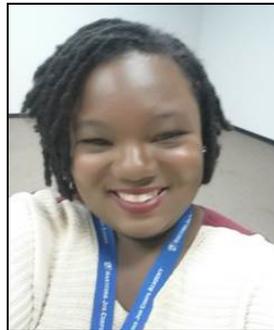


State of Connecticut



Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Annual Report

July 2017 - June 2018

December 2018



*A Message from
the Connecticut Department of Labor
and
the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission*

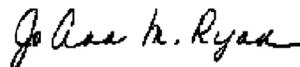
The Connecticut Department of Labor and its workforce development partners successfully met many of the objectives of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) during Program Year 2017. This WIOA Annual Report highlights the state's efforts to achieve planned goals and includes details regarding the employment and training programs, innovative projects, and quality services that were offered throughout the year to benefit the state's businesses and citizens.

The exceptional commitment of Connecticut's five Workforce Development Boards (WDB) to implement their WIOA plans is apparent in each board summary. Likewise, the report describes the Connecticut Department of Labor's endeavors to assist employers and jobseekers and includes information on services for veterans, dislocated workers, individuals with disabilities, and youth. Program outcomes and costs are also noted throughout the report.

While Connecticut's progress and achievements in meeting WIOA's mandates and vision are evident, there is more to accomplish. Through collaboration with the WDBs, other state agencies, and workforce development partners and their direct service providers, we intend to continue pursuing fulfillment of planned goals, preparing a skilled workforce, and advancing economic growth in the state.



Kurt Westby
Commissioner
Department of Labor



JoAnn Ryan
Chairman
CETC



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) - Program Year 2017	1
State Evaluations, Oversight Activities, and Guidance	3
Compliance Monitoring	3
Status of State Evaluation Activities	3
Administrative Review and Technical Assistance	4
WIOA Participant and Employer Survey Results	5
Performance and Accountability	5
Continuing Workforce Activities	7
CTWorks Business System and CTHires	7
Rapid Response and National Dislocated Worker Grant	7
Outreach Efforts by the Office of Research	8
Employment and Training (Wagner-Peyser, Reemployment Services, Business Services)	9
Serving Our Veterans	10
Jobs First Employment Services Integration in the American Job Centers	11
Job Corps	11
Serving Individuals with Disabilities	12
Disability Employment Initiative	13
Workforce Development Boards' Innovative Practices, Challenges, and Exemplary Programs	13
Cost of Workforce Development Activities	20
Discussion of Activities Funded By WIOA 15% Statewide Funds	20

On the cover: *The cover photos reflect Program Year 2017 efforts by the Connecticut Department of Labor, the state's five Workforce Development Boards, and other workforce development partners and showcase some of the participants who benefited from the many programs and services offered. Photo details are provided within the report.*

**State of Connecticut
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
Annual Report
July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018**

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) - Program Year 2017

Program Year 2017 (PY17) proved to be a fast-paced, productive year for the Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL) and the state's five Workforce Development Boards (WDB). With numerous state and local partners and service providers, CTDOL and the WDBs continued to further develop and deliver a host of services under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). CTDOL, in its capacity under the Act, focused its efforts on providing administrative guidance, fostering the growth of workforce development partnerships in accordance with the Act's intent, issuing comprehensive WIOA policies, and pursuing innovative employment and training opportunities while also continuing to provide essential services to businesses, jobseekers, and other customers of the agency.

The Connecticut Employment and Training Commission (CETC), CETC Committees, and the Office of Workforce Competitiveness (OWC) continued to focus on WIOA planning and implementation activities during PY17. Connecticut's modification to the Unified State Plan was approved by USDOL in April 2018. In addition, OWC issued policies and procedures regarding the certification of the state's comprehensive one-stop centers as well as additional guidance for the completion of Infrastructure Funding Agreements, one-stop monitoring, and local plan modification. The state's five Workforce Development Boards submitted local plan modifications to OWC in June 2018.

The CETC Committees continued to address WIOA implementation and other areas critical to Connecticut's economy and workforce development efforts. Committees include representation from business, state agency one-stop partners, Workforce Development Boards, organized labor, education, community-based organizations and philanthropy.

The Service Design and Delivery Committee addressed one-stop system co-location, barriers to service accessibility, duplication of services, and opportunities for partnership. The Department of Rehabilitation Services, the vocational rehabilitation agency providing services to the disability community, has successfully integrated on-site services at the five comprehensive American Job Centers. Additionally, the committee has addressed the addition of apprenticeship programs to the Eligible Training Providers List and provision of information regarding one-stop implementation activities including Memorandum of Understanding and Infrastructure Funding Agreement development, one-stop certification, and dissemination of best practices.

The Business Engagement Committee continued to support its charge of promoting employer-led industry partnerships, sector strategies and career pathways efforts, including convening industry, education, and labor leaders around industry workforce issues and finding solutions that meet business needs. In support of this charge, the committee sponsors seminars geared for employers, human resource managers, non-profits, and related organizations. Six seminars were attended by more than 280 individuals and focused on high-priority matters of concern to Connecticut businesses such as "Drug Testing in the Workplace," "Cyber Security," "Medical Marijuana in the Workplace," "Unemployment Compensation," "Wage and Hour Basics,"

“Workers’ Compensation,” the “Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA),” and “Assistive Technology.” The committee also supports efforts to advance the American Apprenticeship Initiative (AAI) which has the goal of growing registered apprenticeship in advanced manufacturing, information technology, healthcare, and businesses services.

