

# State of Connecticut

## Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

### Annual Report



Program Year 2024

July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025

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**On the cover:**

*~Top left - Keylim (left) and Debbie, participants in EWIB’s CT Youth Employment Program, completed an internship at a soup kitchen in Willimantic. They prepared food for individuals visiting the soup kitchen, distributed food pantry items to individuals in need, and stocked, organized, and inventoried food pantry shelves.*

*~Top right - Lucas (left) and Derek, participants in North Central’s Summer Youth Employment and Learning Program (SYELP) gained hands-on experience in maintenance at a local high school.*

*~Center - Wayne Carter, a participant in North Central’s BEST Chance program, spoke at a graduation for STRIVE which builds confidence, accountability, and employability through a structured, supportive environment.*

*~Bottom right - Lance, a participant in EWIB’s CT Youth Employment Program, gained leadership skills and learned how to maintain and build new boats through an internship developed in partnership between EWIB and Mystic Seaport’s Maritime Adventure Learning Program.*

*~Bottom left - Gordon Wong made a career change upon successfully completing Workforce Alliance’s Skill Up for Manufacturing program. Details of this success story appear at South Central’s summary under the “Workforce Development Boards” section.*

**State of Connecticut**  
**Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act**  
**Annual Report**  
**July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025**

**Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) - Program Year 2024**

The Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL), the state’s five Workforce Development Boards (WDB), and other key partners collaborated throughout Program Year 2024 (PY24) to ensure the programs and services offered under Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding resulted in positive outcomes. New programs, projects, and employment and training options were created, while long-established opportunities continued to be mainstays. Jobseekers and employers both benefited from the state’s strong workforce development partnerships that foster business expansion, create jobs, and grow the economy. This report reflects the successful results that were achieved and the performance goals that were attained through Connecticut’s workforce development activities.

During PY24, the Office of Workforce Strategy (OWS), created by Governor Ned Lamont in 2020, issued its second Governor’s Workforce Strategic Plan and, throughout the year, continually collaborated with key WIOA partners, including CTDOL’s WIOA Administration and Performance and Accountability Units, as well as with the Connecticut State Department of Education (SDE), Aging and Disability Services (ADS), and the WDBs. With the support from public and private stakeholders, OWS and the Governor’s Workforce Council (GWC) continued to develop, inform, and improve the state’s workforce ecosystem. All these endeavors have furthered Connecticut’s workforce development, strategies, and goals.

Throughout the program year, the GWC, which is the state workforce development board, held quarterly meetings. GWC membership is comprised of businesses representing the state’s major industry sectors, labor organizations, education leaders, state agencies, and community-based organizations. To respond efficiently to a changing workforce climate and effectively integrate the leadership and guidance of GWC members, OWS established six GWC sub-committees to advance the work of the Governor’s Workforce Strategic Plan and set data-based, short- and long-term goals with a commitment to systemic alignment and continuous improvement.

By the close of PY24, OWS’s flagship initiative, Career ConneCT, trained more than 6,700 residents of the state by offering targeted, data-driven, and employer-informed workforce training opportunities. With American Rescue Plan Act funds allocated to OWS by the Connecticut legislature, the initiative created free, short-term career training across various industries for eligible individuals. OWS worked closely with CTDOL and the WDBs throughout PY24 and will continue the collaboration through the next program year. Although some programs have ended, many are still accepting enrollments across priority industries throughout the state and will continue to provide services in PY25.

In September 2022, OWS was awarded a Good Jobs Challenge grant for \$23.9 million by the Economic Development Administration (EDA). The resulting project, “Strengthening Sectoral Partnerships Initiative,” trained more than 1,400 individuals from underserved populations for

placement into high-demand careers in manufacturing, information technology, healthcare, infrastructure, and green sectors by the close of PY24. The grant, which aims to serve a total of 2,000 individuals, is a collaborative commitment with the EDA and regional partners that has strengthened the state's growing Regional Sector Partnerships.

Throughout Program Year 2024, employers and jobseekers benefited from a variety of endeavors undertaken by CTDOL's Employment Services (ES) Operations Unit that resulted in 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, transitioned to the final data analysis phase of the Unemployment Insurance Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) evaluation study. 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, is a key component of the study. The final report from the study will be completed by the end of 2025.
- ES Operations staff continued to design and develop a new RESEA module within ReEmployCT 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.
- CTDOL worked with Geographic Solutions, its information system vendor, to implement Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) automation enhancements and system updates in CTHires. Modifications included improvements to screen functionality and the provision of more detailed information on denial notices based on the values obtained from interface processing.
- For a fourth year, CTDOL hosted the annual Hiring Expo with Hartford Athletic, a professional soccer team. Held on September 18, 2024, the event featured over seventy-five hiring employers. To prepare jobseekers for successful engagement with the employers, which represented various industry sectors and supported workforce diversity, American Job Centers (AJCs) offered Job Fair Readiness workshops. Given the success of this event, planning for the fifth annual Hiring Expo has begun.

CTDOL's Consumer Contact Center is the cornerstone of the agency's customer service delivery for Unemployment Insurance (UI) services, relying on technology to provide a convenient and efficient system for filing an unemployment claim. CTDOL customers in need of guidance in filing a new or continued UI claim, information regarding unemployment, or answers to specific benefit questions are directly linked to an experienced agent for assistance. In PY24, the Consumer Contact Center received more than 872,000 contacts from individuals in need of UI claims assistance. The Center's agents accept callers needing immediate assistance, puts overflow callers on a call back list, and diverts the remaining callers to the online case platform. With an enhanced scheduling feature, customers can schedule a call back at [www.filectui.com](http://www.filectui.com) and select a specific date and time for an agent to assist them, thereby avoiding significant wait times. Also, interpreters are provided for deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing claimant customers.

In PY24, the Consumer Contact Center team handled more than 456,000 claimant calls and online cases which represents a weekly average of more than 8,770. Agents provide virtual and in-person UI claim services for claimant customers visiting CTDOL's six comprehensive AJCs. These services include general claim status inquiries and issues, unpaid claims, identification verification, and assistance navigating the system. During the year, the Consumer Contact Center agents served more than 9,000 claimant customers who visited the state's AJCs which represents a weekly average of more than 170.

