



GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE COUNCIL

Governor's Workforce Council

November 14, 2024

Minutes are unapproved

Council Members Present:

Ryan Drajewicz; Kelli-Marie Vallieres; Anthony Medici; Alison Moore for Brian Doubles; Keith Norton for Charlene Russell-Tucker; Chris DiPentima; Cindi Bigelow; David Steuber for Dan O'Keefe; Dante Bartolomeo; Ed Hawthorne; Erika Smith; Gregory Ugalde; Joseph Gianni; Bethany Zemba for Judy Olian; Kathryn Duras for Katheen Silard; Keri Hoehne; Suzanne Palmerie for Leslie Torres-Rodriguez; Leticia Colon de Mejias; Jack Mahoney for Maddie Hulce; Martin Guay; Maurie McInnis; Nikitoula Menounos; Nitin Kumar; Paul Costello; Nick Guillermo for Paul Pernerewski; Gladis Kersaint for Radenka Maric; Ray Pineault; Rebecca Rose; Dr. Sal Menzo; Shawn Coyne; Shellye Davis; Terrence Cheng; Tiana Ocasio; Rep. Toni Walker

Council Members Absent:

Amy Porter; Herron Gaston; Jay Williams; Dr. Jeffrey Flaks; Dr. John Murphy; Mark Argosh; Matthew O'Donnell; Melissa Turner; Michelle James; Molly Kellogg; Dr. Monette Ferguson; Peter Nystrom; Rohan Freeman; Shane Eddy; Shehu Muhamed; Steve Sullivan; Tywanda Talley-Rushing; Wes Alexander

Vice-Chair Vallieres calls the meeting to order at 1:02pm. Chair Drajewicz provides opening remarks.

- Welcomes everyone to the final Governor's Workforce meeting of the year, acknowledging the significant achievements of the organization, reflecting on the year's accomplishments, and the Council's growth.

Vice-Chair Vallieres reviews General Business, OWS Report at 1:08pm.

- Discussed anticipation of the upcoming legislative session to start on January 8, 2025 through June 4, 2025 focusing on the budget for fiscal years July 1, 2026, to June 30, 2028. Encouraged participants to track bills on topics of interest at cga.ct.gov, contact legislators, and public meeting participation including in-person hearings, or submitting written testimony.
- Acknowledged and thanked legislators present and the role of the General Assembly in advancing the Strategic Plan. Updates on the Strategic Plan undergoing refining based on valuable feedback received after September's GWC meeting, and will move forward with the approval process for the final document in the coming months.
- Highlighted the September in-person GWC meeting at Gateway campus of CT State garnering nearly 200 attendees. Based on survey feedback favoring in-person meetings, bi-annual in-person meetings will now be held in early summer and early winter. While hybrid formats are not currently feasible; recorded meetings will continue to be available for those unable to attend.
- Introduced revisiting the previously approved \$883,000 allocation from the Governor's Reserve to allow workforce boards to use the funds for additional job training programs and enhancing participant experiences at local American Job Centers due to previous significant funding shortfalls.

Vice-Chair Vallieres calls the committee to vote at 1:11pm. Introduces the items to be voted on. Committee motions to vote on three items.

1. Vote 1: Updates to PY23 Governor's Reserve Allocation of Funding. Motion to vote made by Greg Ugalde, seconded by Rebecca Rose. Discussion by Toni Walker: Representative Walker inquired of reallocation of PY23 Governor's Reserve allocation. Vice-Chair Vallieres discusses PY23 Governor's Reserve Funding being allocated to the five Workforce Boards to be utilized for improving the American Job Centers. All members present in favor, no nays, one abstention. Motion passed at 1:27pm.
2. Vote 2: 2025 GWC Quarterly Meeting Dates. Motion to vote made by Greg Ugalde, seconded by Rebecca Rose. No discussion. All members present in favor, no nays, one abstention. Motion passed at 1:27pm.
3. Vote 3: Q3 Governor's Workforce Meeting Minutes from September 12, 2024. Motion to vote made by Greg Ugalde, seconded by Rebecca Rose. No discussion. All members present in favor, no nays, one abstention. Motion passed at 1:27pm.



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<i>Item</i>	<i>Yay</i>	<i>Nay</i>	<i>Abstentions</i>	<i>Result</i>
1. Updates to PY23 Governor's Reserve Allocation of Funding	34*	0	1	<i>Motion passes at 1:27pm</i>
2. 2025 GWC Quarterly Meeting Dates	34*	0	1	<i>Motion passes at 1:27pm</i>
3. GWC Q3 2024 Meeting Minutes, September 12, 2024	34*	0	1	<i>Motion passes at 1:27pm</i>

**Reflects the number of members present at time of vote*

Governor Ned Lamont remarks at 1:30pm. Governor Lamont emphasized leveraging the state's workforce strengths in economic development, particularly in manufacturing, while addressing severe shortages in various fields, especially trades. He highlighted the importance of federal funding, effective resource utilization for skill development, and collaboration between businesses and state government to tailor training programs. Additionally, he advocated for better integration with community colleges and stressed the need for ongoing partnerships as we navigate workforce challenges without full federal support, while remaining committed to addressing workforce needs.

