Department of Labor

Agency Description

The mission of the Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL) is to protect and promote the interests of Connecticut’s workers and assist workers and employers to be competitive in the global economy.

The department accomplishes its mission by providing a variety of services that benefit the workplace. These services include: income support that assists workers between jobs and stimulates the local economy; protection on the job (through statutes covering wages, safety regulations, working conditions, and on-site health and safety consultations); work-related training programs; job search and recruitment assistance (through the CT Job Central and local and regional job fairs); tax credit incentive programs and maintenance of the collective bargaining relationship. As the Connecticut arm of the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the department collects, analyzes and disseminates workforce data to inform businesses, the general public, educational institutions, and government planners and policymakers about employment issues and trends.

Informational and enforcement responsibilities that serve both workers and employers are assigned to the department by statutes that cover the payment of wages, collection of Unemployment Insurance (UI) taxes, payment of UI benefits, health and safety, employment of minors, family and medical leave, representation by labor organizations and resolution of labor disputes.

Placing a strong emphasis on continuous improvement in terms of quality and customer satisfaction, the department provides both employment and unemployment services to workers and employers. In addition to providing unemployment insurance through its Internet online service and the TeleBenefits telephone system, CTDOL employees provide employment services from the department’s central office in Wethersfield, and the 14 *CTWorks* One-Stop centers located throughout the state. The department’s website is also highly utilized by jobseekers and employers interested in job fairs, wage standards, unemployment insurance, labor market information, and Connecticut’s job bank and a wide variety of other workforce services.

CTDOL’s major programs, Unemployment Insurance (UI) and the Wagner-Peyser Labor Exchange/Employment Services, are federally funded. Federal funding for the administration of the state’s UI program is tied to the unemployment rate. Connecticut's unemployment rate has ranged from 8.8 percent to 9.0 percent during 2011 - 2012.

CTDOL continues to work with a coalition of business, labor and state and federal government agencies to develop federal legislation that would, among other things, increase administrative funding for UI and employment services.

Job Readiness and Employment Services

## ***Statutory Reference***

C.G.S. Chapters 565 and 567, Sections 31-3j, 31-3k, 31-3o, Chapter 319oo, Sections 31-51w, 4-124w , 17b-694, 12-217y, 17b-16, Public Law 105-220, Subtitle B, Section 112 (b)(18)(C).

## ***Statement of Need and Program Objectives***

To provide job placement, supportive services and temporary financial assistance to individuals who are unemployed and/or are training for employment.

## ***Program Description***

The CTDOL administers the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) federal funding, which this year totaled $27.3 million and provided workforce services to more than 12,000 individuals. The prolonged economic downturn, which has spread across most of Connecticut’s industries, continued to present challenges for the state and its workforce investment partners during Program Year 2011. The needs of individuals affected by the economic situation have increased, and demand for employment and training services has surged. Funding under the WIA has helped Connecticut’s workforce investment partners to increase the availability of employment and training assistance, which is an important component to the economic recovery of the state. CTDOL and the Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) are focused on utilizing funding in the most effective manner, developing initiatives that provide both immediate opportunities and future potential, and supporting established projects that strengthen the workforce and business. Although the exceptional economic difficulties have created quite a test for the state’s workforce system, it is expected that Connecticut’s commitment to employment and training efforts will help employers and citizens on the road to economic recovery.

The state Rapid Response (RR) Unit**,** in conjunction with local Workforce Investment Boards and other one-stop partners, is responsible under WIA regulations (Part 665, Subpart C) for carrying out Rapid Response activities statewide. WIA Title I formula funding supports all rapid response activities in the state. Headed by the CTDOL, the RR Unit reaches out to employers contemplating or experiencing layoffs and plant closings. Employers, affected workers and their unions are provided information on layoff aversion, mass layoff/plant closing and other labor laws, unemployment insurance, WIA, and One-Stop employment services. 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.

During FY 2012, the RR Unit made 203 outreach calls and responded to 213 WARN notices affecting 4,443 workers. The RR team assisted 56 employers and/or unions and made 216 presentations, including 18 on-site job search workshops, to 5,439 workers. Employment sites where face-to-face contact was not possible were provided packets of information, benefiting an additional 3,249 dislocated workers, including human resources managers and union representatives.

The RR Unit also submitted seven Trade Adjustment Assistance Act (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. Five petitions, covering 944 workers, were certified TAA eligible. One petition was terminated as employees were found to be covered under a prior certification (a total of 36 workers), and one petition is still pending investigation. The RR Unit also assisted the Trade Act Unit in re-engaging 265 employees from an employer that had been denied TAA eligibility last year but gained TAA eligibility this program year.