Throughout PY24, CTDOL's WIOA Administration Unit staff engaged in many key areas to ensure WIOA-funded programs and services operated in compliance with applicable federal regulations and the state's WIOA policy. Two essential steps were undertaken as part of oversight responsibility; standard monitoring of WDBs was conducted and the Data Validation process was completed for the year. Staff also provided technical assistance and support to the WDBs in the administration of the Eligible Training Providers List. Performance reporting guidance, Rapid Response activities, WIOA Annual Report preparation, collaboration on WIOA website updating, and policy manual revisions were other key responsibilities of WIOA staff. To support ongoing partnerships, meetings were convened between the WIOA Administration Unit, other CTDOL units, the WDBs, state agencies, and other workforce development partners. USDOL's Employment and Training Administration conducted a Comprehensive Consolidated Review of CTDOL and two WDBs in PY24, the results of which will serve to further Connecticut's ongoing endeavors under WIOA and support positive outcomes.

This report showcases Connecticut's workforce development successes achieved in PY24 by CTDOL and its partners through WIOA funding. The innovative programs, high-quality services, and strategic activities that were provided around the state, plus leveraged resources that enhanced workforce-related projects, resulted in many positive outcomes for participants, as the summaries that follow describe. Also included herein are the PY24 achievements by the five WDBs: Workforce Alliance, The WorkPlace, Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board, Capital Workforce Partners, and Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board. From business engagement to assisting jobseekers, Connecticut's commitment to strengthening workforce development is clear, and continued growth will follow.

## **State Evaluations, Oversight Activities, and Guidance**

### **Compliance Monitoring**

CTDOL's commitment to continuous improvement and accountability is evident through its ongoing collaboration and transparency with WIOA partners. In PY24, CTDOL conducted programmatic, fiscal, and administrative compliance monitoring of the WDBs on an ongoing basis. WIOA monitoring activities included on-site visits; desk reviews; monthly/quarterly virtual correspondence; analysis of records; interviews with staff and participants; and assessment of program outcomes and performance measures. During PY24, a sampling of WIOA active participant files were reviewed as part of both fiscal and programmatic monitoring. A formal monitoring report was issued to each WDB following a review. The report informed each WDB about areas of concern; any compliance findings requiring corrective action; and noted best practices.

Monitoring of PY23 activity was conducted at Workforce Alliance, Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board, and Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board during PY24, with The WorkPlace and Capital Workforce Partners participating in a USDOL Comprehensive Consolidated Review. The results of the monitoring showed that, overall, the boards were in compliance with federal and state administrative requirements in regard to all PY23 activity that was examined. Findings were satisfactorily resolved for most areas; engagement in the findings resolution process continues in one area. Additionally, the WDBs made continuous improvements through the implementation of new policies and procedures during the program year.

### **Status of State Evaluation Activities**

In March 2025, OWS issued a Request for Proposal to procure a vendor to conduct quantitative and qualitative research of Connecticut's WIOA-funded, workforce development system services delivery by WIOA primary, required partners. Besides CTDOL, the five WDBs, ADS, and SDE's adult education program and services, the Connecticut Department of Correction's offender reentry services will be included. The evaluation project, which will begin in PY25 and conclude by June 30, 2026, will culminate in a set of actionable recommendations on how to close identified gaps, scale best practices, and create greater coordination and efficiencies among partners that will strengthen the system.

Another approach to evaluation began with the 2021 enactment of Section 10a-57g(e) of the Connecticut General Statutes which mandated OWS to develop a plan to compile, analyze, and report on data for the purpose of assessing the performance of Connecticut's workforce system. To accomplish this, OWS worked with the Executive Board of DataLinkCT (formerly "P20 WIN"), the state's longitudinal data system, to submit "A Request (#0042) to Study the Impact of Workforce Training and Education on Economic Outcomes" to DataLinkCT. The requested study proposes to answer the following questions:

1. What are the wage and employment outcomes of CT workforce training programs?
2. What are the wage and employment outcomes of CT post-secondary, adult education, and technical education programs?
3. What are the common career pathways in CT?
4. What are employment and wage outcomes by career pathways?
5. Which career pathways lead to the strongest wage growth?

In PY24, a preliminary report was provided to the participating agencies for review and validation. The study and resulting report are expected to be completed in PY25. The report will include the number of individuals served, demographic information, and outcomes achieved after completion of a workforce training program. The state will use the resulting data to evaluate the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs; Adult Education; Trade Act; Jobs First Employment Services; and other state and federal grant-funded initiatives. Specifically, college entry and co-enrollment outcomes, as well as successful career pathways amongst the programs and initiatives, will be evaluated.

Additionally, OWS worked closely with CTDOL on development of a module in CTHires and subsequent wage match process for collecting and analyzing outcomes from Career ConneCT, a

program that provides career training and workforce services across various industries for unemployed and underemployed individuals.

Also in PY24, legislation was passed requiring the WDBs' participation in DataLinkCT, to directly provide program data regarding the workforce programs the boards administer. The data collected will strengthen the state's ability to analyze performance and cross-reference with other datasets developed through DataLinkCT that cover related domains like education and social service utilization, allowing for enhanced data-informed decision making.

### **Administrative Review and Technical Assistance**

To fulfill its oversight responsibilities and the mandates of WIOA and other applicable laws and regulations, CTDOL conducts annual program, data, and fiscal monitoring of the WDBs and performs administrative reviews to continually evaluate program components. Also, throughout the year, WIOA Administration staff offers guidance and technical assistance to WDB staff and their AJC partners. Data Validation, as required by USDOL, is conducted and WIOA Administration staff also evaluates program activities for compliance with USDOL ETA regulations and CTDOL policies. Administrative reviews include, but are not limited to:

- 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.

From December 2024 to March 2025, USDOL's Employment and Training Administration conducted a Comprehensive Consolidated Review (CCR) of WIOA in Connecticut, including reviews of The WorkPlace and Capital Workforce Partners. The WIOA Administration Unit worked with both WDBs to address findings and, as part of the process, Case Note Training was provided to frontline staff of the Southwest and Northwest WDBs. As of the close of PY24 in June, efforts to resolve remaining CCR findings continued.

In PY24, programmatic monitoring of three WDBs was conducted, remotely, and included review of the boards' responses to CTDOL's monitoring tools; entrance and exit interviews; and final report development. Monitoring was waived for The WorkPlace and Capital Workforce Partners due to their participation in USDOL's CCR.

