

# Connecticut Department of Labor



## ***At A Glance***

KURT WESTBY, Commissioner

Daryle Dudzinski, Deputy Commissioner

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Established - 1873

Statutory Authority - C.G.S. Sec. 31-1 to 31-403 (excluding chapter 568)

Central Office - 200 Folly Brook Blvd., Wethersfield, CT 06109-1114

Average number of full-time employees - 566

Recurring operating expenses 2018-19: Federal - \$71,590,915; State - \$86,010,190

Capital Outlay: Federal - \$2,516; State - \$26,320; CEPF - \$381,325

Website - [www.ct.gov/dol](http://www.ct.gov/dol)

## **Mission**

*The Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL) is committed to providing the state's jobseekers and business community with services to strengthen our workforce, communities and the state's economy.*

## **Statutory Responsibility**

The Connecticut Department of Labor meets the needs of workers and employers to become competitive in the global economy. For workers, this is accomplished through income support between jobs, assistance in searching for jobs, protection and fairness on the job, training programs, and information about the economy, wages and the workplace.

Services offered to businesses include workplace data, labor market information, recruitment assistance, regional job fairs, programs to help maintain and upgrade employee skills, such as apprenticeship and incumbent worker training, CONN-OSHA guidance and consulting services, and tax credit information. Informational services to workers and employers, as well as enforcement responsibilities include the payment of wages, health and safety, employment of minors, family and medical leave, representation by labor organizations, and resolution of labor disputes. As the Connecticut arm of the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the agency collects,

analyzes and disseminates workforce data to inform businesses, the general public, government planners and policymakers about employment issues and trends.

### **Workforce Services and Programs**

**American Job Center Services:** CTDOL and its federal and state partners 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.

Resources include workshops covering résumé writing, interviewing and career exploration, as well as access to computers with Internet connection, copiers and fax machines. During 2018-2019, a total of 40,838 participants received services (staff-assisted or self-service) at AJC offices, with 207,056 staff-assisted services provided statewide. In addition, 4,347 individuals received résumé preparation assistance at CTDOL-sponsored events and job centers.

**Jobs First Employment Services (JFES):** 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 SFY19, the WDBs coordinated an array of case management and employment services for 7,765 TFA recipients enrolled in the JFES program.

Approximately 70 JFES staff received training on several different topics, including Successful Job Interviewing; 2 Generational Poverty; Diversity; Employer Engagement; Domestic Violence; Financial Literacy; Developing Awareness; Skill-Building and Motivation; Advanced Presentation Skills; 211 Awareness, and Collaboration Training.

In SFY19, CTDOL's JFES Unit launched two pilot programs:

- 1) A pilot to better connect refugees in the New Haven region was created through a DOL partnership with the state Department of Social Services, the Workforce Alliance, and Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services (IRIS), a local refugee resettlement agency. A principal element of this pilot was achieved by co-locating a JFES case manager at IRIS.
- 2) A pilot employing the use of Uber ride service as a transportation option for JFES clients with transportation barriers was created by CTDOL and the Workforce Development Boards for the Northwest and Eastern regions of the state.

**CTHires (Connecticut Helping Individuals and Employers Reach Employment Success)** ([www.cthires.com](http://www.cthires.com)): Serving as the agency's online workforce development system, CTHires provides cost-free services via the Internet to individuals and employers 24/7. From July 2018

through June 2019, a total of 1,269 registrations from businesses were processed by CTHires staff.

During this same period, employers posted 44,293 new Connecticut job orders and jobseekers placed 5,432 new résumés into the system. In addition, 153,749 jobs have been indexed from corporate websites. Indexing allows jobseekers to click on a job title and be taken directly to the job listing on the employer's website. Jobseekers can post their résumés online while employers can post jobs and search the résumé bank for qualified candidates.

**Connecticut's Registered Apprenticeship system:** The Office of Apprenticeship Training (OAT) administers Connecticut's Registered Apprenticeship system, which is supported by the state's general fund, federal funding, and industry support from registration fees. Registered apprenticeship is a proven solution for training and retaining talent and offers individuals the opportunity of "learning while earning."