Job Corpsis a national, federally funded, primarily residential, educational and vocational training program administered by the U.S. Department of Labor that helps low income youth ages 16-24 to gain workplace skills, train for an occupation in demand, and become independent and self-sufficient. With centers in Hartford and New Haven, more than 400 students enroll each year to earn a high school diploma or GED, learn a trade, obtain third party certifications and receive assistance finding a good job. Onsite CTDOL employees provide staffing support to the Hartford Job Corps Academy and New Haven Job Corps Center. CTDOL is committed to promoting and enhancing the goals of Job Corps students and staff nationally and locally with a vision that includes; constantly enlisting new partners and establishing innovative programs in order to aid Connecticut’s at promise youth to become educated, trained and established in careers with upward mobility fully integrated into Connecticut’s workforce. The wide array of services provided by CTDOL’s on-site coordinator proves to be extremely beneficial to the success of the program. Services include but are not limited to: Accessing and coordinating public and private sector services/programs/jobs to provide quality educational/employment opportunities and support programs to students; interfacing with state partner agencies’ to facilitate communication in order to best serve clients/students toward success; assisting in the recruitment, training and placement of students; providing technical assistance and training to Job Corps center staff and direct services to students in a variety of employability related areas; facilitating coordination between the center, area One-Stops and local WIBs to support student needs; and providing direct support to students in the area of employability services, such as résumé writing, interviewing preparation, job search assistance and mentoring.

There are currently five Opportunities Industrialization Centers (OICs), located in New Haven, New Britain, Bridgeport, Waterbury and New London, which deliver services to individuals with significant barriers to employment.

CTDOL administers Jobs First Employment Services (JFES) which provides employment services to recipients of the Temporary Family Assistance (TFA), the Department of Social Services’ cash assistance program.

The goals of JFES is to enable TFA recipients to become independent of cash assistance, through employment, within 21 months; to remain independent of cash assistance; and to achieve federally mandated work participation requirements.

All TFA families who are not determined to be exempt have 21 months to reach independence through employment. These families are referred to as “time-limited” and the parents are required to participate with JFES.

In FY 2012, JFES served 15,742 recipients. Of these, 5,427 entered employment at some time during that year with an average wage of $9.64.

A range of employment services were provided including assessment, case management, job search assistance, vocational education, subsidized employment, adult basic education and other support services. CTDOL contracts with the five Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) to provide these employment-related services for JFES customers. All services are integrated in the statewide One-Stop Centers.

STRIDE (Skills, Transitional support, Respect, Integrity, Direction, and Employment) is a collaborative effort between the Department of Correction, Department of Labor and Quinebaug Valley Community College. STRIDE is a re-entry program, which serves a targeted group of men and women (both pre and post-release) from Niantic Annex Correctional Institution, York Correctional Institution in Niantic, Bridgeport Correctional Center and Corrigan-Radgowski Correctional Center in Uncasville. The program offers job readiness, job search and job placement assistance and support services such as transportation to job-related activities.

Individual Development Accounts (IDA) allow low-income individuals or individuals with disabilities to deposit modest savings from their earnings or disability income in an Individual development account which will be matched at a rate up to 2:1 for the purpose of purchasing a specific asset. Individuals save regularly, usually over a one- to five-year period. While in the program participants attend money management and financial skills training, receive credit repair assistance and attend asset specific training related to their savings goal(s). The overall mission of the IDA initiative is to strengthen families and communities by facilitating self-sufficiency and economic stability through financial education and asset development.

Under the Wagner-Peyser Act, CTDOL Employment Services (ES) receives federal funding to provide universal access to an integrated array of labor exchange services. ES focuses on providing a variety of employment-related labor exchange services including but not limited to job search assistance, job referral, and placement assistance for jobseekers, [reemployment services to unemployment insurance claimants](http://www.doleta.gov/programs/wprs.cfm), and recruitment services to businesses with job openings. Federal funding for Wagner-Peyser ES is minimal and has decreased in the past decade.

Labor Exchange[CT.jobs/CT JobCentral](http://www.ct.jobs), [www.ct.jobs](http://www.ct.jobs), Connecticut’s state labor exchange system, is a self-service job bank that provides a range of employment services for both jobseekers and business, including the preliminary and broad matching of jobseekers to potential employers based on qualifications, desired location, salary, and other criteria. CT.jobs operates in alliance with US.jobs, the national labor exchange which is endorsed by the National Association of State Workforce Agencies. CT.jobs enables jobseekers to search thousands of employment opportunities representing all types of occupations, including Connecticut state agency jobs, and refer themselves to positions of interest. As part of a national labor exchange with other states, CT.jobs includes job listings from other states for jobseekers interested in relocating. Jobseekers can also post their résumé on-line for business representatives to view. Approved CT businesses can post W-2 jobs and search the résumé bank for qualified candidates at no cost. Technical assistance is provided to both employers and jobseekers.

