASTCONN, New London Youth Affairs, and Norwich Youth, Families & Recreation Services, the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) was made available to 41 towns in the region, making PY22 the sixteenth year in a row that this partnership has offered summer jobs to opportunity youth in the Eastern workforce development board area. The SYEP worked with eligible youth, ages 14-24, to not only provide summer job opportunities, but to also prepare them for a successful future as fully engaged members of the labor force across the EWIB region. SYEP participants gain valuable experience while working

in various jobs in the community and learn about in-demand jobs in the area, such as healthcare and manufacturing, as well as how to plan their career pathway. Their participation also benefits the community by providing local employers with summer help. Some employers even continue to employ students after the program ends.



Nataly, a Summer Youth Employment Program participant, cared for plants while working at a local garden center.

North Central (Capital Workforce Partners)

Regional Sector Partnerships

During PY22, Capital Workforce Partners (CWP) and the Metro Hartford Alliance continued to co-convene the Capital Area Tech Partnership (CATP) that primarily focuses on talent pipeline development, including Talent Retention; Skills-Based Hiring and Apprenticeship-style Models; Postsecondary Supply/Demand Alignment; and Business - Higher Education Partnership Development. CATP, whose membership includes 18 of the Hartford region's largest IT-services providers, is supported by eight public partners, including many of Connecticut's higher education institutions. This regional sector partnership continues to expand and diversify.

CWP also continued to co-convene the Capital Area Healthcare Partnership (CAHP). This regional sector partnership for healthcare, with support from the Workforce Solutions Collaborative, represents 23 acute care, long-term care, home care, community health, and behavioral health employers. CAHP action teams have addressed Cost Optimization; Policy; and K-12 Career Awareness and Training. Among other priorities, the partnership advances strategies that address job quality and retention for frontline workers. CAHP is supported by 13 public partner entities representing workforce development, education, economic development, community-based organizations, and others.

CWP's Capital Area Transportation Distribution and Logistics (TDL) Partnership, launched in February 2022 with support from the Workforce Solutions Collaborative, continued to engage business leaders in addressing common barriers to the competitiveness and sustainability of north central Connecticut's growing TDL sector. Topics addressed by TDL partnership workgroups included workforce training and upskilling, industry promotion, and policy. The partnership includes 21 business members and is supported by 13 public partners.

Employer Engagement

During PY22, the North Central region engaged and/or served 1,182 employers statewide. Many that received services also participated in Youth, Adult, and special programs, or participated in the regional sector partnerships described in the previous section. A total of 638 employers hired program participants.

The regional deployment of the Connecticut Workforce and High-Tech Industry Skills Partnership (CT-WHISP), a statewide project funded by a \$10 million H-1B One Workforce grant from USDOL, continued to attract a great deal of interest and activity related to work-based training within the manufacturing and technology ecosystems. This program year, through CT-WHISP, CWP supported fourteen on-the-job training placements across various manufacturing and technology roles with seven employers. Further, CWP supported 93 incumbent workers and eight employers through employer-designed upskilling programs that lead to industry-recognized credentials, advancement opportunities, or both. These programs represent an approximately \$240,000 training investment in north central Connecticut's manufacturing and technology employers.

Ticket to Work

Ticket to Work is a voluntary Social Security program that assists recipients of SSI or SSDI benefits, ages 18 through 65, to obtain vocational counseling, training, job readiness, job referrals and other employment support services, free of charge. Authorized by the Social Security Administration as an "Employment Network," CWP provided these services to 22 participants during PY22. Of the 22 participants, almost half are no longer receiving benefits, and the others have either entered college; are employed part-time as they work toward full-time employment; or are in training programs such as Recovery Coach or Maturity Works.

Career ConneCT – CDL Training

CWP was granted a total of \$4.5 million by OWS in July 2022 to be the lead in the Career ConneCT CDL statewide training program. CWP was scheduled to serve 225 participants within two years. In January 2023, CWP began registering interested participants for the training programs. As of June 30, 2023, CWP enrolled 209 participants into CDL training programs; 57 of the 209 were ex-offenders, a priority population. At the end of this program year, 58 participants had completed training and 33 participants successfully received credentials. Most of the credentialed trainees that completed training in June had interviews lined up for July with several trucking companies. Additionally, CWP began partnering with the Connecticut Department of Transportation to conduct job fairs. As of the close of PY22, 13 participants had secured full-time employment.