Also during the program year, WIOA Administration Unit staff contributed suggestions for an update to the CTDOL WIOA homepage, which included a new design and features. Additionally, the WIOA Administration Unit's Manager of Community Advocacy was invited by the Family Support Magistrate of Connecticut's Judicial Branch to present an overview of the WIOA program to the Family Support Magistrate Division (FSMs) of the state Superior Court. FSMs establish paternity and enter child support orders in family cases between unmarried parties, a number of whom receive state financial assistance and could potentially benefit from WIOA services. Also in PY24, various sections of the WIOA Policy Manual were revised, which included updating text to reflect the latest federal guidance; clarify procedures; ensuring accuracy to WIOA Final Rules; and adding new policy.

As Connecticut's PY23 WIOA Annual Report noted, CTDOL was awarded \$3,246,250.00 from the Office of Disability Employment Policy to participate in the Employment Transition Models

Demonstration Grants Project to improve career services and employment opportunities for youth and young adults with disabilities. CTDOL's partners in this five-year demonstration project include ADS, Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, the WDBs, and various community partners. The project, effective April 1, 2024, focuses on out-of-school and in-school youth, racial and ethnic minorities, youth in foster care, and homeless, low-income, and justice-involved youth. During its pilot year, the grant served youth from the Northwest, Southwest and Eastern workforce development regions. Expansion statewide is scheduled for years two through five.

In PY24, CTDOL responded to a competitive opportunity to support youth-serving systems statewide and was selected by the Forum for Youth Investment to implement the Building Ecosystems Statewide for Thriving Youth (BEST) initiative. The Forum for Youth Investment will lead this three-year pilot program that will facilitate collaboration across different state systems and sectors, including ADS, Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, and other partners. The goals are to generate cross-system innovations that will result in a more effective and responsive youth development ecosystem, and provide policymakers with insights on how to establish a supportive policy environment for advancing and sustaining the initiatives.

### **WIOA Customer and Employer Survey Results**

During PY24, satisfaction surveys were made available to employers through two sources. CTDOL's webpage hosts an employer survey powered by SurveyMonkey, and CTHires, Connecticut's virtual one-stop delivery system, includes an option for employer feedback.

A total of four employers completed surveys through SurveyMonkey in PY24. The results\* were as follows:

- Two were very satisfied with services, one was satisfied, and one indicated services did not meet their expectations
- Two indicated services were very close to the ideal set of services, one said services were close to the ideal, and one indicated services did not meet the ideal set of services

Also, the WIOA Administration Unit conducted a Customer Feedback survey via CTHires to gain insights into customer experiences with the system and understand individuals' interest in Connecticut's public workforce system. A total of 408 responses were received. Among these, 84% identified as jobseekers, 6.9% as "other," 6.1% as youth, 2.5% as employers, and 0.2% as labor market analyst/researcher. Notably, 94.9% of respondents who accessed CTHires were seeking assistance with either job searches, filing for unemployment, career planning, or locating education and training providers. Other primary reasons for use of CTHires included occupational research, finding employer contact information, researching reports, browsing, and employers looking for job candidates. Additionally, 66.9% of respondents indicated that they strongly agreed or agreed that the information was easy to find, while 74.3% strongly agreed or agreed that the information was easy to understand.

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

## 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 (Jobs for Veterans State Grants)
- Registered Apprenticeship
- Unemployment Insurance (UI)
- Foreign Labor Certification
- Wagner-Peyser Act
- Jobs First Employment Services (JFES)
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers
- 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 ADS and SDE 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 and 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 WDBs and helping to ensure Connecticut is meeting those goals; supports various programs with Data Element Validation tasks; and designs surveys and analyzes their results for numerous CTDOL units.

## **Continuing Workforce Activities**

### **CTHires**

CTDOL's web-based case management system, CTHires, offers an array of helpful options to its many users across CTDOL, the WDBs, other workforce development partners and state agencies, private employers, and the public. Services include 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. Also, required data is collected by CTHires for reporting on self-services and staff-assisted services for WIOA (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth), Wagner-Peyser, Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG), Trade Adjustment Assistance, National Dislocated Worker Grants, and Registered Apprenticeship Expansion Grants. Additional programs have been integrated into the system since CTHires' PY15 launch, such as Foreign Labor Certification, JFES, the Work Opportunity Tax Credit program, and Registered Apprenticeship.

Staff of the Performance and Accountability Unit administer CTHires for CTDOL as well as for the state's workforce development system. In addition, the staff participate in periodic user group calls and attend conferences hosted by Geographic Solutions, Inc., the developer of CTHires. This engagement ensures staff remain current with system-related operations, plans for functionality changes, and important system updates.

### **Rapid Response**

CTDOL's Rapid Response (RR) Unit, in conjunction with local WDBs 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.

From July 2024 to June 2025, the RR Unit made 427 initial outreach calls regarding potential layoffs and responded to thirty-one WARN notices affecting 2,306 workers. Additionally, RR staff made 143 presentations to 2,148 impacted workers. The presentations included thirty-one company-specific information sessions, forty-seven Dislocated Worker Job Search and Training Options information workshops, sixteen on-site job search workshops, one unemployment workshop for union representatives, and forty-eight webinars for workers from companies that did not avail themselves of Rapid Response services before layoff.

Additionally, 4,434 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 495 unemployment-related issues that were holding up Dislocated Workers' initial payments.

As a means of layoff aversion, RR staff contacted seventy-five employers that were participating in CTDOL's Shared Work program to see if their business was improving by using the program. Referrals were made to the Department of Economic and Community Development and other assistance programs, such as the Layoff Aversion microgrant program, for Shared Work employers who continued to struggle financially. RR staff, in conjunction with CTDOL's Business Engagement Unit, organized five company-specific job fairs and one statewide job fair for 1,433 job seekers.

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 is unlikely to return to a previous industry or occupation as defined by CT DOL. A total of 25,092 WIOA Dislocated Worker outreach letters were sent to workers who met that definition. Six hundred and seven workers who were sent the outreach letter attended a Dislocated Worker Job Search and Training Options webinar, and 353 of those attendees were referred to WIOA program operators for enrollment.

CTDOL staff from both the RR and Trade Act Units jointly submitted one TAA petition on behalf of workers whose jobs were believed to be affected by increased imports, foreign competition, 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 PY24, 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, students, workforce development professionals who provide job search and employment assistance, and to education, government, and business leaders. In addition, the Office of Research gave presentations to human resources professionals and civic associations and provided data and information to the GWC and OWS.