A total of 1,926 new account requests from businesses were processed by CT.jobs staff in Program Year 2011. During this same period, employers posted 51,764 new Connecticut job openings. In addition, 1,082 jobs were indexed. Indexing identifies links to jobs on corporate websites, enabling jobseekers to click on a job title on the search results page and be taken directly to the job listing on the corporate website. Jobseekers entered 9,522 new résumés into the system.

During Program Year 2011, approximately 222,576 Wagner-Peyser participants received services (staff-assisted or self-service). In total, approximately 303,685 staff-assisted services were provided. Approximately 57,961 *CTWorks* Career Center customers benefited from a host of services including assistance with career choices and job searches; job search resources such as fax machines and computers with Internet connection; and workshops on résumé writing, interviewing, and career exploration**.** Customers also received information about specific companies and labor market trends. In addition, more than 10,397 individuals received résumé preparation services at CTDOL-sponsored events and *CTWorks* Career Centers. Résumé preparation services were provided by staff with board-certified credentials from the Professional Association of Résumé Writers.

## Special Population Groups

Veterans Workforce Development - CTDOL is committed to the federal mandate requiring priority of services to eligible veterans. The Office for Veterans Workforce Development is funded by a federal grant from the USDOL-Veterans Employment and Training Services. All CTDOL staff in the *CTWorks* Centers provides services to veterans with special emphasis given to services for disabled veterans and recently separated veterans including Connecticut National Guard and armed forces reserve members. Over 7,480 veterans were served through *CTWorks* employment services in FY 2012. Additionally, each *CTWorks* Center has specialized veteran staff to provide employment and training services exclusively to veterans. A total of 2,074 veterans, including 391 disabled veterans and 214 special disabled veterans, were served by the specialized CTDOL veteran staff. CTDOL staff concentrates efforts into two categories: Disabled Veteran Outreach Program representatives (DVOPs) and Local Veteran Employment Representatives (LVERs). The DVOPs/LVERs devote their time to serving veterans only and dedicate a portion of their time to outstation and outreach activities bringing CTDOL services to veterans who may not be aware of the employment assistance available to them.

Unemployment Insurance (UI) Claimants are required to fully register with Employment Services as a condition of eligibility for Unemployment Compensation benefits. From July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012, CTDOL staff continued to focus on unemployment insurance (UI) claimants to be served by the Enhanced Reemployment Services (ERS) program. ERS identifies unemployment insurance claimants who are likely to exhaust their benefits, are unlikely to return to their previous occupations, and will need job search assistance services to make a successful transition to new employment. Orientation sessions were conducted for 16,597 ERS participants who received labor market information, career guidance, information on CT.jobs, an overview of the *CTWorks* Career Center services, and details on UI benefit rights and responsibilities.

As required by the *Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012*, CTDOL provided Reemployment Services and Reemployment and Eligibility Assessments (RES/REA) during the months of May and June to 9,979 claimants collecting Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC).

The Shared Work Program preserves employee’s jobs and an employers trained workforce during a temporary decline in business. Rather than reducing their workforce through lay-offs, an employer reduces the hours of work for all or a particular group of affected employees. These employees could then be eligible to receive partial unemployment compensation benefits to supplement their lost wages. During FY 2012, 262 companies and over 5,000 employees benefited from this program. Program highlights and regulations, along with a downloadable plan application, may be found at the Labor Department website: <http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/progsupt/bussrvce/shared_work/swp.htm>.

Serving People with Disabilities CTDOL works in conjunction with the Bureau of Rehabilitative Services, Department of Social Services, as well as other state agencies and community-based organizations toward the goal of improving the lives of people with disabilities. CTDOL is also a member of the Governor’s Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities and supports the Committee’s mission of addressing the workforce development needs of individuals with disabilities.

CTDOL continues to maintain a website of disability resources for both jobseekers and employers, at <http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/gendocs/pwd.htm>. This website, developed collaboratively between CTDOL and 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.

Migrant and Seasonal Farm workers (MSFWs) - CTDOL is committed to providing MSFWs equal access to the full range of employment services available to the general population. The monitor advocate ensures compliance with all laws concerning migrant and seasonal farm workers. Outreach services were provided to approximately 394 workers, including information on available workforce services, referrals to healthcare providers and other supportive services. Agricultural employers received recruitment assistance, mediation, and interpreter services, as well as technical guidance on compliance with the migrant and seasonal farm worker regulations.

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)helps individuals who are part of worker groups certified by the U.S. Department of Labor as having lost their jobs or experienced partial separation due to foreign competition. TAA offers a multitude of benefits to eligible workers including reemployment services, training; job search, relocation and readjustment allowances, and a health coverage tax credit. Some certifications also provide a wage subsidy (Alternative Trade Adjustment Assistance – ATAA) for mature workers.