During PY17, CTDOL’s Employment Services (ES) Operations Unit also significantly contributed to furthering the WIOA goals of the agency. Among its many efforts, ES staff:

- Participated in the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration’s National Integrated Business Services Cohort and a Regional Monitoring Advisory Group, both of which peer learning initiatives provided the opportunity for CTDOL to share information about its operations, best practices, and challenges.
- Provided the second annual Interagency Business Engagement Training in June 2018 to front-line Business Services staff to educate stakeholders on topics including “Engaging Community Colleges & State Universities as Partners in Serving Employers,” “An Employer’s Perspective on Effective Recruitment Strategies” and “Millennials in the Workplace.”
- Facilitated the development and publishing the interagency “Employer Resource Guide” and “Employer Reference Card” which offer road maps to the many programs, services and incentives for businesses. Available in print and electronic format, these annually-updated materials provide important marketing and training tools for business services professionals.
- Served on the Business Engagement Steering Committee, along with representatives from Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education, the Workforce Development Boards, economic and community development, and the community college and university systems, with a goal of enhancing and aligning services to Connecticut businesses through an integrated business services team to help the businesses grow and thrive.

As for Connecticut’s Unemployment Insurance (UI) operations, effective December 2015, UI WIOA staff began providing comprehensive in-person UI assistance in the American Job Centers in all five Workforce Development Board areas. From July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018, UI WIOA staff assisted 40,657 clients. This UI assistance provided solutions to a host of needs including address changes, return to work notification, held claim inquires, returned payments, status letter requests, processing referee and board appeals, reopening unemployment claims, determining eligibility issues, helping customers navigate UI phone and on-line systems and providing necessary documentation when needed. In addition to the UI office assistance, claimants were informed about ES services and referred to Re-employment and partner staff for additional services, and were provided details regarding workshops and recruitments.

During PY17, CTDOL’s WIOA Administration Unit furthered the Act’s directives in many of its undertakings. To provide ongoing updates and a commitment to communication between workforce development partners, monthly meetings were held. In addition to coordinating a successful WIOA youth-focused summit, unit staff organized a contract conference, held in May 2018. The conference provided an opportunity for various partners in the contracting process, from both within CTDOL and with outside partners, to collaborate on streamlining the contract process. The conference included CTDOL’s fiscal and legal staff, WIOA Unit staff,

and representatives from the Office of the Attorney General. Connecticut's WIOA Policy Manual was further refined and developed in consultation with the WDBs. Efforts continued in regard to the collection and distribution of Eligible Training Provider performance data and staff conducted statewide program and fiscal monitoring activities.

As this report demonstrates, Connecticut has clearly fulfilled many of its WIOA goals. With the plans and foundations that are in place, many more goals are set to be accomplished. Above all, CTDOL and its workforce development partners are committed to serving the state and ensuring that WIOA's many principles are successfully established and carried out.

State Evaluations, Oversight Activities, and Guidance

Compliance Monitoring

Compliance monitoring, as set forth in OMB Circular A-110, "Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations," was conducted at each of the five Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) at the end of Program Year 2017, in accordance with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Regulations at Section 683.410(b)(1) and Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Regulations at Section 667.410(b)(1). In addition, the Connecticut Employment Program Summer Youth payrolls of 2018 and the state's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, Jobs First Employment Services (JFES), were monitored in all five WDBs. Other grants administered by CTDOL were also monitored in each of the WDBs during the 2017-2018 monitoring review process, in accordance with contract requirements.

The annual WIOA compliance monitoring included 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 were sampled and reviewed for eligibility verification for Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth in all five areas.

All recommended corrective action from the 2016-2017 monitoring review was completed and adequate controls appeared to be in place. While overall monitoring results for 2017-2018 show the five WDBs were generally in compliance with federal and state administrative requirements, the WDBs are working toward resolution of the most recent compliance review findings. Newly-implemented policies and procedures lead to continuous improvements during the program year, resulting in minimal findings.

Status of State Evaluation Activities

During Program Year 2017, the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission (CETC) Planning and Performance Committee continued to review the status of WIOA performance measurement shared across the Connecticut Departments of Labor, Rehabilitation Services, and Education. The committee provided guidance regarding the development of infrastructure cost-sharing agreements, oversaw the certification of the state's comprehensive one-stop centers, and will oversee the subsequent designation of local workforce areas. Additionally, the committee has reviewed CTDOL's Legislative Report Card, which report was prepared with guidance from the Office of Workforce Competitiveness and the CETC and may be viewed at <https://www1.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi/pubs/LRC2016.pdf>.

Administrative Review and Technical Assistance

Monitoring, evaluation, and technical assistance are integral oversight responsibilities of the Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL), required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and other applicable laws and regulations. Improved performance outcomes result when monitoring and evaluation findings are identified and corrected as well as when program strengths and best practices are noted, shared, and undertaken. Likewise, program management and operation capabilities are strengthened through the provision of on-going technical assistance to the Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) by CTDOL's WIOA Administration staff.

On an annual basis, CTDOL's WIOA Administration staff conducts program, data, and fiscal monitoring. During PY17, with the transition to WIOA complete, CTDOL developed a new WIOA monitoring tool and the program monitoring process entailed interviewing WDB staff; program participants, providers, and subcontractors; obtaining and reviewing written policies, forms, and guidance issued by the WDB for various program components; discussion of identified issues requiring correction by the WDB; and an exit conference with WDB staff. Administrative reviews are performed consistently through Data Validation and assessment of participant performance outcomes and negotiated goal achievements. Compliance with USDOL and CTDOL policies is continuously evaluated; this is an inherent component of CTDOL's administrative duties.

During PY17, oversight and guidance were also offered to WDBs through in-person, telephone and e-mail consultations on the following:

- ETPL
- Registration policy
- Monitoring
- Dislocated Worker certification
- Basic skills deficiency testing
- Supportive services
- Measurable skills gain

In PY17, CTDOL also continued to develop, review, update, and issue policies for its WIOA Policy Manual with input from USDOL Region 1. Policy topics included: Participant Registration, Monitoring, Measurable Skills Gains, ETPL and Basic Skills Deficiency Testing.