Vice-Chair Vallieres introduced the 119K Commission for report at 1:34pm. Joe DeLong, Executive Director of the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities; Thea Montañez, Senior Advisor, Office of the Governor; Charles Hughes, Deputy Commissioner for Academics and Innovation, and Chief of Strategy Keith Norton, Connecticut State Department of Education; Bill Villano, President and CEO of Workforce Alliance; Catherine Awwad, President and CEO of NRWIB; Joe Carbone, President and CEO of The WorkPlace; Alex Johnson, President and CEO of CWP; Michael Nogelo, President and CEO of EWIB

Joe DeLong, Executive Director of the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities

- Presented the Young People First Report and its four pillars: coordination, conditions, capacity, and coalitions, focus on supporting opportunity youth.
- Outlined the North Star goal of reducing the population of opportunity youth by 50% over a decade by way of preventative and recuperative actions, with a focus on early intervention and supporting young people quickly.
- Described the commission's transparent process, including regional forums, written testimony, and stakeholder briefings, engaging with over 280 young people to understand their daily struggles and future aspirations.

Thea Montañez, Senior Advisor, Office of the Governor

- Discussed the Governor's Kids Cabinet, composed of 11 state agencies focused on creating collaborative solutions for children and families, identifying opportunity youth as a key focus area, with the Governor engaging with young people statewide, including those incarcerated, to gather insights on their needs.
- The Cabinet is assessing current efforts and exploring new initiatives, with the Boston Consulting Group and state agency leaders to discuss recommendations for improvement and collaboration including the establishment of a Youth Service Board to hear Youth needs directly.
- Emphasized the necessity for greater accessibility to state resources.

Charles Hughes, Deputy Commissioner for Academics, and Innovation; Chief of Strategy Keith Norton, Connecticut State Department of Education

- Discussed workforce development, emphasizing incremental steps to advance dual credit and workforce programs, including a \$3.8 million ARPA investment in 89 districts for programming across various subjects and a \$4.9 million investment to expand dual credit opportunities, aiming to address higher education costs and track program impacts.
- Discussed the importance of monitoring dual credit courses on student outcomes and earnings.



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- Announced the introduction of the Secondary Success Work Group to support career pathways, and the development of an Industry Recognized Credentials (IRC) registry to audit and document certifications related to career pathways.
- Highlighted ongoing efforts of the Career, Workforce, and Readiness Council to enhance collaboration across agencies and support adult learners.

Bill Villano, President, and CEO of Workforce Alliance

- Presented on youth initiatives funded by state and federal grants and their focus on work readiness, career exploration, and job training, with a significant portion supporting summer employment.
- Discussed the funded youth employer program, known as the Summer Jobs Program, which served nearly 3,400 youth statewide across 75% of Connecticut's municipalities, with increased year-round funding to include more participants.
- Highlighted gaps identified by the 119k Commission, such as access to services and transparency in program outcomes. Suggested leveraging existing workforce boards to address these issues and noted the comprehensive data reporting capabilities of the 20 career centers in the state.

Catherine Awwad, President, and CEO of Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board

- Highlighted the success of a summer program where 70 students gained immersive experience in healthcare over a week. Presentation included expanding these experiences into the school year with the upcoming "Saturday rounds" program.
- Discussed programs across various sectors, including culinary arts, education, banking, and manufacturing, emphasizing partnerships that provide hands-on learning opportunities.
- Highlighted collaboration with the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services and the Department of Corrections, focusing on enhancing employability through virtual reality tools and work-based learning experiences, and underscored the importance of legislative support for funding these initiatives.

Joe Carbone, President, and CEO of The WorkPlace

- Introduced the "Platform to Employment" program aimed at supporting the 40,000 unemployed youths aged 16 to 26 who have graduated high school. The program offers five weeks of training and job readiness preparation, involving local employers to provide insights into available opportunities.
- Discussed initial success and prospects as the first class nears completion, with several participants already receiving jobs offers and two already hired.
- Emphasized the importance of fostering greater aspirations among participants while encouraging businesses to invest in their workforce.

Alex Johnson, President, and CEO of Capital Workforce Partners

- Presented on the Summer Youth Employment Learning Program, providing young people with job experience, career exploration, and support services, including mental health access.
- Discussed the dual track program implemented with the Bloomfield School District, which combines both academic and healthcare training.
- Noted the Boards future goals of working on a career navigation system "No Wrong Door", to improve access to resources for youth, ensuring that staff across organizations can effectively connect youth with necessary services.
- Concluded by acknowledging the importance of collaboration and the responsibility of workforce boards to build cohesive systems.

Michael Nogelo, President, and CEO of Eastern Workforce Investment Board

- Highlighted EWIB's initiatives for opportunity youth, particularly high school career pathway programs focusing on juniors and seniors disengaged and at risk of dropping out.
- Discussed Youth Manufacturing and Healthcare Pipeline programs, providing work readiness training and industry



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certifications, seeing improved student engagement and job offers for participants in their CNA program.

- Highlighted the Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative addressing the skills gap between job seekers and available positions, successfully placing over 4,000 workers since 2016, with 90% having no post-secondary degree.
- The Connecticut Youth Employment Program served over 4,200 youth this past summer.

Vice-Chair Vallieres takes questions, remarks, and discusses upcoming OWS events at 2:55pm.

- Vice-Chair Vallieres announces the deferral of Doug Casey's presentation on the Connecticut Digital Equity Plan to the next GWC meeting.
- Rep Nuccio suggests meeting with ranking members for bipartisan support and information on the workforce boards' initiatives.
- Christina Morales of the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood offers a tool through the Two-Gen Initiative to help young people identify the benefits of taking pay increases or new jobs.
- Announces 3rd Annual Regional Sector Partnership Convening on January 10, 2025 at Central Connecticut State University
- Announces 3rd Annual Workforce Development Summit on April 22, 2025 at the Aqua Turf.

Vice-Chair Vallieres makes closing remarks at 3:00pm. Reminds everyone of the next GWC meeting to be held virtually on February 6, 2025, and thanks everyone for their participation and contributions, wishing all a happy holiday season.

Meeting concludes at 3:02pm.

DRAFT