The Alien Labor Certification (ALC) program allows employers who have been unsuccessful in securing United States workers to hire foreign nationals on a temporary basis in both non-agricultural and agricultural employment environments. In order for an Alien Labor Certification to be approved, the U.S. Department of Labor must ensure that there are in fact an insufficient number of U.S. workers who are able, willing, qualified and available to fill these positions. Further, it must be established that the employment of the alien will not adversely affect the wages and working conditions of similarly employed U.S. workers. CTDOL also responds to requests for prevailing wages from employers intent on hiring H-1B non-immigrant professionals; H-2B Temporary Nonagricultural and Permanent Workers. ALC handled 59 certifications and inspected 39 farms in connection with agricultural certifications.

Unemployment Insurance

## ***Statutory Reference***

C.G.S. Chapter 567.

## ***Statement of Need and Program Objectives***

To reduce the financial hardship of workers unemployed for short periods of time and to stimulate the local economy by maintaining purchasing power.

## ***Program Description***

Unemployment Insurance (UI) provides a cushion from the effects of unemployment through partial wage replacement. The program is an economic stabilizer that helps to maintain the purchasing power of the unemployed. Benefits are payable to an eligible unemployed individual for 26 weeks within a 52 week period. The average claimant collects 18.9 weeks of the 26 weeks of unemployment insurance. CTDOL also administers a number of federally funded or shared unemployment benefits programs including; Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) that provides up to 47 weeks of federally funded benefits to individuals who have exhausted entitlement to UI; Extended Benefits (EB)\* a federally shared program that provides up to 20 weeks of benefits to individuals who have exhausted entitlement to UI and EUC; and Federal Additional Compensation (FAC)\*\*, a federally funded, $25 per week enhancement to all unemployment benefits paid by CTDOL. Other federal unemployment programs administered by the CTDOL include Disaster Unemployment Assistance for loss of earnings due to natural disaster and Trade Adjustment Assistance for worker groups certified by the U.S. DOL as adversely affected by imports or production shifts to certain countries. The Trade Adjustment Assistance benefits include: Training; relocation allowances and job search allowances; Trade Readjustment Allowances – weekly federally funded benefits after exhaustion of state unemployment benefits for those individuals in approved training; Alternative Trade Adjustment Assistance (ATAA), which provides eligible individuals over the age of 50 who obtain new employment within 26 weeks of their separation with a wage subsidy to help bridge the salary gap between their old and new employment; Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance (RTAA), which expands ATAA benefits to individuals who are employed part time and participating in TAA-approved training and the health coverage tax credit, which is a refundable tax credit equal to 80% of the health insurance premium paid by an eligible individual or as an advance credit paid by the IRS and eligible individuals pay the remaining 20% of the premium for health coverage for themselves and qualified family members (Information on this credit may be located at <http://www.irs.gov> keyword *HCTC* or by calling the HCTC Call Center directly toll-free at 1-866-628-4282 (TDD/TYY 1-866-626-4282).

Initial unemployment claims are filed over the Internet through an automated “*WebBenefits”* system or atelephone system, "*Dial to File"*, in English or Spanish. Separation packets (English and Spanish versions), which include the separation notice or "pink slip", for use with these systems may be obtained by calling (860) 263-6635 or by download from CTDOL's Internet site (<http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/tic/sep-pack.html>). Weekly continued claims are also filed using the automated *W**ebBenefits* and *TeleBenefits* systems, and *WebBenefits* gives claimants access to their benefit payment history with the capability to print out the information. Over 45% of all individuals filing weekly unemployment claims now use the Internet method.

Employers continue to use the UC-62V, Vacation Shutdown Claim for Unemployment, for temporary layoffs of 6 weeks or less.

Eligibility determinations through interviews with claimants and employers are conducted by telephone or in person at 6 adjudication centers throughout the state.

CTDOL staff in local One-Stop Career Centers assist the claimant in developing a work-search plan and provide enhanced re-employment services such as résumé writing and interviewing workshops.

An independent, statutory appeals division consisting of referees and a Board of Review ensures the right of appeal to all parties on any unemployment decision regarding the award or denial of unemployment benefits. This ensures that all parties receive due process. Claimants and employers may use one of the forms listed at <http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/appeals/apfrmnt.htm>) to file an electronic appeal in unemployment compensation matters.

CTDOL also provides assistance to the Department of Social Services in the collection of child support payments owed by UI claimants.

The UI tax division collects and accounts for taxes used to pay unemployment benefits. It also registers and maintains records for all registered employers; conducts field investigations to determine if an employer is subject to UI law and performs audits of taxable employers to ensure conformance with the law.

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| Outcome Measure: | | | | | |
| FISCAL YEAR | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | *2012 (e)* |
| UI Benefits Paid | $653.1M | $1.7B | $2.7B | $2.3B | *$1.85B* |
| Includes EUC | Includes EUC, FAC & EB | Includes EUC, FAC & EB | Includes EUC & EB | Includes EUC & EB |
| Employers Registered | 100,328 | 99,370 | 97,585 | 97,667 | *97,879* |
| FY Collections  (*in millions)* | $562.7 | $605.1 | $679.0 | $788.9 | *$865.7* |
| Estimates for *2012(e.)* | | | | | |

\*Connecticut no longer meets statutory requirements to pay Extended Benefits. The final week for which Extended Benefits was payable was the week ending May 12, 2012.