CTDOL's Rob Bongiolatti hosted "Youth Summit 2017"

On October 23, 2017, CTDOL's WIOA Administration Unit sponsored "Youth Summit 2017," an event designed to highlight WIOA's intent to focus services on disconnected youth. Hosting over 200 participants, the statewide Youth Summit included numerous speakers, workshops, and a youth panel. Attendees included professionals engaged in providing youth workforce development from the WDBs, education providers, the Department of Corrections, youth service providers, and private non-profit/philanthropic organizations. Youth participants representing all five workforce development areas in the state also attended the event.

WIOA Participant and Employer Survey Results

During PY17, Connecticut utilized SurveyMonkey to gather participant customer satisfaction information. A total of 59 participants completed customer satisfaction surveys. The majority of these respondents provided positive feedback to survey questions, with many specifically praising the professionalism, knowledge, and helpfulness of the American Job Centers' (AJC) staff. Some participants expressed the need for jobs in certain areas of the state. While a few individuals stated they were unable to secure employment despite the AJC's services, many others were pleased to find the job they trained for or sought and gave credit to AJC staff for connecting them to employment. Some respondents expressed interest in better-integrated AJCs as well as the availability of like services across all AJCs; budget constraints and current modes of operation leave these as areas to aspire to. The results of the survey were as follows:

Participants*

- 75% were very satisfied with the services provided by the American Job Centers
- 81% believed the services exceeded their expectations
- 80% believed the services provided were very close to the ideal set of services

CTHires was utilized to gather employer customer satisfaction information during PY17. A total of 19 employers completed satisfaction surveys. The results were as follows:

Employers*

- 90% performed self-service activities via CTHires including Job Search, Career Planning, Locating Education Providers, and Candidate Search
- 65% believed the services provided met their needs
- 60% believed the services provided were very close to ideal

Satisfaction survey results were periodically reported to the Workforce Development Boards during PY17. In an effort to increase response rates, Connecticut is looking into alternative forms of gathering the required survey information, including the possibility of embedding a survey into CTHires. CTDOL's WIOA Administration Unit has also developed a new monitoring tool which is designed to provide in-depth analysis of specific program and employer satisfaction within WIOA programming; outcomes gathered may be useful for future satisfaction reporting.

Performance and Accountability

The Connecticut Department of Labor's (CTDOL) 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

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

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:

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) - Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth
- Veterans
- Wagner-Peyser Act
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)
- Jobs First Employment Services (JFES)
- Unemployment Insurance (UI)
- Foreign Labor Certification
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers
- Connecticut Individual Development Account Initiative

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 Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS) and Federal Employment Data Exchange System (FEDES).

As mandated by WIOA, CTDOL must collaborate with the Connecticut Department of Rehabilitation Services and the Connecticut State Department of Education for quarterly and annual reporting purposes. During PY15 and PY16, the Performance and Accountability Unit worked closely with these WIOA-required core partners to establish MOUs for the exchange of data. In PY17, a MS SQL Server database was created and the parties to the agreement began sharing both participant data of those co-enrolled in the core programs of each entity and wage and employment data for all participants, not only those co-enrolled. 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. A unique identification number is assigned 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 synthesizes raw UI data and generates monthly reports so CTDOL's administration may determine whether claimants receive their benefits within federally-mandated timeframes; gathers and provides data critical to both negotiating the establishment of the state's WIOA performance goals with the Workforce Development Boards and helping to ensure Connecticut is meeting those goals; prepares CTDOL's section of the Governor's Budget Narrative; collects and submits Data Element Validation results to USDOL; and designs surveys and analyzes their results for numerous CTDOL units.

Continuing Workforce Activities

CTWorks Business System and CTHires

In addition to its numerous reporting responsibilities described in the summary above, the Performance and Accountability Unit also administers the Connecticut Department of Labor's web-based case management system. For years, the *CTWorks* Business System (CTWBS) supported employment and training services across multiple partner agencies and locations, serving as a repository of the majority of CTDOL-administered program data. CTWBS was partially replaced in PY15 by CTHires, Geographic Solutions' case management system that also provides numerous virtual services to jobseekers and employers. Since PY15, several enhancements have been made to CTHires to accommodate program needs and various changes required under WIOA. In March 2018, CTHires was expanded to include the Jobs First Employment Services (JFES) program, and CTWBS was decommissioned. Another system expansion is expected in the near future to incorporate the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) program.

CTHires offers an array of options, 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. In PY17, a total of 1,570 registrations from businesses were processed by CTHires staff, employers posted 38,564 new Connecticut job orders, jobseekers placed 3,053 new résumés into the system, and 99,685 jobs were indexed from corporate websites. CTHires also collects WIOA-required data for reporting on self-services and staff-assisted services for the Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser, and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) programs.

Rapid Response and National Dislocated Worker Grant

The state Rapid Response (RR) Unit, in conjunction with local Workforce Development Boards 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 the Connecticut Department of Labor, 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 layoffs/plant closings, 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 2017 to June 2018, the RR Unit made 328 initial outreach calls regarding potential layoffs and responded to 39 WARN notices affecting 3,090 workers. The RR staff made 81 employer and/or union visits and provided 131 presentations to 2,078 impacted workers, which included seven on-site job search and/or career planning workshops, one Trade Adjustment Assistance Act (TAA) information session, and 40 webinars for workers from companies that did not avail themselves of Rapid Response services prior to layoff.

Employment sites where face-to-face contact was not possible were provided packets of information, benefiting an additional 1,710 dislocated workers, including human resources managers and union representatives. An additional 4,246 webinar invitations were sent to workers who were part of large layoffs but whose employers declined on-site visits or had employees who work remotely. As a means of layoff aversion, the RR Unit also coordinated or assisted with five company-specific job fairs providing 210 jobseekers the opportunity to meet with potential hiring employers.