OAT provides registration, monitoring, technical assistance and consulting services for the administration of apprenticeship agreements per state regulations and standards. Registered Apprenticeship provides a structured training strategy that combines on-the-job training with related technical instruction. The office also qualifies employers for tax credits, works with the Department of Education, Department of Consumer Protection and other state agencies, and performs outreach to veterans, employer groups, unions and many community-based organizations to promote Registered Apprenticeship and Registered Pre-Apprenticeship throughout Connecticut.

Currently, 1,710 active employer-sponsors and 6,417 registered apprentices are involved in the program. In addition, 1,608 apprentices completed their apprenticeship training while 3,819 new apprentices were registered in the program this year – a significant increase over last year's total of 2,474. This year, the program expanded into the insurance, banking, barbering and healthcare sectors through new industry partnerships while continuing its expansion efforts in the manufacturing and construction sectors.

**Business Services Unit:** The unit helps Connecticut employers to hire, train and retain workers by analyzing the needs of businesses and customizing solutions. Between July 2018 and June 2019, Business Services staff assisted employers with approximately 617 employer recruitments attended by 5,293 jobseekers.

**Career Fairs:** Five Connecticut Career Fairs were held this past fiscal year, 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 312 company recruiters and 4,000 jobseekers.

**Heroes4Hire Veterans Career Fair:** In April 2019, approximately 550 veterans attended the Heroes4Hire Veterans Career Fair, an event that featured the participation of 137 employers and service organizations. In addition to having the chance to meet with representatives from companies with job openings, veterans were provided with information about available services and programs, as well as the opportunity to receive business attire and professional headshot photos for LinkedIn from the Save-a-Suit organization, all at no cost.

**Regional Hiring Events:** Between July 2018 and June 2019, Business Services staff assisted employers with 617 employer recruitments, attended by 5,293 jobseekers at recruitment events at the American Job Centers.

**The Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) Program:** The program helps employers upgrade employee skills, thereby helping businesses to remain competitive and avert layoffs. Employers provide a 50% or greater match for each training program, which includes training in manufacturing, engineering, bioscience and allied health.

This year, CTDOL provided \$525,137 in Incumbent Worker Training funds to 75 Connecticut employers with 1,190 employees participating. Legislation requires that a minimum of 50% of the Incumbent Worker Training funds go to new employers, however, CTDOL surpassed this requirement and provided 93% of the funds to new employers, far exceeding the legislative requirement.

**Job Corps Vocational Training:** Administered by USDOL, the program served over 400 students at the Hartford and New Haven locations. Low-income youths (ages 16-24) receive intensive, wraparound services including life skills and social skills training; career and mental health counseling; basic health care; residential housing; a bi-weekly living allowance; an annual clothing allowance; driver education; on-the-job training; high school diploma and high school equivalency attainment; academic and career technical training; employability skills training; job placement and retention, and support services after graduation. CTDOL has an assigned staff member providing on-site support to the Hartford Job Corps Academy and New Haven Job Corps Center.

**Jobs Funnel Initiative:** Comprised of public-private joint efforts around the state, the program places unemployed and underemployed individuals in a variety of employment opportunities including construction and non-construction jobs in both union and non-union settings and apprenticeship training programs. The Funnel partnerships have placed 4,434 individuals into jobs since their inception.

**Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers program:** Through this program, agricultural employers receive recruitment assistance, mediation, interpreter services, and technical guidance on compliance with the Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker regulations. In 2018-2019, the program provided outreach services to 987 workers, including information on available workforce services, referrals to healthcare providers, and related supportive services.

**Alien Certifications program:** This program ensures that employers have exhausted all efforts to hire American workers before recruiting foreign workers prior to receiving certification. Acting as an agent for USDOL, staff processes H-2A job order certifications for temporary foreign agricultural workers, and conducts pre-occupancy housing inspections in connection with agricultural certifications.

**Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC):** The program provides a federal tax credit for employers hiring individuals from specified groups. A total of 4,016 tax credit certifications were granted between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019. The WOTC target groups include:

- Unemployed Veterans (including disabled veterans)

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients
- Food Stamp (SNAP) recipients
- Designated Community Residents (living in Empowerment Zones or Rural Renewal Counties)
- Vocational Rehabilitation Referred Individuals
- Ex-Felons
- Supplemental Security Income Recipients
- Summer Youth Employees (living in Empowerment Zones)
- Qualified Long-Term Unemployment Recipient

**Individual Development Accounts (IDAs):** Since the program began in 2000, approximately \$5.4M has been administered by CTDOL to help create self-sufficiency, enhance careers and build assets. IDAs are matched savings accounts designed to help low-income individuals and families save money to purchase assets. The Legislature has appropriated approximately \$2.9M for the IDA program and \$600,000 for the CT Housing Trust Fund IDA program to leverage \$907,500 in federal funds and more than \$1.18M in contributions from other financial partners. This has helped 493 low- and moderate-income families in CT to become asset owners.