In-person sessions were presented to high school career advisory boards, adult education providers, a Connecticut Learns and Works Breakfast Symposium in October 2024, and an all-day Connecticut Learns and Works Conference in May 2025. Virtual presentations included those for GWC; teachers and counselors at an event sponsored by a Regional Educational Service Center in northwestern Connecticut; and the Department of Developmental Services with a focus on jobseeker resources for job developers.

During PY24, the Office of Research continued to provide technical assistance to the WDBs for Help Wanted OnLine (HWOL) through an account the Office of 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 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.

## **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 in person and remotely, 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 PY24, a total of 32,828 individuals received Wagner-Peyser services; some of these individuals received self-services, while others received staff-assisted services through AJC offices. A total of 35,346 staff-assisted services were provided, statewide, to enrolled participants.

### 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 PY24, CTDOL continued to design and develop a new, enhanced RESEA module within the ReEmployCT system that will meet current and future needs of the program to better serve UI claimants. While the new RESEA is under development, a statewide interim solution remains operational. This solution, which relies on manual processes to select and notice participants, track results, and compile federal reports, will remain in place to serve eligible participants pending the development and implementation of the new RESEA system, targeted for completion in 2026.

### 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 targeted groups who face barriers to employment. The U.S. Department of Labor (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 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 2024, CTDOL processed a total of 62,515 WOTC applications from employers, of which 17,277 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 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 qualifying employment barriers, or other characteristics specified by the Secretary of Labor, may be referred to a DVOP to 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 enhance services to veterans in the AJCs, DVOPs conduct community outreach 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. During PY24, CTDOL's DVOPs provided services to 467 eligible veterans under JVSG.

Other CTDOL 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.

## **Business Services**

The Business Engagement Unit (BEU) provides a broad array of services to employers from across Connecticut's five workforce development areas. 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 related questions;
- Information to employers regarding free labor exchange services;

- Referrals to resources and programs to support business needs;
- Layoff aversion and downsizing support through Shared Work and RR programs; and
- Partnering with local organizations such as Chambers of Commerce, educational institutions, and non-profits to assist with job fairs held throughout the state.

In PY24, the Business Engagement Unit continued hosting virtual employer seminars on various compliance topics, including “Connecticut’s Paid Sick Leave Law,” “Introduction to Employment Law,” “CT FMLA and CT Paid Leave,” “What to Expect During a Wage Investigation,” “UI 101 for Employers,” “Health Benefits Under COBRA,” and “AI in Action: Boosting Efficiency & Protecting Your Business.” Seminars about Workers’ Compensation, Second Chance hiring, Shared Work, and domestic violence awareness, support and prevention were also provided. Seminars were held monthly via Zoom. Approximately 2,200 individuals attended these seminars. In addition, the Business Engagement Unit offers professional development credits from the Society for Human Resource Management for each webinar attended.

The Business Engagement Unit uses an email marketing platform for both email distribution and list management. Over 3,000 new subscribers resulted from the email distribution list generated for job seekers and workforce partners. A total of 823 business registrations were processed by staff into CTHires; employers posted 10,563 new Connecticut job orders; and 176,770 job orders were indexed from corporate websites. Business Services Specialists held recruitment events, with 703 employers represented and approximately 8,300 job seekers in attendance. In addition, more than 32,000 services, including recruitment assistance, candidate referrals to job postings, business consultation, assistance utilizing CTHires, promotional contacts, and referrals to additional support programs were provided to over 8,300 employers by CTDOL Business Engagement Unit staff.

In PY24, the Business Engagement Unit began offering virtual employer information sessions to help employers reach multiple candidates and highlight the benefits of working for their organization. The unit also sponsored a large, statewide job fair in collaboration with Central Connecticut State University on June 12, 2025. Over seventy employers and 1,500 job seekers attended this event which focused on all career levels and industries.

### **Jobs First Employment Services Integration in the American Job Centers**

In partnership with the Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS) and the five 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) funding. 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 \$13,145,177 and a total of 5,498 JFES participants were served during the program year. JFES data and demographics are available in the “Jobs First Employment Services Annual Report for SFY23” that was issued by CTDOL on June 20, 2024.

## **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 PY24, 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 CTDOL, WDBs, state and local agencies and organizations, and Job Corps' program operators resulted in Job Corps' success in Connecticut. In PY24, the Connecticut Job Corps Program served over 580 students. On May 29, 2025, USDOL announced a phased pause in operations at contractor-operated Job Corps centers nationwide, which, in effect, also paused new student enrollment.

## **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 CTDOL's web page that provide 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 ADS, the Department of Developmental Services, SDE, DSS, 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 May 30, 2025, was attended by 250 participants. Presentations on the topics of Depression, Trauma, Adverse Childhood Experiences,

and Artificial Intelligence were offered. CTDOL was a Gold Sponsor of this event, which enabled fifty JFES staff to attend the conference.

### **Workforce Development Boards**

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

#### **Northwest (Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board)**

##### **Good Jobs Challenge Program - Regional Sector Partnerships**

During PY24, the Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board (NRWIB) continued to expand three regional sector partnerships (RSP) under the Good Jobs Challenge program. The NW CT Manufacturing, NW CT Health Connect, and Architecture, Engineering & Construction (AEC) RSPs collaborated to refine objectives, identify regional needs, clarify solutions, and outline action plans involving community-based and public-sector partners. These partnerships aimed to enhance local education and training programs; promote careers in healthcare, manufacturing, and construction; strengthen the talent pipeline; attract career-changing adults; and advocate for regulatory improvements that increase industry efficiency.

The AEC Regional Sector Partnership (RSP) grew significantly during PY24. Its early success prompted the NRWIB to approach the state's four other workforce boards in early 2025 with the goal of scaling the initiative statewide. With support from OWS and partner workforce boards, this broader, coordinated approach marked a major step toward unified, industry-led workforce development across Connecticut and the strengthening of the state's AEC talent pipeline.

To ensure job readiness for Good Jobs Challenge clients, NRWIB also continued offering training for in-demand certifications through partnerships with Connecticut State Community College, Griffin Hospital, and local occupational training providers. This included program offerings specifically geared for the metalworking and manufacturing communities of Greater Waterbury.

Additional accomplishments included the development of an industry-driven curriculum focused on the metal finishing subsector of manufacturing, as well as the creation of quarterly and monthly newsletters designed to foster collaboration among RSP members and deepen regional industry engagement, strengthening the network for economic growth and workforce advancement.