The RR Unit submitted 14 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. Twelve petitions, covering 575 workers, were certified TAA eligible. Two petitions resulted in negative determinations.

During PY17, CTDOL administered the following National Dislocated Worker Grant (formerly “National Emergency Grant” under the Workforce Investment Act), awarded by the USDOL:

Sector Partnership National Emergency Grant

CTDOL was awarded \$3,889,995 through June 30, 2017 to partner with, and conduct regional planning with, the state’s five Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) to identify new or growing employment opportunities and sector strategies to build talent pipelines. The grant, which was extended through June 30, 2018, concurrently provided programs for enhanced employment and training services for dislocated workers via three WDBs (Capital Workforce Partners, EWIB, and The WorkPlace). A total of 376 dislocated workers received intensive re-employment services, occupational skills training, and on-the-job training. Also under this grant, CTDOL’s Office of Apprenticeship Training provided informational workshops to approximately 120 American Job Center users and economic development partners regarding apprenticeship programs.

Outreach Efforts by the Office of Research

During PY17, the Connecticut Department of Labor’s Office of Research staff engaged in numerous outreach activities on behalf of the agency, providing labor market information (LMI) of interest to jobseekers; education, government, and business leaders; and those who provide job search and employment assistance, such as career counselors. Presentations were offered at community and professional events around the state, including those held at:

- AJC – training and team meetings with Employment Services and Business Services staffs
- Reemployment/jobseeker support groups
- One-stop Career Centers
- Business/employer groups
- WIOA “Youth Summit 2017”
- Social services agencies
- High schools (including technical high schools) – student job fairs, meetings with teachers/guidance counselors, other events
- Universities (career counselors and advisors)
- Several workgroups and consortia involved in manufacturing and providing training for manufacturing jobs.

In addition, a training webinar was taped and made available on CTDOL's intranet among a series of Employment Services training videos. The Office of Research also responded to data requests from and provided training to staff of the Workforce Development Boards and their vendors. The training focused on how to access both LMI and on-line job search tools to assist jobseekers. Many presentations incorporated Help Wanted OnLine (HWOL) information. HWOL offers jobs data, in a variety of measures, gathered from jobs posted online each month from over 16,000 Internet job boards, corporate boards, and smaller job sites. Aggregate HWOL data can be used as an indicator of overall labor demand while detailed information about postings by industry, occupation, geography, and specific employers is useful for job search purposes.



Patrick Flaherty of CTDOL's Office of Research presented at "Youth Summit 2017"

Employment and Training

Wagner-Peyser

CTDOL receives federal funding under the Wagner-Peyser Act to provide universal access to an array of labor exchange services offered at American Job Center (AJC) locations throughout Connecticut. These services include assistance with career choices and job search, referrals to jobs, placement assistance for jobseekers, reemployment services to claimants receiving unemployment insurance, and employer recruitment services to businesses with job openings. Additional resources that are available at the AJCs include computers with Internet connection, copiers, fax machines; and résumé writing, interviewing, and career exploration workshops. During 2017-2018, a total of 44,488 Wagner-Peyser program participants received services (staff-assisted or self-service) at AJC offices, with 162,184 staff-assisted services provided statewide. In addition, 4,740 individuals received résumé preparation assistance at CTDOL-sponsored events and job centers.

Reemployment Services for Unemployment Insurance (UI) Claimants

During periods of unemployment, the agency provides a variety of federally-funded reemployment services to residents. CTDOL meets the reemployment needs of many 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 receiving Unemployment Compensation for Ex-servicemembers (UCX). The goal of this program is to provide UI claimants early access to services that will help get them back into the workforce faster. The UI RESEA program also serves as a prevention/detection program regarding improper UI payments. From July 2017 to June 2018, CTDOL completed 8,714 initial RESEA appointments. For this same time period, 7,701 claimants participated in a required reemployment activity.

To augment outreach efforts to UI claimants beyond RESEA, CTDOL provided a reemployment service program to introduce other UI customers to the workforce programs available through the AJC network. Pathway to Reemployment was delivered at affiliate AJC locations throughout Connecticut in coordination with AJC partners and primarily targeted first-time filers who may have been unaware of the services available. A facilitated orientation

provided details about UI work search requirements as well as advice about accessing labor market information and using web-based tools. Like RESEA, Pathway to Reemployment was mandatory for those selected, and UI claimants who failed to report without notice and good cause received a one-week disqualification. Begun as a pilot in March 2017, the program served 377 claimants through the five-month period ending July 31, 2017. CTDOL implemented an enhanced Pathway to Reemployment program in October 2017, which provided participants with expanded guidance about résumé writing, job search and networking tips, and strategies for successful interviewing. For the period of July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018, the program served 668 claimants.

Business Services

Business Services helps Connecticut's employers to hire, train and retain workers by analyzing the needs of businesses and customizing solutions. Between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018, Business Services staff assisted employers with more than 548 employer recruitments attended by approximately 4,539 jobseekers.

In addition, five Connecticut Career Fairs were held in PY17, including a veteran-specific Heroes4Hire Job Fair co-sponsored by the Department of Veterans' Affairs, as well as Diverse Ability fairs focused on hiring individuals with disabilities. The fairs drew 873 company recruiters and 2,050 jobseekers.

Serving Our Veterans

Connecticut's veterans may receive reemployment services from trained staff at American Job Centers (AJCs) throughout the state. Among the staff are representatives funded by the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) 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 veterans and eligible spouses who have significant barriers to employment or otherwise qualify for DVOP services, and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives conduct outreach to area employers to assist veterans in gaining employment and facilitate employment, training, and placement services for veterans in the AJCs. During PY17, employment and training services were provided to 2,419 veterans, and those who filed for Unemployment Compensation were connected to reemployment services through the Unemployment Insurance Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (UI RESEA) program.