\*\*Federal legislation authorizing payment of Federal Additional Compensation has expired. The final week of benefits which included Federal Additional Compensation was the week ending December 18, 2010.

Labor market information

## ***Statutory Reference***

C.G.S. Sections 31-2 and 31-3a.

## ***Statement of Need and Program Objectives***

To collect, analyze and disseminate an array of data on workforce issues and trends that allow employers, workers and those who assist them to make informed economic, workforce and career decisions. To serve as an information resource to users including businesses, jobseekers, students, government planners and policymakers, economic and workforce development agents, education and training providers, labor and employer organizations, economists, and the public at large.

## ***Program Description***

The Office of Research is Connecticut’s leading producer of information and statistics on the economy, workforce, occupations, and careers. The office prepares a variety of resources for tracking the health of the state’s economy, for assessing the state’s needs for skilled workers, for assisting in economic development initiatives, for aiding in education and training program planning, and for guiding the career choices of jobseekers and students. Labor market information (LMI) is provided in numerous publications and other resources in print and on the Internet. Staff respond to numerous requests for economic and workforce information, and participate in many initiatives to strengthen the economy, identify and evaluate the workforce needs of targeted regions or groups, and respond to critical economic and workforce issues.

Web-based LMI for employers, jobseekers, students and others includes the *Connecticut Job & Career ConneCTion (JCC) and the Connecticut Education & Training ConneCTion (ETC).* The JCC (www.ctjobandcareer.org) includes job descriptions, education and training requirements, wage information and employment projections for nearly 900 occupations, making it the most extensive source of local information on jobs and careers in the state. The *Potential Employer Search* finds contact information on Connecticut employers by desired occupation or company search. The Military Skills Translator feature uses the *Military Occupation Classification (MOC*) to identify similar occupations in the civilian workforce.

The ETC ([www.cttraining.info](http://www.cttraining.info)) includes information on more than 250 providers and 8,700 training programs and courses, and is the most comprehensive source of information on education and training in Connecticut.

Workforce Investment System Approved Training Programs (www1.ctdol.state.ct.us/etpl)is a web-based tool for counselors, career developers, and other *CTWorks* staff to aide individuals receiving WIA assistance with the selection of training programs to obtain the knowledge and skills that can help them get the job of their choice.

Workforce Employment Dynamics provide information on the characteristics of Connecticut’s jobholders, including detailed breakdowns by age, gender, industry, geographic region and wages earned. Information can be found on-line at www1.ctdol.state.ct.us/employmentdynamics.

The *Information for Workforce Investment Planning (IWIP)* publication provides the state’s Workforce Investment Boards with labor market information for strategic planning, evaluating services, and developing training programs. The IWIP includes information on the labor force, industry employment trends, population changes, public aid recipients, high school dropout rates, and persons with other barriers to employment. The geographic detail contained in the IWIP is extremely useful for planners and policy makers involved in making critical workforce system decisions.

The office undertakes special studies and projects of importance to the state on topics relevant to the labor market, workforce, and the workforce development system. These have included:

* Intensive studies of the impact of employment services on the employment and earnings of participants, of the long-term effect of job displacement on the income of workers, and of the dynamics of job gain and loss in the Connecticut labor market;
* Analyses of Connecticut’s older workers: the industrial distribution, geographic distribution, and the wage distribution of the jobs held, and the detailed estimates of earnings losses of older workers (ages 40 and over) who experience mass layoffs relative to a continuously employed comparison group;
* Examination of the earnings losses of displaced workers in Connecticut highlights prime age workers who have lived and worked in Connecticut and who lose their jobs due to a reduction in employment at their place of work;
* Special reports on the demand in Connecticut for occupational skills requiring knowledge in science and math, the profiles of Connecticut’s industry clusters, the employment and earnings outcomes of graduates of public higher education, and career information and planning guidance for students and following Connecticut’s unemployment insurance claimants through the recession:

[The Training and Education Planning System (TEPS](http://www1.ctdol.state.ct.us/employmentdynamics/main.aspx)) is a tool 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.

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| Labor Market Information Graphs | |
| **LMI Web Sites**  **(Visitor Sessions)**  **5,040**  **79,062)**  **105,644**  **185,368**  **601,612**  **New Hires**  **ETPL**  **ETC**  **JCC**  **LMI**  **Program**  **Sessions** |  |
| **LMI Training and Other Activities**  **1,600**  **2,000**  **6,700**  **25,000**  **73,500**  **11,653**  **Phone, Mail, Email &**  **FAX**  **Training**  **Job/Career Fairs**  **Presentations &**  **Exhibits**  **Media Events**  **Website Press**  **Releases**  **Program**  **People Served** |  |

Workforce Job Training and Skill Development

## ***Statutory Reference***

C.G.S. Sections 31-22m to 31-22t.