##### **Northwest Construction Careers Initiative**

The Northwest Construction Careers Initiative (NCCI) grew during PY24, strengthening partnerships with trade unions and employers to promote construction careers through apprenticeship and readiness training. Staff conducted targeted outreach, hosting both virtual and in-person recruitment events that connected with 158 residents of the Northwest region, leading to fifty-six enrollments. The NRWIB reentry program also advanced, providing job-readiness training and career opportunities for individuals reentering the workforce. Collaborations with trade unions led to eleven NCCI participants securing employment after training.

NRWIB administered the City of Waterbury's Good Jobs Ordinance, requiring contractors on projects over \$500,000 to hire 30% local residents and 10% minorities. To support this, the board

delivered OSHA 10 certification courses and other essential training. Additional opportunities included environmental remediation (through an EPA grant), Heavy Equipment Awareness, CORE construction coursework in plumbing, HVAC, and electrical, as well as flagging certification courses. Client services were enhanced with a two-day, work-readiness bootcamp and personalized job placement assistance, ensuring participants entered the workforce prepared and aligned with industry needs. Together, these efforts strengthened construction workforce pipelines, expanded credentialing options, and supported local hiring mandates across the region.

### Ticket to Work

Ticket to Work is a voluntary Social Security program that assists SSI or SSDI recipients, age 18 to 64, in obtaining no-cost vocational counseling, job training through WIOA or other programs, job readiness, job referrals and other employment support services to ultimately attain self-sufficiency without disability benefits. Authorized as an “Employment Network” by the Social Security Administration since 2014, the NRWIB provided these services to twenty-nine participants during PY24. To participate, the SSI or SSDI recipients meeting the age criteria must be willing to work full time. Participants benefit from deferred disability medical reviews, continued Medicare/Medicaid benefits, and expedited reinstatement of benefits, if needed.

### Apprenticeship Connecticut Initiative - Manufacturing Your Future

During PY24, the NRWIB continued to convene, implement, and facilitate a wide range of initiatives aligned with the region’s workforce priorities. One key example is the Apprenticeship Connecticut Initiative (ACI) which directly addressed the manufacturing sector’s shortage of skilled workers. This initiative brought together a regional partnership that included local schools, two community colleges, business associations, chambers of commerce, and employers. Through ACI, 115 participants were served during the program year.

### Career ConneCT G.R.E.E.N. Job Training and More

The Career ConneCT Growing Renewable Energy Employment Network (G.R.E.E.N.) program, funded through OWS until June 2026, offers training in high-demand, green sector occupations including CDL, solar photovoltaic installation, weatherization, welding, and other sustainability-focused skills.

In addition to supporting training in the Northwest region, the program allocates funding to Connecticut’s other WDBs, ensuring equitable, statewide access to high-quality G.R.E.E.N. sector training programs. Job placement services are also integrated into the program, and early outcomes show successful transitions into employment for participants. Beyond G.R.E.E.N., NRWIB has received additional Career ConneCT funding, channeled through other WDBs via OWS, to support training and job placement in critical sectors such as manufacturing, transportation, healthcare, and information technology. These collaborative efforts are strengthening the state’s workforce development infrastructure and expanding career pathways not only in the Northwest region, but across Connecticut. In Program Year 2024, the NRWIB served 180 individuals through these targeted training and employment initiatives.

### Youth

During PY24, the NRWIB continued to serve both in-school and out-of-school youth by funding Naugatuck Valley Community College (NVCC), Northwestern Connecticut Community College (NCCC), and the Police Activity League (PAL). The two community college programs focused on providing in-depth education, training, and employment opportunities to the fifty-nine out-of-school youth served. As for the PAL program, the focus was to continue to work with ten at-risk youths from the Waterbury Career Academy to develop leadership and communication skills.

Since the goal for both community college programs is for the participants to attain an associate degree, each participant receives intensive mentoring as they maneuver through their respective program. Upon entering the program, each youth attends occupational skills training. Those who complete receive a customer service credential which is helpful once the youth participates in the required work experience component that is set up for them. A total of eight youth attained an associate degree, seven committed to attending a four-year college, and one was offered a job working as a paraprofessional.

In the PAL program, each youth has the potential to attain occupational skill credentials, either in customer service or ServSafe, or both. PAL staff monitors academic performance to ensure the youth participants remain on track and meet academic standards. In PY24, a total of sixty-nine youth were served, and all attained a measurable skills gains along with an occupational skills credential. Four youth graduated with a high school diploma and all will be moving on to post-secondary education.

### **Southwest (The WorkPlace)**

#### Platform to Employment

Platform to Employment (P2E) completed its 10th year serving Connecticut residents in partnership with CTDOL and the state's WDBs. The program offers a five-week preparatory course that includes skills assessments, career readiness workshops, financial literacy tools, behavioral health support, and job search strategies guided by career coaches. In PY24, P2E served 307 participants, helping them manage the emotional stress of unemployment while preparing them to reenter the workforce; 76% of participants returned to work.

Building on the success of the P2E model, The WorkPlace introduced P2E Youth to support young adults navigating the transition from high school to career. Recognizing that many young people face uncertainty and barriers during this time, P2E Youth provides hands-on learning experiences, mentorship, and exposure to real-world challenges to build confidence and career direction. In PY24, the program served forty-three participants, equipping them with the tools and support needed to take their first steps toward long-term success. By the end of the program year, twenty participants entered employment, demonstrating the program's impact in launching meaningful career pathways.

#### Tech Ready Career Training

Created in partnership with the Stamford Partnership, the Tech Ready Career Training program offers paid training as well as structured, hands-on micro-internships to participants who attend Tech Ready's fully online Information Technology courses. CompTIA, Generative AI, Python, and training in other high-growth areas are offered, with flexible options and start dates, so participants can find programs that align with their schedules and career goals. The courses are

expert-led and presented in partnership with local colleges and universities, ensuring high-quality instruction in current industry standards. In addition to gaining in-demand skills, participants benefit from Tech Ready's certification support and personalized job placement assistance. In PY24, the program served over 250 individuals. Of those enrolled, 80% earned industry-recognized certifications in areas such as AWS Cloud Practitioner, Google Cybersecurity, CompTIA, and Python. As of the close of PY24, ninety-six participants have secured employment, and an additional 160 are in training. Notably, nine training completers entered employment, earning \$90,000 or more annually.

