



GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE COUNCIL

Governor's Workforce Council

February 29, 2024

Minutes approved 5.23.2024

Council Members Present:

Mark Argosh; Kelli-Marie Vallieres; Amy Porter; Anthony Medici; George Anderson for Brian Doubles; Charlene Russell-Tucker; Mark Soycher for Chris DiPentima; Cindi Bigelow; Dante Bartolomeo; Gregory Ugalde; Jeff Auker; Joseph Gianni; Keri Hoehne; Liliana Cuevas for Leslie Torres-Rodriguez; Lillian Brough for Leticia Colon de Mejias; Jack Mahoney for Maggie Hulce; Martin Guay; Melissa Turner; Michelle James; Monette Ferguson; Paul Pernerewski; Peter Salovey; Radenka Maric; Ray Pineault; Rebecca Rose; Dr. Sal Menzo; Peter Holland for Shane Eddy; Shawn Coyne; Shellye Davis; Jonathan Harris for Steve Sullivan; Neil Bjorkman for Suresh Muthuswami; Terrence Cheng; Tiana Ocasio; Tywanda Talley-Rushing; Wes Alexander

Council Members Absent:

Dan O'Keefe; Ed Hawthorne; Erika Smith; Herron Gaston; Jay Williams; Dr. Jeffrey Flaks; Dr. John Murphy.; Judy Olian, Katheen Silard; Molly Kellog; Nikitoula Menounos; Paul Costello; Peter Nystrom, Rohan Freeman; Sharon Barr; Shehu Muhamed; Toni Walker

Chair Argosh calls the meeting to order at 2:34pm and provides opening remarks.

Chair Argosh reviews the issues to be voted on at 2:37pm.

1. October 19, 2023 Minutes
2. E-vote on the Governor's Workforce Plan

Chair Argosh calls the committee to vote at 2:37 pm. Committee motions to vote on two items, motion to vote made by Amy Porter, seconded by Cindi Bigelow. No discussion.

VOTES

1. October 19,2023 Governor's Workforce Meeting Minutes
2. E-vote on the Governor's Workforce Plan

<i>Item</i>	<i>Yay</i>	<i>Nay</i>	<i>Abstentions</i>	<i>Result</i>
1. October 19,2023 Governor's Workforce Meeting Minutes	34	0	1	<i>Motion passes at 2:46pm</i>
2. E-vote on the Governor's Workforce Plan	34	0	1	<i>Motion passes at 2:46pm</i>

Governor Ned Lamont opening remarks at 2:54pm

Chair Argosh asks Vice-Chair Kelli Vallieres to provide the OWS Report at 2:55pm

- Kelli Vallieres, Chief Workforce Officer, provides an update on workforce development activities and leads a discussion on the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) plan.
- Second Annual Workforce Summit to be held on April 16,2024.
- Connecticut to host National Governors Association Summer Symposium on workforce development in September.
- The state's workforce development system is outlined in the WIOA plan, which includes six core programs and strategic planning elements.



Kelli Vallieres reviews proposed WIOA State Plan to be voted on at 2:56pm

1. Submission of WIOA State Plan on March 4 2024.

Kelli Vallieres calls the committee to vote at 3:05 pm. Committee motions to vote, motion to vote made by Rebecca Rose, seconded by Tiana Ocasio. No discussion.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Yay</i>	<i>Nay</i>	<i>Abstentions</i>	<i>Result</i>
1. Submission of WIOA State Plan on March 4,2024	35	0	0	<i>Motion passes at 3:08pm</i>

Voting concludes at 3:08 pm

Chair Argosh introduces Breakout discussions at 3:26pm:

Data and Accountability led by Kelli-Marie Vallieres, Chief Workforce Officer, Office of Workforce Strategy; Education and Career Pathways led by Jeff Auker, Associate VP, Head of Innovation and Delivery, Hartford, Infosys; Chancellor Terrence Cheng, CSCU; Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker, State Department of Education; Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access led by Wes Alexander, VP, Workforce Solutions, Travelers; Sector-Based Training led by Shawn Coyne, VP of Human Resources, General Dynamics Electric Boat; Industry Leadership led by Marty Guay, VP, Business Development, Stanley Black & Decker; Jack Mahoney, Sr Director, Indeed

Report Out from Breakout Session

Data and Accountability: Kelli-Marie Vallieres, Chief Workforce Officer, Office of Workforce Strategy

- Focus consisted of challenges related to data collection and management within the workforce system. Discussed the limitations of existing data in CT Hires, highlighted the importance of aligning data management systems, and emphasized the need for integration and collaboration among various agencies to improve data collection and reporting.
- Discussed the potential of leveraging existing systems like CT hires and P20 Win, as well as the importance of not just aiming for a single system but focusing on integration across different platforms to achieve more holistic outcomes. The idea of creating a centralized archive of data to reduce redundancy across agencies and improve the customer experience was also highlighted.
- Discussed the significance of conducting an inventory of workforce programs to understand the data being collected, identifying the current state to set benchmarks for progress, and establishing milestones to measure success over time. Overall, strategizing ways to improve data collection, integration, and reporting within the workforce system to enhance outcomes and program effectiveness.