## ***Statement of Need and Program Objectives***

To meet the need for a highly skilled and trained workforce in apprenticeable occupations and to help businesses develop a stable, highly-skilled workforce that will enable them to be highly productive and globally competitive.

## ***Program Description***

Registered Apprenticeship is an unsubsidized, proven training system that combines on-the-job training with related classroom instruction to prepare highly skilled workers for Connecticut’s industries. Apprentices learn industry-defined skills at industry-accepted standards. Apprenticeship gives workers versatility by teaching all aspects of a trade and helps participants learn to work with a variety of people in actual working situations. It specifically addresses worker and industry needs.

In Connecticut, apprenticeship is a voluntary training system representing a unique partnership in which business and labor are the primary operators of programs with government playing a support role. An employer/employee relationship must be in existence to establish an apprenticeship program. After successfully completing an apprenticeship program (which usually lasts three to four years, but may range from one to six years) the worker receives an apprenticeship completion certificate and is recognized as a qualified journeyperson nationwide. This certificate is one of the oldest and most highly portable industry credentials in use today.

A tax credit designed to encourage the development of skilled workers through apprenticeship training programs is available in manufacturing, construction and plastics-related trades.

Apprenticeship services are provided to the public through the unit’s regional apprenticeship representatives. The representatives develop apprenticeship training programs for sponsors (employers and joint labor management apprenticeship committees), register, monitor and complete apprentices (employees) while providing technical assistance to program participants. The staff makes presentations to employer, labor and educational associations as well as students and outreach organizations to promote the benefits and opportunities available through apprenticeship.

*Business Services* helps Connecticut’s employers to hire, train and retain workers by analyzing the needs of businesses and customizing solutions. Between July 2011 and June 2012, Business Services staff helped Connecticut businesses with more than 462 recruitments attended by approximately 9,125 jobseekers. Additionally, Business Services staff administered the 21st Century Skills Training Program, a unique program for new and expanding Connecticut businesses that need to enhance the skills of the current workforce to remain competitive. Using an allocation of $425,000, the staff developed agreements resulting in over $860,000 in training that included green manufacturing, Lean government practices, and quality systems. The program trained 1162 workers from 49 Connecticut companies.

Wage and Workplace Standards

## ***Statutory Reference***

Chapters 556, 557 Part III, and 558.

## ***Statement of Need and Program Objectives***

To ensure that the more than 1.7 million Connecticut employees receive all the wages to which they are entitled without the need for litigation and to enforce labor statutes that safeguard and protect the rights of workers.

## ***Program Description***

The Wage and Workplace Standards Division is responsible for two major programs, regulation of wages and regulation of working conditions.

In FY 2012, through the regulation of wages program, $5.6 million in wages was recovered that would otherwise not have been remitted to employees who had legally earned them. Most individual complaints range from $100 to $1,000, amounts not sufficient to interest and retain a private attorney. Further, if all complaints were filed with the courts, they would have an adverse impact on the civil docket.

The regulation of wages staff undertake the following activities as a result of a complaint received:

Complaints concerning wages are received, both in writing and by telephone. If the complaint concerns minimum wage, overtime, or prevailing wages, a compliance audit is made of all employees, past and present, covering a period of two years from the date of the complaint. If the complaint concerns nonpayment of wages, only that specific complaint is investigated.

Routine audits are also made to ensure compliance with minimum wage, overtime and wages agreed upon for labor or service rendered and prevailing wage. Violations are identified and corrective action recommended.

Where underpayments are discovered, hours and payroll records are transcribed and proper payment is required from the employer. In disputed cases, hearings may be held and every effort is made to resolve the cases.

When all administrative procedures have been exhausted with no hope of resolution, disputes/complaints are referred for criminal prosecution or for civil prosecution.

The penalties for non-payment of wages reflect the severity of the non-payment. If more than $2,000 was not paid, it is a Class D felony. The Labor Commissioner may assess civil penalties for violation of labor laws amounting to $300 per violation.

The Wage and Workplace Standards Division is also responsible for regulating the working conditions of Connecticut’s employers. The various elements of specific labor laws comprise the activities of the regulation of working conditions program. The division’s major function is to investigate complaints from employees and former employees and requests from employers pertaining to laws governing the following areas: hazardous employment of minors; working hours and working papers of minors under 18 years of age; polygraph as a condition of employment; blacklisting of employees; more than six days employment in a calendar week; cancellation of medical insurance; heat and utilities in the workplace; written employment policy in the workplace; access to personnel files; meal periods; family and medical leave from employment; smoking in the workplace; drug testing in the workplace and whistle blowing.