### *Unemployment Services and Programs*

**Unemployment Insurance (UI):** Benefits are provided to unemployed persons while claimants look for new work or take part in approved training programs. This year the agency further enhanced its online benefits filing system, located at [FileCTUI.com](http://FileCTUI.com) that allows claimants to file a first time (initial) or re-opened claim by using the web. Furthermore, to provide better service to customers, resources allocated to related phone systems were shifted in order to provide better online services.

During the year, \$590 million in benefits was provided to unemployed workers needing assistance while securing their next job. The average number of weeks a claimant collected benefits before finding new employment was approximately 16 weeks.

**Reemployment Programs for Unemployment Insurance (UI) Claimants:** The agency provides a variety of federally-funded reemployment services to UI claimants through the Unemployment Insurance Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (UI RESEA) program.

The goal of this program is to provide UI claimants early access to services that will help them get back into the workforce faster. The UI RESEA program also serves as a prevention/detection program regarding improper UI payments. From July 2018 to June 2019, CTDOL completed 8,882 initial RESEA appointments. For this same time period, 8,729 claimants participated in a required reemployment activity.

**Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN):** WARN is a federal program administered by CTDOL that lends timely re-employment assistance to workers that will soon be

losing their jobs. The program requires Connecticut employers of 100 or more full-time workers to give 60 days advance notice of a plant closing or mass layoff. The 60-day advance notice allows state and municipal entities to offer workforce assistance to affected employees prior to layoffs.

The state's *Rapid Response Team*, headed by CTDOL, reaches out to Connecticut employers contemplating or experiencing plant closings, helps to ease the impact of layoffs, and assures workers are offered a full range of benefits and services.

Prior to layoffs, the agency's Rapid Response staff conducts "Early Intervention" sessions where employees can learn about unemployment benefits, job search assistance, training opportunities and receive information about community services and local agencies that provide support to dislocated workers and their families.

**Treasury Offset Program:** This partnership with the Internal Revenue Service and the US Department of Labor allows for the interception of federal tax returns when individuals have not repaid unemployment insurance benefits they were not entitled to collect.

**State Income Tax Intercept:** Through a partnership with the Department of Revenue Services, this program enables CTDOL to intercept state income tax refunds to recover debts.

**Interstate Benefit Intercept:** This program allows CTDOL to intercept benefits being paid to individuals filing UI claims in other states to repay monies owed for overpayments of benefits in Connecticut.

**Prosecutions:** Funded by USDOL through June 2018, the Unemployment Compensation Fraud Prosecution Unit identified, investigated, and prosecuted offenders for collecting benefits to which they were not entitled. This effort, a partnership between CTDOL and the Chief State's Attorney's Office, resulted in more than 300 arrests for unemployment insurance fraud and approximately \$2.5 million recouped for the state's Unemployment Trust Fund.

### *Departments*

**Office of Workforce Competitiveness (OWC):** OWC staff provides technical assistance to the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission (CETC), whose members represent Connecticut businesses, employers, key state agencies, regional/local entities, organized labor, community-based organizations and other stakeholders. OWC works to coordinate employment, education and training programs and promote innovative strategies and ideas that will stimulate employment opportunities and job growth.

**Legal Division:** Division staff members provide educational presentations on statutes within the agency's jurisdiction to employer and employee groups; associations; Chambers of Commerce; unions and other groups.

The division provides legal counsel to the Executive Administration, Division Directors and the agency, and interprets a wide range of statutes affecting the Connecticut workplace. Staff

members also provide technical assistance in unemployment insurance matters to agency adjudicators and written opinions and verbal guidance in complex cases.

