



CONNECTICUT SOCIAL EQUITY COUNCIL

The 2025 Council Market Outlook Working Group

Marketplace Non-Cannabis Subcommittee - Second Working Session

November 24, 2025, at 4:30 pm

Marketplace Non-Cannabis Chair:

Chris DiPentima **Connecticut Business & Industry Association**

NOTES:

The discussion focused on identifying and scaling workforce development strategies that effectively address poverty, reentry, youth employment, and economic opportunity in Connecticut communities. Participants emphasized the importance of building on existing successful programs rather than creating new systems, with a strong focus on demand-driven workforce pipelines, wraparound services, and community-centered investment strategies.

Several members highlighted data showing significant outreach to (DIAs) through workforce initiatives, while stressing the need for deeper analysis to understand which programs are producing the strongest employment outcomes. The group discussed the importance of pairing workforce development with broader community transformation efforts, including housing, economic infrastructure, and partnerships with municipalities and grassroots organizations.

Participants from organizations such as Open Hearth, Forge City Works, and ConnCORP shared examples of successful models that combine employment training, housing support, business incubation, and wraparound services to create long-term economic mobility. The conversation emphasized that sustainable workforce development requires addressing barriers beyond technical skills, including transportation, housing insecurity, reentry challenges, and community trust.

The group also discussed opportunities for the Council to support pilot programs, expand proven models into additional communities, and use reinvestment funding to strengthen local workforce ecosystems.