Education and Career Pathways: Jeff Auker, Associate VP, Head of Innovation and Delivery, Hartford, Infosys; Chancellor Terrence Cheng, CSCU; Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker, State Department of Education

- Discussed 44% of high school graduates are not college ready and would be excluded. Need for the right foundation to create pathways that will open doors for people that are looking for jobs in Connecticut.
- This is not a silo, and all pillars impact each other. Salient connections are needed to examine them in tandem with other pillars. It's important to be thoughtful about the links.
- Intentional resourcing and funding are an important part of that equation. Doing the work in a measurable and accountable way is key.



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- Higher ed must do more work to serve different populations. Need to start moving away from the traditional idea that K12 moves directly into college as a pure continuum. Many graduates have no plan, and it is imperative they are accounted for. Needs for a wide net to train and educate to bring them in.
- Continuing education and CTEs must be a large part of this conversation.
- Student loans need to be able to go to non-credit programs. It is a massive barrier, and a national topic of conversation. Many are in debt before entering training programs. They are discouraged with their education and in debt. Would be helpful to consider a hand up to be able to assist these individuals.
- Majority of incarcerated people are leaving incarceration without a GED, and this could be low hanging fruit to bring them into the workforce.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access: Wes Alexander, VP, Workforce Solutions, Travelers

- Focused on refining the strategic plan with specific emphasis on inclusion and accessibility across various sections. Key points included the need for consistent language in the Persons with Disabilities section and the inclusion of recent migrants, as highlighted by Lesley Barewin, who stressed the potential of this group in healthcare careers through programs like Healthcare Career ConneCT.
- Crystal Engram advocated for adding transportation issues to the youth group discussions, highlighting the barriers this group faces. Mimi Haley emphasized the need for consistent age groupings for opportunity youth and discussed various barriers such as housing, transportation, and mental health support, stressing the importance of addressing intersectionality among populations like young mothers, persons with disabilities, veterans, those involved with justice, in foster care, or experiencing homelessness.
- Robin Sharp and others highlighted the necessity of accessible transportation and improved training for veterans, suggesting public policy solutions. Tomas Olivo brought up the need for support for non-English speaking individuals, while Mark Soycher discussed the broader issues of underemployment and collateral consequences like access to housing, healthcare, transportation, and education, especially for returning citizens.
- David Doukas and Jill Larmett discussed issues related to disabilities, advocating for comprehensive services and support, and the importance of inclusive employer training programs. Eileen Healy emphasized the significance of competitive integrated employment over traditional models like sheltered workshops, advocating for fair wages for Persons with Disabilities.
- Finally, the conversation also touched upon the need for the strategic document to reflect the specific work of DEIA subcommittees alongside the state's overall interests. The importance of including mission and vision statements that embrace intersectionality was discussed, with Amos Smith emphasizing the need for performance metrics for each DEIA goal.

Sector-Based Training: Shawn Coyne, VP of Human Resources, General Dynamics Electric Boat

- The discussion on sector-based training in CT delved into various aspects critical to the state's workforce development landscape. One significant focal point was the pressing need to provide workforce training, particularly within the manufacturing sector, with a specific emphasis on supporting small businesses. Participants underscored the importance of ensuring that small businesses, often faced with resource constraints, are not left behind in discussions and initiatives surrounding workforce development.
- A key suggestion was the imperative for better integration between the public workforce system and regional sector partnerships. This integration would not only help bridge existing skills gaps but also ensure that training initiatives are finely tuned to meet the evolving needs of employers across different industries.
- Challenges within workforce development were candidly acknowledged, ranging from understanding employer needs to the lack of effective networking channels and inadequate job training programs. These challenges underscored the necessity for nuanced and tailored approaches to address the diverse needs of CT's workforce.
- Amidst these challenges, however, the discussion also acknowledged notable accomplishments in workforce development, including the successful implementation of career advancement programs and apprenticeships via funding sources such as Career ConneCT and Good Jobs Challenge.



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- Participants emphasized the importance of promoting existing resources like American Job Centers and the CT Hires platform to provide comprehensive support for job seekers. Additionally, attention was drawn to the hurdles faced by small businesses in hiring individuals with disabilities, highlighting the need for increased awareness and accessibility of available resources and programs.
- Consideration was given to the financial aspect of obtaining industry certifications, as well as the underutilization of resources such as CT Hires and American Job Centers with a disproportionate amount of focus on the RSPs and programming. Suggestions were made for improving communication strategies to enhance the visibility and accessibility of these resources.
- Ultimately, the overarching theme emphasized throughout the discussion was the critical importance of aligning job training initiatives with the evolving needs of employers. This alignment is seen as essential not only for successful hiring outcomes but also for effectively addressing the broader workforce challenges faced by both businesses and job seekers in CT.

Industry Leadership: Marty Guay, VP, Business Development, Stanley Black & Decker; Jack Mahoney, Sr Director, Indeed

- Discussed the need to expand job and skills development initiatives to reach more companies and individuals.
- Discussed the need to ensure inclusivity and addressing tensions between large and small companies.
- Emphasized the importance of defining good jobs, focusing on skills rather than degrees, and measuring progress through KPIs.
- Need to follow up on how to ensure companies are leveraging the job definition, looking at appropriate KPIs and dig into how to make sure companies are focused on skills over degrees in hiring practices.
- Need to continue discussions on getting more employer participation in regional partnerships.

Chair Argosh thanks everyone for joining the meeting and for their time.

Mark reminds every one of the next GWC meeting on May 23, 2024.

Meeting concludes at 4:23 p.m.