**State Board of Labor Relations:** Defines and protects the statutory rights of employees including the right of public employees to form, join, or assist labor organizations. The Board also encourages and protects the right of employees and employers to bargain collectively and remedies certain practices on the part of employees and employers that are detrimental to the collective bargaining process and to the general public. More than 80 percent of the cases filed are resolved short of a Board hearing, largely due to successful mediation efforts of Assistant Agents.

**The State Board of Mediation and Arbitration (SBMA):** provides the services of mediators for impasses in contract negotiations and grievance disputes. Mediators also provide outreach and educational programs in the art of dispute settlement. The Board provides arbitration services for the purpose of arbitrating disputes concerning the application or interpretation of the terms of collective bargaining agreements.

The Board administers the Binding Interest Arbitration Statutes under Section 7-473c, Municipal Employees Relations Act, MERA, and Section 5-276, State Employees Relations Act, SERA. Under MERA the Board fully processes the statutory requirements from inception to completion.

**Employment Security Appeals Division:** An autonomous, quasi-judicial agency housed in the Department of Labor, it's primary function is to hear and decide appeals arising from decisions made by Connecticut's Unemployment Compensation Department, from which it is statutorily independent. From July 1, 2018, through June 30, 2019, the lower authority (Referee Section) decided 12,124 appeals and the higher authority (Board of Review) decided 1,412 appeals.

### *Grants and Awards*

**Connecticut's State Apprenticeship Expansion Project:** The U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) Employment and Training Administration awarded, as part of the Apprenticeship State Expansion (ASE) grant allotments, \$1,067,532 to the CTDOL Office of Apprenticeship Training.

The project is 3 years in duration and the official start date of the grant is July 1, 2019. This new funding has three primary goals:

- To expand the number of apprentices in Registered Apprenticeship Programs in Connecticut by 800 in three years
- To support and encourage Registered Apprenticeship Program diversification, including increasing the diversity of apprentices and growing apprenticeship across industry sectors, and
- To support the integration of Registered Apprenticeship Programs into state workforce development strategies, education (utilizing pre-apprenticeship strategies embedded in Career Technology Education offerings), and economic development strategies and programs.

**Apprenticeship CT Initiative:** A \$5 million, four-year initiative administered by the Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship, the initiatives' objective is to implement sustainable workforce pipeline training programs to train qualified entry-level workers for job placement with manufacturers and employers in industries experiencing work shortages.

Funding was awarded to the Northwest (\$1.25 million) and South Central (\$3.45 million) Workforce Development Board (WDB) partnership groups. Training courses are five to 26 weeks in length with programs for various age groups through a certified pre-apprenticeship program. Training programs respectively were developed in consultation with employers or modeled after the Eastern CT Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative in consultation with industry partners.

**American Apprenticeship Initiative (AAI):** This \$5 million federally-funded initiative supports the expansion of quality and sustainable apprenticeship opportunities in high-growth occupations and industries, particularly Healthcare, Business Services/ Information Technology and Advanced Manufacturing. AAI training scholarships for registered apprentices and pre-apprentices are designed to promote pathways for demand driven careers that meet the state's economic, industry and workforce needs.

**Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG):** This program helps Connecticut veterans through its team of Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists, and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs), located at the American Job Centers (AJCs). During the program year, JVSG staff provided employment and training services to 713 veterans.

Also, in September 2018, JVSG staff participated in the annual Stand Down held at the State Veterans' Home in Rocky Hill, an event for veterans who are homeless, chronically unemployed, or have difficulty adjusting in society.

In partnership with the Department of Defense and the Connecticut Military Department, JVSG staff also assisted military troops and their families, including returning troops from the CT National Guard and U.S. Armed Service Reserves, by participating in three pre- or post-deployment Yellow Ribbon Events and three Reverse Soldier Readiness Program (RSRP) briefings that inform troops and their families about the services available to them.

**Homeless Veterans Employment Program (HVEP):** Operating under a state grant, the HVEP team during the last year met with 62 homeless veterans, or those at risk of becoming homeless, to provide job search assistance, referral information and other supportive services.

Specifically, 55 of these individuals received direct services from HVEP staff, such as résumé preparation assistance, job search help and career guidance; nine were referred to housing services; four were referred to medical services; 17 were referred to other supportive services; and 24 were referred to employment and training services at the American Job Centers.

