

EconomicEmpowerment

PRESS RELEASE

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TREASURER WOODEN CONVENES WORKFORCE ROUNDTABLE WITH HEALTHCARE & ADVANCED MANUFACTURING LEADERS TO DISCUSS SKILLED WORKFORCE SHORTAGES & SOLUTIONS

*Wallingford's Economic Listening Session Suggests Training Programs & Company
Partnerships to Meet Demands of CT's Growing Industries*

HARTFORD, CT — Today, Connecticut State Treasurer Shawn T. Wooden convened a number of South Central Connecticut leaders in healthcare and advanced manufacturing for a roundtable discussion with Workforce Alliance on bridging the workforce skills gap in industries that are adding jobs to Connecticut's economy. The Treasurer's workforce development forum in Wallingford was a stop on his Economic Empowerment listening tour, designed to elicit feedback on ways to strengthen Connecticut's economy and the financial wellbeing of residents, families and businesses.

In Connecticut, healthcare and advanced manufacturing are widely recognized as high-growth, high-opportunity sectors. According to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), employment of healthcare occupations is projected to grow 14 percent from 2018 to 2028, much faster than the average for all occupations. While [reports earlier this year](#) indicate Connecticut's manufacturing industry is estimated to need between 25,000 and 35,000 new skilled workers for the state's 4,100 manufacturers in the next 2 decades.

Despite the economic opportunities in these growth sectors, Connecticut's bench of skilled workers cannot keep pace with the industry hiring demands. Employers cite skills and training, recruitment and retention of qualified staff among the biggest barriers to filling vacancies.

"Connecticut's employers are telling us what they need to help grow the state's economy: a skilled workforce. Let's listen," said **State Treasurer Shawn T. Wooden**. "Workforce development is about more than a job, it's about empowering individuals with the tools and skills to succeed in careers—careers that can change the trajectory of their lives and Connecticut's economy."

According to reports from the [Connecticut Department of Labor](#), more than 35% of the state's manufacturing workforce is over the age of 54, and manufacturing will be among the hardest hit sectors by retirements. Moreover, healthcare and social assistance—Connecticut's largest employment sector—has more than 71,000 workers over the age of 54 also reaching retirement. In healthcare, as

the state's population ages, the challenge of workforce shortages will be compounded by the increased demand for health services from an aging demographic.

Moreover, the report indicates that, "... knowing which industries have a large share of these highly experienced workers is important to ensure that their needs are met and that an adequate pipeline exists to help train incoming workers to replace those who will eventually retire."

"Connecticut's competitive future depends on our ability to effectively prepare our workforce for in-demand jobs and to create the workforce pipelines that meet employer needs," said **Bill Villano, President and CEO of Workforce Alliance**.

Participants in today's workforce roundtable include Penn Globe of North Branford, Hobson & Motzer of Durham, Masonicare Health of Wallingford, Middlesex Health of Middletown, Retreat Behavioral Health of New Haven and Yale New Haven Health.

"As a small, woman-owned manufacturer, we've found access to training—especially second-tier training—is essential our employees," said **Marcia LaFemina, President and CEO of Penn Globe**. "With the right training and skills, we have lower turnover because our workforce can see their career paths, and know they can excel in our company or anywhere else they choose."

"In school, the career guidance I got was to either become a doctor, a policeman or a fireman. I didn't want to do any of them, so I spent a lot of time at jobs that wouldn't take me anywhere until found a career at Penn Globe," said **Eduardo Melendez, Production Supervisor at Penn Globe**. "I started at the ground floor learning my way up, climbing each rung of the ladder. When I became a supervisor, the training I received through Workforce Alliance was the type of management skills I needed to be successful for myself and my team."

About the State Treasurer & Workforce Development

Economic empowerment is centered on improving and advancing the financial wellbeing of Connecticut residents, businesses, and the State's economy. The Office of the Treasurer supports comprehensive workforce development, which is a building block of economic empowerment, to ensure the State of Connecticut is meeting the needs of workers and employers and moving the economy in the right direction.

[In July](#), Treasurer Wooden joined leaders from the Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board and the Workforce Alliance at Sound Manufacturing, Inc. in Old Saybrook to discuss the successes of the Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative, a regional partnership that has resulted in more than 1,400 job placements. As a member of the State Bond Commission, in September, the Treasurer supported the [approval of \\$10 million for the Apprenticeship Connecticut Initiative](#), which invests in workforce development programs like Skill Up at Workforce Alliance.

Treasurer Wooden also serves as an ex officio Board Member of the Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority (CHEFA), which [awarded a \\$500,000 grant to the Workforce Development Council](#) earlier this year in February, for workforce training and support across Connecticut's five Workforce Development Boards.

About the State Treasurer's Economic Empowerment Listening Tour

The purpose of the statewide Economic Empowerment listening tour is to tap into the knowledge, insights and feedback of different industry and community voices on ways to strengthen our economy and the financial wellbeing of families in Connecticut. The tour is covering a variety of financial issues, including: workforce development & job creation, K-12 financial literacy education, personal finance, retirement security, college financing, homeownership, business start-ups & entrepreneurship, community banking, credit counseling & tax assistance, among other economic issues. Feedback from the listening tour will inform the work and priorities of the Office of the Treasurer.

About the Workforce Alliance

Workforce Alliance is the policy and oversight organization responsible for creating a comprehensive, community-wide response to the challenges of building a highly skilled workforce in South Central CT. Board members include business owners, local elected officials and community leaders in order to meet changing local needs and shifting national economic and workforce trends. In the last year alone, Workforce Alliance and American Job Centers in New Haven, Meriden, Hamden and Middletown, served about 15,000 people and assisted in placing job seekers into full-time, part-time and per diem positions in healthcare, manufacturing, transportation, distribution, logistics, information technology, hospitality, retail and more. For more information visit workforcealliance.biz.

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