In September 2017, JVSG staff participated in Stand Down, an annual event held at the State Veterans' Home in Rocky Hill for veterans who are homeless, chronically unemployed, or have difficulty adjusting in society. JVSG staff promoted the services available to veterans at the AJCs and transitioning services were provided to troops returning from overseas. To further assist those transitioning to civilian life, two demobilization briefings were held during the program year, making available employment and training services, referrals and other helpful information through the coordinated efforts of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, USDOL, the Connecticut Department of Veterans' Affairs, and the Connecticut Military Department.

In April 2018, the *Heroes4Hire* Veterans Career Fair featured 101 employers and was attended by approximately 1,100 veterans, a 22.7 percent increase over last year's attendance. In addition

to having the chance to meet with representatives from companies with job openings, 45 veterans were interviewed onsite. Service providers and educational institutions also participated, sharing information about veterans' benefits and programs.

CTDOL continues to work toward ending veterans' homelessness through its Homeless Veterans Employment Program (HVEP) which operates under a state grant. During the program year, CTDOL's HVEP team met with 85 homeless veterans, or those at risk of becoming homeless, to provide job search assistance, referral information, and other supportive services. Specifically, 75 of these individuals received direct services from HVEP staff, such as résumé preparation assistance, job search assistance and career guidance; 17 were referred to housing services; 15 were referred to medical services; and 40 were referred to employment and training services at the AJCs.

Jobs First Employment Services Integration in the American Job Centers

In partnership with the Department of Social Services (DSS) and the five Workforce Development Boards (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 American Job Centers around the state.

In PY17, the WDBs coordinated an array of seamless case management and employment services for 7,700 TFA recipients enrolled in the JFES program. Also, approximately 90 JFES staff received training on several different topics including Financial Literacy, Domestic Violence, the Department of Rehabilitation Services' referral process, and "Awareness, Motivation, and Skill Building."

In March 2018, CTDOL launched the JFES component of the CTHires case management system, thereby enabling JFES case managers and administrative staffs to more accurately track the activities and successes of JFES participants. This newly-added system capability will also assist CTDOL in maintaining its compliance with state and federal requirements, improve the ability to audit off-site, enhance the tracking of cash penalty referrals for noncompliance, and confirm that system data is in sync with DSS for reporting measures.

Job Corps

Through Job Corps, youth have the opportunity to receive educational and career technical training, thereby gaining the skills needed to become employable, independent citizens. This federally-funded program, administered by the USDOL Employment and Training Administration, offers residential and non-residential placements for youth ages 16-24 (no upper age or income limits for those with disabilities) as well as intensive, wraparound service such as career and mental health counseling, driver education, social skills training, and many other services that lend to participants' achievements. Job Corps' success in Connecticut is largely due to the collaborative efforts of CTDOL, the Workforce Development Boards, state and local agencies and organizations, and Job Corps' program operators.

During PY17, a variety of trades were offered at two Connecticut Job Corps locations. New Haven Job Corps Center offered Culinary Arts, Certified Nursing Assistant, Building Construction Technology and Carpentry. Trades available at the Hartford Job Corps Academy included Business Technology/Insurance & Financial Services, Advanced Manufacturing, and Health Occupations (Certified Nursing Assistant and Clinical Medical Assistant). Students who qualified for the Advanced Career Training program were eligible to continue their education at local colleges and universities or transfer to a Job Corps Center offering advanced training in the field of their choice.

Job Corps Success – Hartford



Allyiah Guiont came to the Hartford Job Corps Academy after struggles at home, the passing of her grandfather, and the hardship of making ends meet. She enrolled in the Certified Nursing Assistant program and graduated at the top of her class. Allyiah (pictured at left) then applied for Second Level training as a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) at the Cassadaga Job Corps Center in Cassadaga, New York. She graduated in May 2018 and is working in New York as a LPN.

Job Corps Success – New Haven

Jose lost his parents at an early age and, having become the sole support for himself and his younger brother, living from couch to couch, he knew he had to do something to change their situation. He enrolled in Building Construction Technology and moved into the dorms at New Haven Job Corps. Through his participation in the program, which partnered with the Home Builders Institute, Jose earned several nationally-recognized credentials and landed a job with the City of New Haven.

Serving Individuals with Disabilities

The Connecticut Department of Labor, the Departments of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) and Social Services (DSS), and other state agencies and community-based organizations offer assistance and guidance on opportunities and options for individuals with disabilities. To highlight disability resources that are available to employers and jobseekers, CTDOL's web page at www.ctdol.state.ct.us/gendocs/pwd.htm (developed in collaboration with the Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities) includes information on assistive technology, tax credits, workplace accommodations, and disability employment initiatives in Connecticut. In addition, CTDOL serves as a member of the following:

- Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities – the Committee's mission is to address the workforce development needs of individuals with disabilities.
- Parents with Cognitive Limitations Workgroup - assists professionals who serve parents with cognitive limitations so the parents can better navigate the vast offering of services available to them.
- Disability Focus Group – this group, which other members include DRS, the Department of Developmental Services, State Department of Education, Capitol

Region Education Council, and Adult Education providers, plans the annual Conference on Serving Adults with Disabilities.

Disability Employment Initiative

Connecticut was one of eight states to receive a grant under the U.S. Department of Labor's Disability Employment Initiative (DEI). Awarded in October 2013 to CTDOL's Office of Workforce Competitiveness (OWC), the three-year, \$3,058,706 grant enhanced employment services to adults with disabilities in the public workforce system in the North Central and Northwest workforce development regions. The project ended in September 2017, exceeding performance goals with 1,454 jobseekers with disabilities receiving case management services, 231 trained, and 799 placed in employment. Additionally, five resource fairs were held and four Diverse Ability career fairs helped jobseekers find employment.