**Shared Work:** The agency continues to use a \$1.2 million federal grant to promote the Shared Work unemployment insurance program to Connecticut employers. To promote the website, informational materials and video, increased social media was accompanied by electronic



newsletters and radio promotions. During FY 2019, the program has served 1,599 UI claimants and 273 employers, of which 59 were new to the program.

Outreach has also included informational workshops with PowerPoint presentations for both employers and employees to help explain the benefits of Shared Work. CTDOL launched a second phase of promotional efforts, including a pre-recorded informational webinar and radio announcements, to spread awareness and the benefits of participating in the program. Materials can be found at: [www.sharedworkct.com](http://www.sharedworkct.com).

**Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury/Illness Network (RETAIN):** Connecticut was one of eight states to receive a grant under Phase I of the Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury/Illness Network (RETAIN). Awarded to the Office of Workforce Competitiveness by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy and the Social Security Administration, this \$2.1 million quality improvement program will implement a pilot project in the North Central region to improve return-to-work outcomes for workers in Connecticut with musculoskeletal pain and injuries.

Led by CTDOL, this innovative project involves collaboration among state agencies, healthcare providers, workers’ compensation and/or short-term/long-term disability insurance carriers, injured workers, employers and the workforce development system. The RETAIN-CT approach involves health care provider training, improved employer communication and outreach, the use of early return-to-work coordination and planning, and access to medical peer physician advice on best occupational health practices. In early 2020, Phase I states will be eligible to apply for Phase II funding of up to \$19.9 million to expand the pilot project statewide.

**Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF):** With state funding and a \$6 million federal grant for an “Eastern CT Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative,” the WIF brings innovative approaches to the design and delivery of employment and training services that have the potential to generate long-term improvements in the workforce system.

Administered by CTDOL in partnership with the Eastern CT Workforce Development Board, Connecticut’s model is focused on the current hiring needs of Electric Boat (EB) for skilled labor. Developing curriculum specific to EB’s need for trades workers; providing short-term training to unemployed and under-employed jobseekers; and placing training graduates in jobs at EB or other area employers are goals of the initiative. As a result of the grant, 809 participants were enrolled in the WIF grant; 694 were enrolled in customized occupational training, 629 completed training, and 633 were employed in jobs following training with – 459 of these in jobs at EB.

**Manufacturing Innovation Fund:** As part of CTDOL’s efforts to expand registered apprenticeship within the manufacturing sector, the program is a collaborative effort funded by the state Department of Economic and Community Development to subsidize wages, classroom instruction, and credentialing for apprentices registered by manufacturers. To date, nearly 200 companies and 650 registered apprentices and pre-apprentices have participated in this initiative.

**The Manufacturing Innovation Fund Incumbent Worker (MIF IWT) Program:** The program provides financial assistance to Connecticut manufacturers for growing innovative and technology-

based manufacturing businesses. MIF IWT helps employers meet emerging market needs and improve productivity and efficiency by enhancing the skills of their current workforce. Since April 2015, a total of 327 companies have been approved for \$13.3M in funding to train 19,974 workers. Approximately 13% of those workers have already achieved an upgraded position due to skills training and 63.7% of the companies completing training report that upgraded skills are expected to increase production rate. The program is in collaboration with the Department of Economic and Community Development.

### **Safety and Wage Services**

**Connecticut Occupational Safety and Health Division (CONN-OSHA):** The division enforces health and safety standards in public-sector workplaces by conducting safety inspections, responding to complaints or requests, and investigating fatalities and serious accidents. Citations are issued where violations are discovered. Safety training and onsite safety and health consultations are provided to private and public sector employers on request, and the division offers no-cost technical assistance and information services on workplace hazards.

**CONN-OSHA's Monthly Employer Roundtable Discussion series:** The program features guest speakers, panel discussions and an overview of state and federal safety and health regulations for the workplace. Participation for the monthly roundtables averaged 40 attendees per event.

**Wage and Workplace Standards Division:** The Division recovered more than \$5.5 million in owed wages for Connecticut workers this year. The Division enforces approximately 166 state statutes and administers a wide range of workplace laws, including the minimum wage, overtime laws, wage payment laws, prevailing wage, standard wage, employment of minors, and misclassification of workers as independent contractors.