Apprenticeship Connecticut Initiative – Success Story

Larry Johnson (pictured, right) was raised in a community that was riddled with high crime, drugs and gang activity. Some of his childhood friends are in prison, convicted felons, or deceased. At first, he followed the same pathway, but he overcame the odds. Before joining the Apprenticeship Connecticut Initiative and receiving AJC services, he had just purchased a home. Shortly thereafter, he was terminated from his employment and was back to square one. That is when his search began for a new job or training opportunity. Eventually, he decided to pursue a career as a CNC machinist. Larry enrolled in the “Introduction to Manufacturing” training at Capital Community College through the Apprenticeship Connecticut Initiative and successfully completed the course in April 2023. Because of this training, Larry was able to attain both the 10-hour OSHA Construction Safety and Health Certificate and Six Sigma White Belt Certification. Within a week, he obtained employment as a CNC machinist, making more money than at his previous job. He is grateful for the amazing instructors and career advisors that helped him find and stay on the path to success.



Youth

In PY22, a total of 368 participants were served in the North Central area by the WIOA Youth program. Many of the participants received more than one service. The outcomes were as follows: 139 entered sector-based training; 128 participated in paid work experiences with companies and organizations across the Greater Hartford region; 92 youth were employed at some point in the program; and 59 obtained new employment as of June 30, 2023. Community-based organizations provided 41 paid supportive services and made 92 referrals to other resources for supportive services, to address the needs of youth with barriers.

Summer Youth Employment and Learning Program (SYELP)

CWP partnered with Junior Achievement to offer virtual career exploration webinars. The Junior Achievement staff facilitated interviews that were held with professionals who volunteered to share their experiences working in the sectors of manufacturing, healthcare and entrepreneurship. The videos and career-exploration webinars that were created as part of this project offered a wealth of knowledge to share with youth as they explored career options while enrolled in the Summer Youth Employment and Learning Program.

Also, for a third year, CWP partnered with the Village for Children and Families to provide mental health support to youth, including virtual workshops. CWP also partnered with My People’s Clinic to offer clinical services to Hartford residents.

South Central (Workforce Alliance)

Program Year Overview

The AJCs in the South Central area served 998 jobseekers through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in the Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth funding streams in Program Year 2022. This is nearly a 30% increase over the prior year. All WIOA-enrolled jobseekers had the opportunity to access career services to increase their marketability with employers. Many decided to take advantage of specialized opportunities to grow and develop their skill sets, including 115 individuals who received an Individual Training Account (ITA) to help them gain occupational skills and industry-recognized credentials; 30 individuals who entered subsidized employment; and 14 who participated in On-the-Job Training. Each AJC in the region offered customers a variety of in-person and virtual work-readiness workshops, which included digital literacy and weekly job clubs that averaged 252 jobseeker attendees per month. As a result of the career and work-readiness services provided, approximately 201 participants were employed at case closure and 45 received industry-recognized credentials.

Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative - Skill UP

During PY22, the board continued to emphasize manufacturing opportunities for program participants. Six Skill UP classes were held during the year, which were held at Vinal Technical High School and Gateway Community College; lab time was provided at Eli Whitney Technical High School. A total of 67 students enrolled during this period and 62 successfully completed the training. In addition to the technical skills students gained, they also learned how to write a résumé, which was reviewed by a certified professional résumé writer, that would appeal to a manufacturing company. Participants were also coached on how to successfully interview with employers. As many as 14 employers participated in these virtual job fairs and these events resulted in numerous interviews for Skill UP graduates. Thirty-nine graduates received job offers and started a career in manufacturing during PY22.

Healthcare Careers

The Health Careers Advancement Program (HCAP) provides tuition assistance, professional development, and job placement to eligible jobseekers. Additionally, HCAP helps individuals who previously earned healthcare-industry certifications return to school, add skills, and move up the career ladder. A total of 62 career seekers enrolled in the program. Of the 62, 15 enrolled in Pharmacy Technician training (13 were then directly hired), 26 were placed into CNA training, and 2 were placed in Patient Care Technician training. Other trainings included EKG, Medical Billing and Coding, Phlebotomy, and Recovery Coaching. Overall, this program year resulted in an increase in the variety of health careers successfully completed, which directly benefited the industry.

Youth

The South Central WDB provided many workforce-based opportunities for youth during PY22. On May 30, 2023, Workforce Alliance's WIOA-funded program for youth and young adults, Project CEO, hosted a pop-up Career Information Fair for its program participants at the New Haven AJC. Approximately 100 youth attended the fair which offered information regarding career advancement and opportunities, at booths and via presentations. Project CEO also

partnered with several local service providers and community-based organizations that held presentations for in-school and out-of-school youth on topics such as career choice, money management, entrepreneurship, and creating a positive work environment. For the youth who were high school seniors seeking career options to pursue upon graduation, the partnerships also offered résumé support and career exploration activities on career paths that matched the youths’ skills or interests.