In October 2016, Connecticut was among six states to receive another federal grant under Round VII of the DEI. Awarded again to OWC, this three-year, \$2.5 million youth-focused project involves the Northwest, Southwest, South Central and Eastern workforce development regions. This project seeks to increase the participation of youth with disabilities ages 14-24 in the workforce system's career pathways programs, offer the opportunity to attain industry-recognized credentials, and provide paid internships and experiential learning opportunities. To date, 78 youth with disabilities have entered training in career pathway programs, 52 have received industry-recognized credentials, and 80 have been placed in paid internship or work experiences.

Workforce Development Boards' Innovative Practices, Challenges, and Exemplary Programs

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

Northwest (Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board)

Northwest Construction Careers Initiative

During PY17, the Northwest Construction Careers Initiative (NCCI), continued to offer residents of the Northwest region a coordinated system of outreach, recruitment, assessment, case management, and placement for career opportunities in the construction building trades. NCCI, now in its 14th year, works in partnership with the local trade unions as well as private sector companies to encourage apprenticeship in the construction trades. NCCI staff coordinated two rounds of brownfield job training during PY17 under a grant funded by the Environmental Protection Agency; of those two rounds, 20 participants successfully completed the intensive, five-week training. Several rounds of Asbestos, Lead and HAZWOPER refreshers and OSHA classes were also held. In total, NCCI staff has assisted in securing close to 26 job placements during PY17.

Step Up

The Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board (NRWIB) promotes the State of Connecticut's Step Up program to employers throughout the Northwest region and, during PY17, issued 93 Step Up agreements with several different companies. The success of this effort can be attributed largely to the collaborative efforts of the NRWIB staff, CTDOL, and

Chambers of Commerce within the region. Of the 93 Step Up agreements written, 66 were for Step Up Manufacturing, and 27 were for Step Up Subsidized Employment.

Youth

The NRWIB youth programs were significantly impacted by state budget constraints in PY17 which resulted in the cancellation of the Summer Youth Employment Program. However, the NRWIB funded youth programs for both in-school and out-of-school youth. As for the WDB's in-school programs, 22 youths attained high school diplomas and 16 continued on to receive post-secondary education. Regarding the WDB's out-of-school youth, 18 students received Associate's Degrees and, of those students, 13 matriculated to four-year colleges. An additional group of 18 students pursued occupational credentials in healthcare, culinary, hospitality, and retail sales fields. In total, 62 in-school and out-of-school youths were served in PY17.

Disability Employment Initiative (DEI)

DEI Youth is geared to improving the outcomes for in-school and out-of-school youth with disabilities (ages 14-24) who are looking to transition into high-quality, post-secondary education, career pathways training programs, career exploration, and the workforce system. Built on the notion that youth with disabilities need added supports and opportunities to develop and learn, DEI Youth offers an internship component. American Job Center (AJC) resources such as résumé writing, CTHires, and various work-readiness workshops are also available for participants to access.

Outreach efforts in the region have led to a significant increase in youth with disabilities using AJC career services, working to land an internship, seeking training, or entering employment. During PY17, DEI Youth worked with 21 students, 13 of which began meaningful employment. As of June 30, 2018, nine remained employed, 1 was placed in an internship, and 3 enrolled in a training program.

TechHire

The NRWIB, in partnership with the South Central workforce board, offers Information Technology (IT) training and career support through the ITXpress program. Funded by a \$4 million TechHire Partnership Grant from USDOL, the program offers training to unemployed and out-of-school young adults (ages 17-29) as well as skills upgrading to current workers in IT fields such as software development, information system management, and computer programming. Support services, which often make the difference in being able to remain and participate in training, are also provided under the grant and are awarded on the basis of need, participant commitment, and other relevant criteria. Upon completing TechHire's program, six graduates from the Waterbury and New Haven ITXpress cohorts participated in Phase 1 of the "Grow with Google" program, with two participants receiving "Grow with Google" Scholarships.

Southwest (The WorkPlace)

During PY17, The WorkPlace offered numerous innovative programs that were successful in serving the education, training, and workforce supports needs of the community while also being responsive to the current job market. By aligning resources and systems, the following opportunities were made available through The WorkPlace and its various partners:

Platform to Employment (P2E)

In partnership with CTDOL and the state's other Workforce Development Boards, The WorkPlace's Platform to Employment (P2E) completed its fourth year serving Connecticut residents with programs offered in Bridgeport, Waterbury, New Haven, Hartford and the Norwich area to create a pathway to opportunity for long-term unemployed jobseekers. The foundation of P2E is 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.

P2E served 191 participants in PY17, offering access to financial literacy tools and behavioral health services to all as part of the training, which helped them understand and effectively address emotional burdens and stresses associated with unemployment. Upon training completion, P2E helps participants find open positions at local companies and offers a 4-week, paid work experience. Seventy-seven percent of those who completed P2E training were placed in a work experience position. Of this population, nearly 90 percent were hired by employers.

Dress for Success Mid-Fairfield County

Dress for Success Mid-Fairfield County (DFSMFC) empowers low-income women to achieve economic independence by providing a network of support, professional interview attire, and the development tools to help women thrive in work and life. Approximately two-thirds of the women served by DFSMFC are single parents and the majority of clients have numerous barriers to employment, including limited education, deficient work skills, and lack of work history. The needs of clients are met through three, no-cost, key activities:

- Simply Suited - offers professional attire to women who are searching for employment or are newly-employed (735 suiting were provided in PY17);
- The Professional Women's Group - a professional networking group and learning community that includes a guest speaker at monthly meetings to address topics around five established pillars: work/life balance, health and wellness, leadership and civic engagement, the unwritten rules of the workplace, and financial planning;
- Referrals to American Job Center (AJC) locations (Bridgeport, Ansonia, Derby and Stamford) - AJC career resources help women research, obtain, and retain employment (437 individuals were referred to the AJC in PY17).