During the year, CTDOL's Wage and Workplace Standards Division visited 321 construction projects and reviewed 601 contractor records. This resulted in the issuance of 239 Stop Work orders, which requires cited employers to show proof of appropriate coverage, such as worker's compensation, before worksites can be re-opened and work resumed.

The agency's UI Tax Division conducted nearly 980 employer audits and approximately 6,100 individual wage investigations. These examinations resulted in the reclassification of more than 4,500 workers and the discovery of more than \$26 million in previously unreported payroll.

The Wage and Workplace Standards Division and the UI Tax Division work together to ensure workers are not misclassified. Workers misclassified as independent contractors can experience a loss of many worker protections such as UI benefits, workers' compensation coverage, no overtime pay, pay below minimum wage, and often a job without health benefits.

### **Public Education and Labor Market Information**

**CTDOL's website, [www.dol.state.ct.us](http://www.dol.state.ct.us):** From July 2018 to June 2019, the agency's website had 4,297,242 unique visits. Approximately two million of these visits were for information related to unemployment insurance benefits. A total of 220,000 people made inquiries on wages and workplace standards; 16,000 obtained information on job-seeking skills or youth employment; 8,000 sought employer recruitment information; and 7,000 were interested in veterans' services.

**DOL Social Media:** The agency's online presence was expanded through its Facebook and Twitter sites. Efforts to increase social media awareness include web banners, daily and scheduled tweets, and inviting state policymakers to visit CTDOL's Facebook page. The agency expanded its outreach and education efforts through new Facebook graphics, electronic flyers, newsletters, online publications and new web pages.

**Office of Research:** In cooperation with the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the office collects, analyzes and delivers information on the state's labor market. Information is collected and disseminated on employment levels, unemployment rates, wages and earnings, estimates of available labor, employment projections, business staffing patterns, and career planning information. A survey of workplace injuries and illnesses and a census of work-related fatalities are conducted annually. Employers, career counselors, educators, economic developers, training program planners, policy makers, economists and the general public use the information.

The Office of Research also produces the Labor Situation report and partners with the Department of Economic and Community Development to produce the Economic Digest. The Labor Situation provides a monthly and over-the-year snapshot of the state's industry sectors and unemployment rate. The Economic Digest provides data and articles on the state's workforce and economy.

The Office of Research has worked with the Department of Education, CT State Colleges and Universities, and UCONN to establish the P20-Win – a data sharing system to link individual student records across the education institutions and into the workforce.

This permits the building of safe, de-identifiable databases to evaluate education programs and their impact on workforce outcomes. An example of the potential of this linkage is the Legislative Report Card that annually traces (by school and program of study) the employment and wages earned for all graduates of Connecticut's Higher Education System.

**JobCenterCT.com:** CTDOL's newest web page, it offers a simple overview of employment and unemployment services – the agency's recent effort to provide an easy way to find information on services that often offer comprehensive options. The page provides access to workshops, the CTHires job bank, recruitment events as well as the online filing site for claimants.

**The Connecticut Job & Career ConneCTion (JCC):** The website received 100,673 page views from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019. The site provides job descriptions, education and training requirements for each job category, wage information and employment projections for nearly 800 occupations. Included in the JCC is the VETCENTRAL website, which allows military veterans to find similar civilian occupations by military code, rank, or branch of service.

**Speaker's Bureau:** The program includes a diverse pool of agency experts available for public speaking engagements on topics and issues within the agency's jurisdiction. Topics include employment law, worker health and safety, labor market information, hot jobs, résumé writing, job interview tips and techniques, workforce development, and unemployment insurance. Approximately 250 speaking requests are handled each year by a CTDOL subject matter expert.

**Business Seminars:** Offered by CTDOL’s Office of Workforce Competitiveness, seminars included an employer’s guide to handling worker’s compensation correctly, and understanding the laws surrounding medical marijuana in the workplace. The seminars, advertised and archived under [BusinessCT.com](http://BusinessCT.com), drew up to 100 attendees.

**Connecticut Learns and Works Consortium:** For the past 26 years, the consortium has provided up-to-date data presentations to over 6,000 educators, teachers, guidance counselors, job developers and social service case managers. The focus is on researching the most innovative programs and education/workforce initiatives, and offering first-hand labor market information at the spring and autumn symposiums. STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math) skills for women and girls are emphasized and supported.