### American Job Center

The Southwest board's WIOA performance outcomes, as reported to USDOL for PY24, demonstrated many positive achievements across both the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. From entered employment to credential attainment to median earnings and more, the area's year-end results indicated that WIOA funding, once again, played a key role in workforce gains.

In June 2025, the American Job Center in Derby was relocated to a new facility. This change will enhance community engagement and reduce operational costs. The move was strategically aligned with the local community action agency, TEAM Inc., to better serve residents.

### Youth

During PY24, The WorkPlace continued to offer youth programming through CareerHub to help young adults (ages 16-24) become self-reliant members of the community. A variety of programs are offered and are tailored to the needs of youth to assist them in gaining the skills and training necessary to connect not just to a job, but to a meaningful career.

Once program eligibility is established, each participant receives individualized support to explore, prepare for, and pursue a career path the youth can take pride in. Services include career exploration and job search coaching, occupational skills training, GED exam support, résumé development, job placement assistance, and access to supportive services. The program served 143 young adults throughout the year.

## **Eastern (Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board - EWIB)**

### American Job Center Services

In PY24, EWIB continued to offer both in-person and virtual workshops, including WIOA Orientation Workshops, all at no cost to jobseekers. Customers continued to visit all three eastern Connecticut AJCs, but workshop attendance remained more positive with the virtual option. Given the lack of transportation and daycare in this mainly rural section of the state, the virtual option has remained a better fit for many customers.

### Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative

The Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative (MPI), an award-winning workforce program managed by EWIB and other partners, continued its growth. During PY24, over 450 individuals received

training and, as of June 30, 2025, MPI placed over 4,700 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 solid foundation of curriculum designed by manufacturers and academia, the MPI's success is also attributable to its strong partnership of more than thirty stakeholders making up the Eastern Advanced Manufacturing Alliance Regional Sector Partnership 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 thirty-six classes during PY24.

### Healthcare Pipeline Initiative

The Healthcare Pipeline Initiative (HPI) has been modeled after the MPI program to train individuals interested in healthcare careers. Customers are co-enrolled into WIOA and case managers guide customers through an orientation, at which time in-demand healthcare fields and appropriate trainings are reviewed. HPI customers then choose the training that will best support their career pathway. EWIB again ran some classes in partnership with local high schools, New London Adult Education and Norwich Adult Education in PY24.

Upon completion of the healthcare training, the customer either moves up in the current healthcare career opportunity based on their training. EWIB also actively worked with the area's Healthcare Regional Sector Partnership to connect employers to HPI and potential hires to fill their healthcare program needs. Also, EWIB began partnering with Hartford Healthcare to quickly address the shortage of trained healthcare workers by providing Incumbent Worker Training to upgrade employees.

### 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 manufacturing 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 those schools. In the eight years since its establishment, the YMPI has placed over 200 high school graduates into jobs. The program has received strong support from the participating schools' administrators and youth participants. EWIB continued to expand its K-8 YMPI program activities in PY24 through virtual reality training and career exploration opportunities for elementary and middle school students. Additionally, EWIB collaborated 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 and apply to the employer they would most like to work for.

#### Youth Healthcare Pipeline Initiative

The Youth Healthcare Pipeline Initiative (YHPI) replicates the YMPI model by offering high school students in-school training that results in industry-recognized credentials and creates immediate employment opportunities on healthcare career pathways. The YHPI creates the early healthcare career onramps needed to adequately address healthcare employer hiring demands. Piloted in PY22, the YHPI has experienced growth and success since then, with expansion to a

few new schools in PY24. The YHPI continues to have support from the Eastern CT Healthcare Partnership to inform curricula and partner with regional high schools for career exploration, job shadowing, clinical rotations, and recruitment opportunities.

### Connecticut Youth Employment Program - Summer Youth Employment Program

In partnership with EASTCONN, New London Youth Affairs, and Thames Valley Council for Community Action, the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) was made available to 41 towns in the region, making PY24 the eighteenth year in a row that this partnership has offered summer jobs to opportunity youth in the Eastern workforce investment area. The SYEP worked with eligible youth, ages 14-24, to not only provide summer job opportunities but to prepare them for a successful future as fully-engaged members of the labor force across the EWIB region. SYEP participants gained valuable experience while working in various jobs in the community and learned about in-demand jobs in the area, such as healthcare and manufacturing, as well as how to plan their career pathways. Their participation also benefited the community by providing local employers with summer help. Some employers continue to employ students after the program ends.

### **North Central (Capital Workforce Partners)**

#### Regional Sector Partnerships

Capital Workforce Partners (CWP) continued to convene three Regional Sector Partnerships (RSPs) in PY24. These industry-led partnerships bring together business representatives and various stakeholders from education, government, and the community to address industry-specific challenges and opportunities, such as talent pipeline development. RSPs are a central piece of CWP's business engagement strategy as they have helped to inform a variety of workforce and education strategies, including sector-based training initiatives like Good Jobs and Career ConneCT, credential-based curriculum development, and future workforce programs. During PY24, businesses connected to the RSPs described below conducted 199 new employment placements. Additionally, eleven RSP members partnered with CWP on a variety of workforce development strategies including on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, layoff aversion projects, job quality projects, internships, and others.

The Capital Area Healthcare Partnership (CAHP) comprises twenty-three healthcare organizations and a supporting network of twenty-six partners to tackle challenges shared across the industry and develop collaborative strategies for improvements. Key accomplishments in PY24 included two major hiring events that connected approximately thirty employers with more than 600 jobseekers. The partnership also hosted its first "Unconference," titled "Breaking Barriers in Healthcare: Together We Can Make a Difference." This event gathered 168 high school students, healthcare professionals, and academic leaders to address the challenges and opportunities facing the healthcare workforce. Also during the year, CAHP's policy action team actively advocated for public policies that enhance patient care, strengthen the stability of the healthcare industry, and improve access to and the quality of healthcare jobs.

The Capital Area Tech Partnership (CATP) regularly convenes over fifty business and public entities to address issues related to developing and sustaining the region's tech workforce. In PY24, CWP partnered with a CATP business member to launch a tech internship for a group of

WIOA youth participants. All three youth accepted into the internship program were given job offers upon completion, and CWP is seeking to expand the program in PY25. CATP also hosted a variety of events to connect businesses and jobseekers. Step-Into-Tech days, for example, offered opportunities for local jobseekers to visit area tech companies and meet with tech leaders. Additionally, the partnerships' Executive Tech Talk webinar series, which brings together leaders and practitioners from area companies to speak to jobseekers on a variety of topics, offered information about tech contracting, how to prepare for various career pathways in tech, and insights from tech-sector recruiters to more than 100 attendees over a six-month period.