*Dress for Success participant Paula Huertas Gonzalez
Photo credit: Photography by Lisa Garcia.*

Other programs offered by The WorkPlace included:

MaturityWorks - fosters economic self-sufficiency for older, low-income adults by providing job skills training through community service assignments at non-profit and public facilities.

Mortgage Crisis Job Training Program - helps borrowers stay in their homes by increasing their job skills and providing access to resources to become more financially stable.

Health CareRx Academy - cultivates a pipeline of health care workers to meet the needs of employers in southwestern Connecticut.

YouthWorks - helps local youth ages 16 to 24 select and prepare for a career and become self-reliant members of the community.

YouthBuild - provides Bridgeport youth who lack a high school diploma with occupational training in carpentry, electrical and HVAC.

Eastern (Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board - EWIB)

Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative

The Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative (MPI) is a demand-driven workforce program designed to raise the competency baseline of the area's labor force to align with skills that are in-demand by employers. The program was initially funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor and is managed by the Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board (EWIB) in concert with 27 other stakeholders. The core of the program is high-rigor skills training classes (150-300 hours in duration) with curriculum designed by employers in concert with academia. The MPI is supported by employers such as General Dynamics' Electric Boat and 68 other members of the Eastern Advanced Manufacturing Alliance, a consortium of manufacturers.

The program is innovative for two reasons. First, it is strongly marketed to visitors of the American Job Centers (AJCs), connecting the public workforce system to the employers. Second, the strong employer engagement ensures the skills being taught are in need in the job market. Employers have designed key program elements such as a skills-based assessment and training class curriculum. Since its 2016 inception, the program has placed 1,023 individuals in jobs and achieved a 90% placement rate among training class graduates. Manufacturers also report a 50% improvement in their employee retention rates from Pipeline graduates. These strong results have generated great interest in the MPI, resulting in further funding from state and private sources to continue the initiative into the future. The State of Connecticut is even considering opportunities to expand this concept beyond manufacturing and to other industries and geographies. While the focus of the MPI has been to serve unemployed and underemployed adults, the program is being expanded to also support high school students who intend to enter a career pathway upon graduation. A pilot with Norwich Free Academy began in May 2018 via a training class for recent graduates taught by Three Rivers Community College to develop skills in manufacturing trades.



Recent Norwich Free Academy graduates participated in the Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative pilot. From left to right: Anthony Garcia, Bryan Dorlus, Jack Elliott, Jonathan Bostick, and Jacob Foster.

Health Professions Opportunity Grant

EWIB was awarded a five-year \$7.5M Health & Human Service (HHS) Health Profession Opportunity Grant (HPOG) in September 2015 in partnership with the Northwest and South Central Workforce Development Boards. HPOG targets individuals receiving TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) and low-income adults. Participants complete a contextualized, employability, work-readiness basic skills “boot camp” to prepare them for entry-level vocational trainings in the healthcare field. Participants then enroll in short-term occupational training programs resulting in an industry-recognized credential in four healthcare career pathways. To assist participants overcome life’s barriers, Health Career Navigators provide intensive, person-centered case management and connect participants to program resources such as funds for emergency payments, childcare assistance, and mileage reimbursement. Participants are encouraged and supported to continue their learning with additional training. Cumulatively, through June 30, 2018, 77 participants enrolled, 71 were trained, and 48 were placed in employment. HPOG requires annual renewal; successful performance thus far has resulted in the program’s continuation.

Youth

The Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) is annually delivered by regional agencies across the 41-town area; it provides valuable job experience and skills to participating youth. The summer 2017 program was challenged by state budget reductions, but was still able to serve 155 youths (it typically serves more than 400). Job functions included patient care, customer service, maintenance, recreation, and medical records management. The perseverance of the program was due to philanthropic donations from various community organizations.

North Central (Capital Workforce Partners)

Community College and American Job Center Co-location

In April 2018, Capital Workforce Partners (CWP) relocated its Enfield American Job Center (AJC) to Asnuntuck Community College (ACC). In addition to increasing awareness of the AJC and the services it offers, the move gives Enfield-area employers and jobseekers access to a full complement of workforce development and educational services in one location, including career coaching, job readiness, a variety of assessments, and credential training programs that will lead to employment in the core industries of the region. CWP plans to replicate this model and partner with other community colleges in the North Central region.

Sector Strategy: Healthcare Careers

The Metro Hartford Alliance for Careers in Health (MACH) is a healthcare employer-led and driven partnership convened by CWP and the Workforce Solutions Collaborative of Metro Hartford that promotes entry-level and middle-skill careers in the healthcare industry. MACH, which members also include representatives from various community colleges, four-year colleges, private universities, and healthcare institutions in the North Central Connecticut board area, meets quarterly to identify and address workforce development needs and policy issues. Initiatives include incumbent worker training, healthcare-focused career agents, and youth programs. Relationships developed through this sector strategy yield career opportunities for jobseekers as well as workforce talent for the employers.

A striking example of the healthcare partnership's success is the experience of Amer Abdullah, a Syrian immigrant. He came to the AJC as an accomplished surgeon, unable to find employment in his field. Amer received Dislocated Worker and National Emergency Grant (NEG) services through the AJC, including Focused Intensive Re-Employment Success Training, a strategy designed by CWP for skilled workers. He impressed, encouraged, and inspired his peers and the staff. Amer was referred to a major healthcare network provider by the Re-Employment Alliance for Careers in Health (REACH) program coordinator and was hired as a part-time researcher. He is now on a career pathway and has advanced to a full-time position.