In addition, the department licenses, inspects, regulates and otherwise exercises control over the activities of private employment agencies doing business within the state. The department also interviews applicants, evaluates applications and investigates complaints pertaining to industrial homework.

The division has the authority to stop the work of an employer who misclassifies employees as independent contractors or underreports payroll for the purpose of committing fraud against insurance companies by paying lower premiums.

To increase public awareness of the wage and workplace laws the division has published guidebooks, bookmarks and more information on its extensive website.

Occupational Safety and Health

## ***Statutory Reference***

C.G.S. Chapters 571 and 573.

## ***Statement of Need and Program Objectives***

To reduce the incidence of occupational injuries and illnesses by ensuring that workplaces are free from recognized safety and health hazards.

## ***Program Description***

The Division of Occupational Safety and Health has four primary responsibilities:

* Protecting 224,400 state and local government employees by enforcing safety and health standards in public sector workplaces, which includes conducting routine safety and health inspections, responding to complaints/requests and investigating fatalities or serious accidents.
* Providing free safety and/or health consultative services, at the employer’s request, to Connecticut’s public and private employers at their locations. The program is geared to help high-hazard establishments and smaller firms or government agencies who lack the expertise or resources to interpret complex standards or conduct extensive health monitoring.
* Developing and conducting individualized safety and health training programs in the private and public sectors.
* Compiling, analyzing and annually publishing safety and health data on the private and public sectors within the state. This data serves as a basis for scheduling inspections, utilizing education/training resources and measuring program effectiveness. The 2006 injury/illness incidence rate was 5.2 per 100 full-time workers in Connecticut.
* In addition, the division administers the occupational health clinic program. This program serves workers and employers through recognition, diagnosis and prevention of occupational diseases and injuries. It also collects significant data on occupational health and safety.

Maintain Collective Bargaining Relationships

## ***Statutory Reference***

C.G.S. Sections 5-270, 5-280, 7-467 through 7-479, 31-90 through 31-111(b), 52-418 through 52-420, 10-153e.

## ***Statement of Need and Program Objectives***

To define and protect the statutory rights of employees to form, join or assist labor organizations and to encourage and protect the right of employees and employers to bargain collectively.

## ***Program Description***

The State Board of Mediation and Arbitration resolves impasses in order to promote and maintain stability in collective bargaining whenever disputes occur. Mediation is an informal process to assist the disputing parties in reaching an agreement. Upon receipt of a contract expiration notice, or upon notification that a strike is imminent, a state mediator is assigned to the dispute in an attempt to bring about a settlement. Mediators also assist in resolving grievances prior to and after submission to the Board for final and binding arbitration.

Arbitration is a process to resolve grievances by holding a formal hearing to take testimony and receive evidence resulting in the arbitrator’s rendering of a final and binding arbitration award.

The board’s mission is to have grievances heard in as expeditious a manner as possible by shortening the time between the date when a demand for arbitration is received to when the case is heard. For priority cases, the goal is to have the case heard within four months and non-priority cases from four months to a year.

By law, public employees may not strike. Instead, procedures are in place for arriving at a new contract, without resort to job action. The State Board of Mediation and Arbitration has considerable responsibilities in this process.

The Municipal Interest Arbitration procedure is fixed by statute with a series of mandatory time limits. The panels of arbitrators are not necessarily members of the board. The procedure results in a final and binding arbitration award (contract) in resolution of municipal contract impasses.

State employee bargaining units are eligible for mandatory interest arbitration. Whenever an impasse occurs, the parties can jointly, or singly, initiate arbitration by filing with the State Board of Mediation and Arbitration.

In FY 2012 a total of 710 grievances were filed for arbitration; 1,042 grievance arbitration hearings were scheduled; 724 arbitration cases were closed and 109 awards were issued. Expiration notices were received on 253 private sector contracts and the board imposed binding interest arbitration on 407 municipal contracts under C.G.S. Sec. 7-473c. The mediators responded to 667 cases.

The function of the Board of Labor Relations is to ensure that employers and employee organizations abide by the statutory requirements for collective bargaining for public sector employees and a small number of private sector employees in Connecticut. The Board of Labor Relations administers portions of four statutes setting forth the requirements of the collective bargaining process.

The board performs its functions in the following ways:

Processing petitions from employees seeking to be represented by an employee organization. As part of that process, the labor board conducts secret ballot elections among employees to determine if they wish to be represented by an employee organization.

Upon receipt of written complaints from employee organizations, employees or employers alleging violations of the statutes, informal conferences are conducted with parties to investigate and mediate complaints in order to resolve disputes.

If settlement is not reached after a complaint has been filed and investigated, the case is either recommended for a formal hearing or recommended for dismissal. If a party timely objects to a recommendation for dismissal, the case will be scheduled for a hearing before a full panel of the board. After a full evidentiary hearing, the board issues a final, written decision in the matter.