The consortium provides up-to-date skill set requirements for the world of work, showcasing work and education opportunities throughout the business community, high school, college, private and state university systems.

### **Agency Improvements and Efficiencies**

**eWage:** Implemented in May 2019, this case management system allows the Wage and Workplace Standards Division to capture, manage, store, report, and centralize the Wage Division’s business information to keep data current, accurate and quality controlled. It allows better utilization of resources, eliminates waste, and delivers services to customers with enhanced efficiency, while gaining greater data security. The system includes a public portal for outside users to submit a claim, complaint and waiver forms through the DOL Wage Website. The “Schedules” portion of eWage posts information on the Web for employers to access prevailing wage rate schedules.

**FileCTUI.com:** This website is the agency portal for all services related to the filing of unemployment compensation benefits, with most of these services available 24/7. Customers may file a new claim, reopen an existing claim, file a weekly claim, check the status of their weekly payment or use a variety of self-serve options in the “Quick Links” section to request additional services and support. As a result of these changes, customers avoid significant wait times and more than \$500,000 in infrastructure and technology support costs are saved. For those who may have difficulty using these self-service options, in-person assistance is available from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at full-service American Job Centers (AJC) and limited hours at affiliate AJC offices.

**Credit Card/ACH Repayment:** This program allows individuals with a UI overpayment to use their credit card, debit card or e-check to repay these owed benefits. Since 2015, thousands of transactions have been made through this service, resulting in the recovery of more than \$5.2 million dollars.

**Separation and Information Data Exchange System (SIDES):** This web system expedites the process of gathering separation information from employers. Implemented in 2016, the project was funded through an award of approximately \$1 million in federal funds. SIDES enables electronic communication and transmission of unemployment insurance (UI) separation information between UI agencies and large multi-state employers or third party administrators (TPAs).

For small- to medium-size employers who are not able to exchange information with SIDES web services, SIDES E-Response provides an electronic means to communicate separation and wage information to UI agencies. Benefits to employers in using either version of SIDES include savings in operational, postage and handling costs; standardized questions that result in improved quality of adjudications reports and decisions; and the ability to protest cases more quickly through an expedited data exchange. In the last year, there has been a 38% increase in the number of CT employers participating in SIDES through their use of TPAs and a 450% increase in the number of CT employers using E-Response.

**Cross Match Integrity:** To help strengthen our economy, CTDOL continues to strive to minimize unemployment benefit overpayments while also focusing on fraud detection, fraud prevention and recovery of overpayments, using these tools. Through a grant from USDOL, CTDOL automated the Cross Match Integrity system that prevents improper UI benefit payments by using a cross match of the National Directory of New Hires and current Connecticut claimants filing for benefits. This system improves the integrity of the UI payment process through earlier detection of overpayments which minimizes unemployment trust fund losses.

**Lean Government Process Improvement:** The program actively promoted its services to state agencies and organizations this year through public outreach events. The program, which consists of formal classroom training and group sessions, works in a team setting to map out work processes, identify customer values, and find ways to slash waste. The goal is to promote increased productivity, fewer errors and improve quality by eliminating unnecessary reports and paperwork and streamlining approval processes and information retrieval.

### **Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity**

The agency is firmly committed to the principles and objectives of equal employment opportunity for all individuals and is an Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity employer. The agency ensures compliance with the state's Affirmative Action regulations and Contract Compliance laws, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Fair Employment Practices Act, Title, VII of the Civil Rights Act, and other applicable laws.

The agency's Office of Diversity and Equity coordinates and monitors programs and has undertaken numerous steps this past year to further equal opportunity in its hiring, promotions, training and other employment-related duties. Details can be found in the agency's Affirmative Action Plan, which was approved November 8, 2017 by the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities. Despite the continuing hiring freeze and budgetary concerns, the agency was able to achieve 67 percent of its hiring goals, 56 percent of its promotional goals, and 100 percent of its program goals.

### **Information Reported as Required by State Statute**

**Wage and Workplace Standards Violations:** CTDOL investigators recovered \$5,525,386.57 in legally due wages for employees during the past fiscal year. This included \$2,164,207.46 recovered by wage enforcement staff responding to 1,834 complaints that owed wages had not been paid. Wage and Workplace Standards staff also returned \$1,712,433.29 to at least 540

workers who were not paid for overtime work or who were paid less than minimum wage, and recovered \$1,514,609.27 by enforcing the state's prevailing wage laws and \$95,786.92 was recouped in back pay owed to 74 service workers hired by private contractors.