Cost of Workforce Development Activities

During PY22, a total of \$25,806,764 was allocated to the WDBs for WIOA services, an increase of \$1,853,384 from the PY21 WIOA allocation of \$23,953,380. Funds were distributed as follows:

Program Year 2022 Fund Allocation

- Adult - \$8,459,464
- Dislocated Worker - \$8,060,429
- Youth - \$9,286,871

For the period of July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023, as reported by CTDOL to USDOL via form ETA 9169, a total of 4,294 participants were served during PY22. The Adult program assisted the largest number of participants; the 2,360 served represents 55% of the total WIOA participants served. Also in PY22, a total of 1,104 Dislocated Workers and 830 Youth were served, comprising 26% and 19% of the total number of WIOA participants served respectively.

<u>Program Year</u>	<u>Adult</u>	<u>Dislocated Worker</u>	<u>Youth</u>	<u>Total</u>
PY21	2,068	2,193	783	5,044
PY22	2,360	1,104	830	4,294

Over the past two program years, as the state’s unemployment numbers steadily decreased from the pandemic’s historic highs and began leveling off with individuals returning to work or exhausting benefits, the number of adults seeking job search and other assistance grew. In addition to the increase Connecticut experienced in the number of adults served during the previous program year (PY21), the PY22 total of adults served increased as well, up by 292 over PY21’s adult total. While a greater need for WIOA-funded services may be related to the exhaustion of unemployment benefits or other economic factors, the increase may also be attributable to Connecticut’s ongoing efforts, across government-funded programs, private industry, education and training sectors, and other workforce-based areas, to expand the availability of services.

The number of Dislocated Workers served during PY22, which totaled 1,104, represents a continued decline for the category since the pandemic-triggered high of 2,239 served in PY20. Unemployment Insurance programs that were unique to the pandemic response eventually began expiring, shutdowns ended, and other business disruptions lessened as issues, such as supply chain shortages, were overcome. With these changes, which signaled a return to normal, came a slight decrease in the number of Dislocated Workers served in PY21. This program year saw a bigger drop-off with a total of 1,089 fewer Dislocated Workers served compared to the 2,193 served in PY21.

After the few years of decline in the number of Youth served, which has been directly connected to the pandemic-related shutdown, the disruptions to services, difficulties in engaging youth via remote options, and the challenges in both establishing and re-establishing contact with disconnected youth, Connecticut saw a modest increase (47) in the number of Youth served during PY22 compared to PY21. While this can be credited to concentrated, local efforts that were undertaken to boost the participation of youth, CTDOL and the WDBs will analyze options and methods that can potentially lead to a more significant number of Youth receiving services in the coming program year.

Discussion of Activities Funded by WIOA 15% Statewide Funds

WIOA requires the Governor to allocate the majority of WIOA funds, via formula, to the local WDBs which are responsible for setting local policy and directing the use of these formula-allocated funds in their regions. Under the Act, the Governor may also reserve a percentage of the state's WIOA funds for use in the administration and provision of statewide employment and training activities.

Statewide activities, delivered in Connecticut with 15% reserve funds during PY22, included:

- Maintaining the state list of eligible training providers;
- State administration of the adult, dislocated worker and youth workforce development activities, by conducting performance evaluations, including programmatic monitoring and customer satisfaction surveys;
- Assisting in the operations of the AJCs;;
- Operating fiscal management and performance accountability system activities; and
- Supporting CTHires, the state's WIOA case management information system.

Finally, the 2023 Connecticut Workforce Summit was convened in April. The event, created in collaboration with OWS, GWC, Connecticut Business & Industry Association, Connecticut State Colleges and Universities, ReadyCT, and Social Venture Partners, brought together key stakeholders from industry, education, community-based organizations, and the public sector. Presentations and discussion focused on innovative approaches to public-private partnerships that strengthen and enrich the workforce system, to ensure access and equity in training, education, and support for individuals from historically underserved and marginalized communities.

Activities related to monitoring, evaluation, and accountability provide essential information and guidance for the state and its workforce development partners regarding continuous improvement and program efficiencies. Also, of particular value to the WDBs in achieving programmatic goals is performance data that is made available through CTHires. By having timely access to this data, WDBs can analyze performance, determine areas in need of attention, and focus on solutions.