The Capital Area Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics Partnership (CATDLP) now comprises thirty-four businesses and fifteen public partners and is Connecticut's only partnership focused on common challenges and business priorities for the TDL sector. The two areas of priority for the CATDLP are workforce development and career awareness. In PY24, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual TDL Expo and Career Fair, held in Hartford, brought together 48 exhibitors and 197 jobseekers. To meet more localized hiring demand, the partnership also began a series of smaller, TDL-focused hiring events around the state. Also in PY24, the workforce development action team began working on strategies to develop a talent pipeline of diesel mechanics.

### Returning Citizens

The BEST Chance program is a dedicated employment and training initiative committed to empowering justice-involved individuals, who often face substantial barriers, to achieve sustainable economic independence. In PY24, through occupational trades training in the fields of carpentry, construction, culinary, and masonry, along with personalized case management and targeted skills development, the program equipped participants with the essential tools to secure and sustain new or improved employment. CWP's mission is to facilitate pathways to careers that foster long-term stability for individuals and strengthen the local workforce. During the program year, CWP supported 513 unique, active participants and facilitated skill development through various training pathways, engaging over 400 participants in training, leading to nearly 100 new job placements.

### Sector-based Training

Through 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, training in IT/technology and advanced manufacturing continued to expand. In PY24, enrollment grew, 479 individuals were served statewide, and a no-cost extension through January 2026 was granted. In parallel, Career ConneCT offered credential-based programs in manufacturing, CDL, IT/technology, green industries, and healthcare; 298 participants enrolled in PY24.

Under the Good Jobs Challenge, CWP and six education/training providers launched credential-based cohorts in healthcare and IT/technology, enrolling eighty-one participants in IT and 128 in healthcare in PY24. CWP also executed a contract with CT State to train an additional 100 individuals for specialized roles such as Central Sterile Processing Technicians, Patient Care Technicians, and Pharmacy Technicians. In addition, the Basic Skills Remediation Pilot officially launched with CREC, Manchester Adult Education, and Bristol Adult Education to assist 150 North Central residents who hold a high school diploma or equivalent, but did not pass the Career ConneCT Skills Assessment or other required secondary assessments. Targeted remediation in

academics, computer literacy, and professional skills were offered, with completers taking the CASAS assessment to gauge readiness for CWP-funded workforce training. In PY24, CWP enrolled seventeen participants in the pilot program and additional enrollments are planned for PY25.

### Ticket To Work

Ticket to Work is a voluntary Social Security program that assists recipients of SSI or SSDI benefits, age 18 through 65, to obtain vocational counseling, training, job readiness, job referrals and other employment support services, free of charge. This program is authorized by the Social Security Administration as an “Employment Network,” through which CWP provided services to twenty-four participants during PY24.

### Youth

In PY24, a total of 376 participants were served in the North Central area by the WIOA Youth program. A total of 177 youth received training during the program year; 136 started their training in PY24 while the others entered training the prior year. Out of 146 youth who completed training in PY24, 103 received a credential. Training options included customer service, CNA, CompTIA A+, ServSafe, CDL, and more.

Through the Summer Youth Employment and Learning Program (SYELP), an additional 1,310 youth received paid summer internships, which included 120 hours of work experience with local employers or work-based learning experiences. SYELP also provided career competency development, career awareness and exposure, and supportive services such as for mental health. SYELP is funded through CTDOL, numerous other state agencies, the City of Hartford, and other sources.

Additionally, CWP partnered with Bloomfield High School to provide a Dual Track Program embedded in the school’s curriculum. Youth participants completed CNA training, career readiness preparation, and internship hours during the school year, alongside their regular academic courses. In the spring of 2025, 18 Bloomfield High School seniors graduated with both a high school diploma and a CNA credential.

## **South Central (Workforce Alliance)**

### Program Overview

In PY24, WIOA program services reached hundreds of jobseekers across the New Haven, Middletown, and Meriden AJCs. Through collaboration with various partners, participants accessed a wide range of resources, including year-round career-readiness workshops, adult education, and monthly computer literacy classes offered by community action agencies and local education departments. The positive outcomes attained through these opportunities reflect the power of community partnerships and tailored workforce solutions. WIOA participants have not only found jobs, they are building long-term career stability with credentials in place.

### Re-Entry: Next Steps Program

The Next Steps Program supports the re-entry population in gaining employment by offering career counseling, life coping skills, occupational skills training, on-the-job training, and support services such as transportation assistance. Customized workshops and virtual services are also available. In PY24, ninety-nine re-entry customers were served, and fifty were placed into employment. Those still enrolled will continue to receive additional services until being placed into employment. Since its inception in 2003, the program has placed 2,508 individuals in jobs. The Next Steps Program collaborates with police departments, courts, prisons, probation offices, parole services, halfway houses, and community organizations to improve success rates.

### South Central Manufacturing Regional Sector Partnership

Workforce Alliance has worked closely with the Governor's Workforce Council and the Office of Workforce Strategy to adopt a Regional Sector Partnership (RSP) framework to coordinate strategic initiatives in high-growth and high-demand industries. In PY24, Workforce Alliance supported the South Central Manufacturing RSP by braiding funding from federal, state, and philanthropic grants to increase both the availability of manufacturing training options and the number individuals trained in manufacturing careers. In PY24, a total of 152 adults were enrolled in manufacturing training, 117 completed, and thirty-four secured employment.

The South Central board also continued to offer the Skill Up for Manufacturing program that has been a success for years. For Gordon Wong, who was a Senior Administrative Assistant looking for a career change, Skill Up was a perfect fit. He had started looking into the manufacturing field because family members were working in the industry. He had no manufacturing experience at all, but heard about Skill Up and became a participant. During his training, Gordon was interviewed by a major manufacturing firm in Connecticut and that subsequently led to a job offer as an Avionics Assembler which Gordon accepted.

In addition to the Skill Up program for Adults, Workforce Alliance partnered with three school districts in the region to develop and expand manufacturing career training and awareness of options for juniors and seniors in high school and older youth enrolled in Adult Education. Funding and support by Workforce Alliance allowed the districts to send teachers to training, purchase supplies for instruction, and provide transportation to Electric Boat's "Boat for Next Gen" program which introduces high school students to the trades. A total of 132 students were enrolled in manufacturing training in PY24.