Violations of prevailing wage laws were determined after investigators conducted 37 payroll audits and made 15 site inspections. A total of at least 48 employees received owed wages as a result of non-payment of prevailing wage rates.

Violations were found in 184 additional cases concerning employment of minors in the workplace (hours of labor, night work of minors, prohibited employment of minors, working papers/certificates of age), meal/rest periods, personnel files, and drug testing issues.

A total of 143 Stop Work orders were issued to employers that did not comply with Workers' Compensation requirements. Following on-site investigations, these companies were required to cease work on a construction project until certain workplace regulations were met. In some cases, it was determined that employers misrepresented employees as independent contractors, a practice that causes an economic disadvantage to companies following the law and to those workers that are misclassified.

**Unemployment Compensation:** The Unemployment Insurance (UI) *UI Tax Division* administers an equitable UI tax program that protects both workers and employers through the fair enforcement of the UI law. UI benefits paid to unemployed workers totaled \$590 million. Of that amount, \$552 million was paid to claimants formerly employed by employers paying quarterly UI taxes under the regular UI benefits program, and \$38 million was provided to claimants formerly employed by non-taxable employers and/or under other programs. Total taxes paid by more than 106,000 employers whose employees were covered by UI totaled \$735 million.

**CONN-OSHA:** The Occupational Safety and Health Division conducted safety and/or health compliance inspections at 271 public work sites. Violations were documented in 203 of those inspections, with citations resulting in 980 hazards identified as follows: 556 "serious" violations; 411 "other than serious" violations; six "regulatory" violations; three "willful" violations; and four "repeat" violations.

CONN-OSHA provided safety and health consultations to 365 private-sector businesses that collectively employ 18,975 workers; during these consultations 1,723 hazards were identified. CONN-OSHA conducted 161 consultations at public sector workplaces with a total of 11,108 employees; during these consultations 232 hazards were identified. Additionally, safety training programs and outreach were provided to 16,926 employees.

**Population and Employment Data:** Through its Office of Research, the agency completes special state, local, or sub-state regional studies and economic analyses to provide information support for economic transition, workforce development initiatives, education program analysis and development, and responses to major layoffs or disasters. Strategies for addressing issues such as labor gaps, and for positioning the state's educational and workforce systems to be able to respond quickly to critical areas of workforce need, are a fundamental part of the Governor's vision for Connecticut's workforce and economic development efforts.

### **Occupational Analysis Products and Publications**

**The Office of Research website:** The website contains an exhaustive collection of data and tools useful for Workforce Investment Planning and understanding the labor market of Connecticut and each of the state's five Workforce Development Areas, including population and population density, labor force, employment and wages by industry sector, and new housing permits. In addition, detailed information on residents in need of workforce investment services such as high school dropouts, Medicaid recipients, adult probationers, Temporary Family Assistance recipients, and other residents with barriers to employment is included. Also incorporated is information on commuting patterns, long-term unemployment insurance claimants, a work area profile for each Workforce Investment Area as well as appendix tables and historical data on the aforementioned topics for comparisons and trends analysis.

**Connecticut Career Paths:** A planning guide developed for high school students and those making or guiding career choices, the guide profiles nearly 500 occupations, along with their employment levels, growth potential, expected earnings, skills requirements, and education paths. A new Connecticut Career Paths edition was published this year and distributed to schools, colleges, libraries and job centers throughout the state.

**Training and Education Planning System (TEPS):** The system is designed to aid the analysis and discussion of the demand and supply of talent in Connecticut's workforce. It is intended to help identify where there may be skill shortages or surpluses in the labor market, and thereby guide investments in education and training programs by program planners and administrators, as well as by individuals considering career options. The system is intended primarily for educational administrators and workforce development training providers that are considering whether or not to develop a new program, expand or contract an existing one, or drop an existing program, by showing where there may be a need for trained workers.

**Economic Indicator Scorecards:** Monthly updated economic indicators that present an overall picture of the current conditions in the Connecticut labor market, business climate, consumer sector and the current/future overall conditions. These include charts, trends, year-to-year changes and data for 24 economic indicators.