Braiding Funding and Blending Employment Strategies

In PY17, CWP braided funding from NEG, Governor's Reserve, and H1-B to create a program blending subsidized employment and on-the-job training (OJT) for WIOA participants. The combination of the two provided an effective bridge to full-time, permanent employment for jobseekers while helping employers meet their workforce needs by hiring candidates they may not have otherwise considered. Subsidized employment creates a risk-free, trial period during which an employer may evaluate the work readiness and basic technical skills of a candidate, and identify any skills gaps. Once a candidate is hired, OJT delivers structured training to close those skills gaps and integrates the new hire into the employer's workforce. This is an effective strategy with employers that have high costs associated with new employee training. Typically, this includes employers hiring for positions with unique or highly specialized responsibilities for which candidates with the requisite skills may be difficult to find. This strategy has also helped CWP build strong relationships with businesses with specialized hiring needs.

Youth Liaisons

CWP, through its AJC contractor, KRA, dedicates two WIOA Youth Liaisons to increasing awareness of the youth services available through the AJC and CWP and serving as the primary point of contact for jobseekers (ages 18-24) in need of employment services. In PY17, the WIOA Youth Liaisons presented at a number of partner agencies to educate staff and attract individuals to become engaged in the targeted youth services in the region. The Youth Liaisons meet with and assess individuals, then refer them to programs that most suit their interests and aptitudes and may lead to middle-skill jobs. In PY17, the Youth Liaisons referred 80 individuals between the ages of 18 and 24 to various youth and adult programs in the region, including WIOA and, for youth, Job Corps and other employment and training programs.

YouthBuild New Britain

New Britain out-of-school youth lacking a high school diploma or GED receive case management and support services through WIOA as well as training and credential services through YouthBuild. Participants are trained using the nationally-acclaimed Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) model, through which they learn basic academic skills necessary to be successful in the construction industry. The program provides a proven service infrastructure for assessment; case management; support services; basic and technical skills training; and job placement and retention services.

South Central (Workforce Alliance)

Business Services

During Program Year 2017, Workforce Alliance met the needs of south central Connecticut's employers and simultaneously broadened opportunities for WIOA-eligible jobseekers through an intense, business-focused approach to offering job fairs, assisting with direct job placements, and sponsoring hiring events.

Job fair activities expanded the board's scope of services throughout the 30-town region. Close to 30 hiring events were hosted at various employer sites and within the American Job Centers (AJCs) in this region. These AJCs and Workforce Alliance's Business Service staff organized, recruited for, and staffed large job fairs including:

- April 19 in New Haven: 24 employers were recruited based on the skills and experience of the active customers enrolled in WIOA and other programs in the region, such as JFES; 272 jobseekers attended.
- May 17 in Old Saybrook: 32 employers were recruited; 180 jobseekers attended. This fair demonstrated a successful collaboration with youth and social service bureaus in the shoreline communities.
- June 15 in Meriden: 24 employers were recruited; 300 jobseekers attended. This was in collaboration with the local chamber of commerce.

Youth Employment Success

Workforce Alliance established a goal to offer targeted services in the area's American Job Centers for young adults (ages 18-24). This resulted in the development of YES: Youth

Employment Success. Led by WIOA Youth Specialists, YES offered career pathway exploration, occupational training, paid work experience, college exploration, and employment opportunities in a cohort-based setting. This complemented the established out-of-school and in-school youth programs delivered through a network of community-based agencies. With “high school drop-out” and “basic skills deficiency” (in math and reading) making up the majority of the qualifying barriers to employment for youth, stand-out vendor programs with strong ties to Adult Education for credit diploma and GED attainment were involved. Occupational skills training was offered and, moving forward, Workforce Alliance anticipates that its strong Business Services model will result in more WIOA Youth placements into on-the-job training which will allow for wages to be earned while job skills are gained and employers’ needs are met.

Hospitality Careers Initiative

To meet the current and anticipated growth in the leisure and hospitality industries, particularly given Greater New Haven’s robust economic sector in these industries, Workforce Alliance utilized WIOA Governor’s Reserve funds to create the Hospitality Careers Initiative in collaboration with the University of New Haven’s (UNH) renowned hospitality degree program. Funds provided for curriculum development, initial cohort enrollment, career development support, and employer engagement. The first cohort graduated 24 participants in June 2018, with placements being monitored in the following months. Two more cohorts are planned with a total goal of 60 graduates. The 4-week, 60-hour program includes classroom learning, on-site visits, industry guest speakers, and hospitality industry certifications. Training takes place at UNH as well as at local restaurants and hotels. Program topics include: Foodservice Operations; Lodging and Tourism; Career Development; Convention/Events; and Legal Aspects.

Cost of Workforce Development Activities

During Program Year 2017, a total of \$27,405,351 was allocated to the Workforce Development Boards for WIOA services, an increase from the PY16 WIOA allocation of \$25,438,376. Funds were distributed as follows:

Program Year 2017 Fund Allocation

Adult - \$8,541,665
Dislocated Worker - \$9,594,052
Youth - \$9,269,633

As reported to USDOL by CTDOL via form ETA 9169 for the reporting period covering July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018, a total of 6,460 participants were served during PY17. Of those served, the Adult program assisted the largest number of participants, with 2,976 participants served, which is 46 percent of the total WIOA individuals served. Also in PY17, a total of 2,129 Dislocated Workers and 1,355 Youth were served, comprising 33 percent and 21 percent of the total number of WIOA participants served respectively.

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 Workforce Development Boards (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. The reserve, set at 10% for PY15, was restored for states to 15% beginning with PY16 and remained at 15% for PY17.

Statewide activities, delivered in Connecticut with 15% reserve funds during PY17, 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, data validation, and customer satisfaction surveys;
- Assisting in the operations of the American Job Centers;
- Operating fiscal management and performance accountability system activities; and
- Supporting CTHires, the state's new WIOA case management information system.

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 Workforce Development Boards 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. In addition, the 15% Statewide Funds supported some new efforts, in the form of demonstration projects administered through the WDBs. One such project, administered in two regions, involved the provision of pre-apprenticeship training to disconnected youth, with direct linkage to employers and employment in the manufacturing field.