### Parent Leadership Training Institute

In PY24, Workforce Alliance, in partnership with the United Way of Greater New Haven, restarted the Parent Leadership Training Institute for parents, caregivers, and individuals interested in strengthening the communities of the Greater New Haven region. This 20-week program promotes the development of leadership skills to improve child outcomes, advance democracy, and increase the civic engagement of families. The training, which is centered around increasing civic knowledge and skills, includes activities such as appreciating diversity; understanding the role of citizens in the political process and formation of public policy; monitoring current events; and thinking critically about political information. Public speaking,

communication skills, coalition and community building, and organizing and advocating for change are also included in the training. A variety of successful outcomes were attained by training completers: two completed their high school education, four enrolled or re-enroll in post-secondary education or completed advanced training, and six obtained employment.

### Youth

Workforce Alliance, in partnership with CVS and other local organizations, supported thirty-seven youth and young adults (ages 18-24) with disabilities and/or a high school Individualized Education Plan through #EmployMe, a program to explore career opportunities in the retail pharmacy industry or other industries of their choice. Staff at the area AJCs and in the South Central partners' network identified youth who had limited or no work histories and were interested in career exploration and work experience opportunities. Youth were provided with three weeks of career exploration/career readiness instruction. Workshops and services were provided virtually as well as in-person, in a group setting, or via individual meetings for career planning. Activities included, but were not limited to, career assessment, career planning, identifying transferable skills, completing online applications, résumé writing, interviewing skills, transitioning to the workplace, work/life balance, conflict resolution, and digital literacy.

Following completion of the workshops, students participated in a 40-hour, paid work experience/internship at CVS stores located throughout the South Central region or other sites of the participants' choosing. During the externship, students gained practical experience, including proper customer service techniques, and performed various merchandising activities.

After completion of training, students were provided with additional options such as attending further training or supported employment opportunities. Four students enrolled in or had completed advanced training, fourteen were involved in work experience and four obtained employment.

### **Cost of Workforce Development Activities**

A total of \$24,701,964.00 was allocated to the state's five WDBs for WIOA services in PY24, a decrease of \$2,256,573.00 from the PY23 allocation of \$26,958,537.00. The funds were distributed as follows:

#### Program Year 2024 Fund Allocation

Adult - \$8,382,776.00  
Dislocated Worker - \$7,083,841.00  
Youth - \$9,235,347.00

For the period of July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025, as reported by CTDOL to USDOL via form ETA 9169, a total of 4,023 participants were served in PY24. As the chart below indicates, the Adult program assisted the largest number of participants; the 2,335 Adults served represents 58 percent of the total WIOA participants served. Also in PY24, a total of 675 Dislocated Workers and 1,013 Youth were served, comprising 17 percent and 25 percent of the total number of WIOA participants served respectively.

Program Year	Adult	Dislocated Worker	Youth	Total
PY23	2,634	756	1,040	4,430
PY24	2,335	675	1,013	4,023

### **Discussion of Activities Funded By WIOA 15% Statewide Funds**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (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 also may 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 PY24, 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;
- Supporting CTHires, the state’s WIOA case management information system;
- Workforce events, coordinated and hosted by OWS (Annual CT RSP Convening; 2025 Connecticut Workforce Summit; and a meeting of the National Governors Association’s Workforce Development Policy Institute); and
- Supplemental awards to two WDBs to fund training opportunities beyond those supported by formula funds.

Activities related to monitoring, evaluation, and accountability provide essential information and guidance for the state and its workforce development partners in regard to 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.

### **Waivers and Their Influence on Performance**

On May 30, 2024, USDOL ETA approved CTDOL’s request for a waiver of statutory and regulatory requirements under WIOA Section 129(a)(4)(A) and 20 CFR 681.410. Specifically, for both the Northwest and Southwest WDBs, CTDOL requested a waiver of the requirement that local areas expend 75 percent of local youth formula funds on out-of-school youth (OSY). This expenditure requirement for OSY was preventing the state from being responsive and agile in supporting all youth as Connecticut’s economy recovers from the pandemic and the state seeks to decrease the rate of disconnection among marginalized youth.

In USDOL’s approval letter, it was indicated that the expenditure requirement for the two areas may be lowered to 50 percent and, with that, the expectation is that “the number of in-school

youth (ISY) served will increase, and performance accountability outcomes for overall WIOA Youth (including both ISY and OSY) will remain steady or increase for the majority of the WIOA Youth performance indicators.” The waiver, which was approved for both PY24 and PY25, was incorporated by reference into Connecticut’s current State Integrated Workforce Plan.

The Southwest WDB began to utilize the waiver in PY24, but the impact of it was limited due to slow or delayed starts by vendors and vendor availability. This has been addressed by the board, but for PY24 activity, these limitations resulted in just a slight increase in cumulative enrollments of In-School Youth (ISY) from PY23 to PY24, with a total of twenty-four enrolled and thirty-three served in PY24, compared to twenty enrolled and twenty-six served in PY23. It is anticipated that the Employment Transition Model will support ISY enrollment, particularly through coordinated programming and an increased focus on engagement. Also, while the waiver allowed for greater flexibility in serving ISY, recruitment did not increase significantly. The Southwest board did not collect measurable data on school attendance, engagement with supportive services, or academic performance; this will be an area for improvement as the waiver continues to be utilized. In addition, the board expects that continued quarterly tracking, combined with early planning with vendors and school partners, may help increase ISY participation and better leverage the waiver benefits moving forward.

The Northwest WDB, which initially suspended ISY programming due to concerns about meeting the 75/25 requirement and overall youth funding levels, restarted programs and achieved promising results with the waiver in place. In February 2024, the Police Activity League resumed their WIOA-funded ISY program for at-risk youth. The waiver allowed for the enrollment of ten ISY in PAL’s “Beyond the Bleachers” program which provided enhanced classroom instruction and career exposure, utilizing curriculum designed to develop leadership and communication skills; work experience; and opportunities for occupational skills attainment. Additionally, summer work experiences were offered in 2024 and 2025, enabling youth to work as tutors or in PAL’s Service Corp, Culinary Program, or River Brigade. PAL’s ISY activities resulted in improved academic performance and school attendance, and growth in areas such as group engagement and public speaking skills. There were also successes in educational advancement, with four graduates planning to attend post-secondary institutions.