After the issuance of the final decision, the aggrieved party may then appeal to the Superior Court. A petition for court enforcement may be filed if a party does not comply with an order of the board.

Management Services

## ***Statutory Reference***

C.G.S. Section 31-1 and 31-2.

## ***Statement of Need and Program Objectives***

To ensure that the department delivers necessary services to the public in an integrated and efficient manner and to set policy and manage the department’s financial, human and information resources.

## ***Program Description***

The Office of the Commissioner provides overall management of activities and policy direction to ensure that all CTDOL programs meet the needs of both employees and employers. The Commissioner of Labor is a member of the Governor’s Jobs Cabinet and the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission. The office works closely with the Office of Workforce Competitiveness, Workforce Investment Boards, other state agencies and community-based organizations to promote effective workforce development strategies in the *CTWorks* system.

CTDOL's Office of Diversity and Equity Programs (ODEP) acts on behalf of the Commissioner on matters concerning affirmative action and equal employment opportunity. The ODEP achieved 67 percent of its hiring and promotional goals for FY 2011. The contract compliance program exceeded its goals for utilizing small business and minority/women business enterprise vendors. ODEP conducted diversity training for all new employees and sexual harassment prevention training for all managers and supervisors. The ODEP assumed ADA Coordinator responsibilities.  It processed 25 requests for reasonable accommodation.

The Communications Unit is the primary contact for media inquiries and strives to heighten public awareness of the agency’s available services and accomplishments.

The Employee and Organizational Development unit ensures that staff have the knowledge, skills and abilities to support the agency's strategic goals. The unit assists the executive management in developing programs that support organizational change through performance improvement initiatives, including training programs.

The responsibilities of the Office of Program Policy include: facilitating the development of agency policy which is legally sound and promotes the department’s mission; overseeing the promulgation and adoption of regulations under the Uniform Administrative Procedure Act (UAPA); providing legal counsel to the executive administration and to all divisions (except the State Board of Mediation and Arbitration, the State Board of Labor Relations and the Employment Security Board of Review); acting as liaison to the Office of the Attorney General; promoting quality adjudicating through technical assistance and training of Unemployment Insurance (UI) staff in interpretation and application of unemployment compensation statutes and regulations and all aspects of determining benefit eligibility; representing the Administrator of the Unemployment Compensation Act in proceedings before the Employment Security Board of Review and Appeals Division; serving as hearing officers for the Labor Commissioner in contested case hearings; administrative prosecution of cases within CTDOL’s jurisdiction including hearings under the state Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA); preparing declaratory rulings and responding to questions about Connecticut's employment laws. Additionally, Program Policy serves as CTDOL’s Ethics Liaison.

In FY 2012, the Office of Program Policy issued decisions on a variety of legal and policy questions within the agency’s jurisdiction, including opinions in 397 individual unemployment compensation cases and 46 multi-claimant cases including four labor disputes. Attorneys handled hearings before the Employment Security Appeals Division and the Employment Security Board of Review, whose decisions are precedent in similar unemployment compensation cases. More than 32 appeals, written arguments or motions were submitted to the Board of Review and Appeals Referees. A total of 63 FMLA complaints were received and 38 cases were closed either by settlement, withdrawal or dismissal. The office oversaw the promulgation of regulations concerning CONN-OSHA standards. Attorneys served as hearing officers and/or mediators in 13 cases involving allegations of retaliation for filing wage claims, applying for unemployment benefits and filing OSHA complaints.

Business Management is responsible for the fiscal management of the agency's state and federal appropriations, grants and contractual funding. The functions performed include accounting, budgeting, contract administration, payroll and purchasing.

Facilities Management provides services which include facilities leasing and compliance for local offices (a total of 248,000 square feet); design and planning; facilities project management; printing services; mail services and warehousing, including property and inventory control.

The Human Resources unit provides personnel related services to over 870 employees located in 15 offices throughout the state and employed in nearly 200 job classifications.

The Information Technology (IT) division provides information technology infrastructure and applications systems.

The new Performance and Accountability unit is a centralized impartial unit for data administration, reporting, and operational and program evaluation. This unit supports administrators of the state’s workforce investment system by: compiling reports and evaluating data; maintaining and supporting an existing business system; implementing, and maintaining a new comprehensive business system to replace the current one now in operation, and implementing a Results-Based Accountability system to inform decision making regarding business strategies, service delivery, training, and continuous improvement. In 2012, the unit has continued to modify and supply all required State and federal reports; developed business requirements for the new business system, and is currently in process of securing a contract for this new system.

The Project Management Office (PMO), provides skilled resources trained in the discipline of project management to Agency automation and technology projects. This critical link between program and information technology staff ensures successful project outcomes and consistency with established statewide project practices and controls.