STATE OF
CONNECTICUT
WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT

Unified State Plan - “Working” DRAFT

2020 - 2023
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I. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE – UNIFIED STATE PLAN

The State of Connecticut has opted to submit a Unified State Plan encompassing the six core programs covered by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) – Adult Program, Dislocated Worker Program, Youth Program, Wagner-Peyser Act Program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program, and Vocational Rehabilitation Program. In addition to the six aforementioned core programs, the Connecticut Unified State Plan also includes reference to the linkages for various Federal and State funded education and training, workforce development grants and programs.

Becoming a Leader in Effective Workforce Development

Governor Lamont has stated his goal to ensure our CT workforce system is designed to meet the needs of 20th the 21st century. Toward that end, the Governor signed Executive Order No. 4 on October 29, 2019, which directs the creation of the Governor’s Workforce Council (GWC) – formerly known as the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission. This body is responsible for partnering with the business community and knocking down barriers amongst state government agencies so that Connecticut can have the most aligned, high-quality, and equitable workforce development system in the country. The Council includes top executives from key industries as well as leaders of nonprofits, unions, the legislature, and educational institutions.

The Council is emblematic of our administration’s approach of bringing the public and private sectors together to drive our state’s economic growth. Strategic goals of the Council include:

- strengthening the bridge from secondary to post-secondary education;
- reducing barriers to training; and
- measuring data-informed outcomes.

The first meeting of the GWC was held on November 21, 2019 and included a review of the Council’s role, functions and structure. Six committees have been formed to address the state’s primary industry clusters, data performance and planning, education and training, and supportive services. Council meetings will be held quarterly. The Council Chair has conducted a listening tour of businesses, universities and educational institutions, State and local leaders, philanthropic organizations, and Workforce Development Boards. A strategic plan will be submitted to the CT Legislature and Governor in October, 2020.

The Council and its chair will take a lead role in advising the Governor on the state’s workforce development strategy and supporting the state’s economic growth. It will also coordinate among stakeholders in the workforce system, including businesses, state agencies, quasi-public and independent entities, boards, councils, and commissions, public and private education and training institutions, workforce development boards, nonprofit institutions and labor unions.
Economic Development

Key components of Governor Lamont’s vision to transform the state’s economic development strategy include aggressive business recruitment, collaborative work across agencies to better support existing businesses and onboard new ones, as well as a strategic and long-term economic policy focus, including in the important area of opportunity zones. To execute on this vision, Governor Lamont appointed David Lehman, a partner with Goldman Sachs, to serve in dual roles as the Commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) and as the Governor’s Senior Economic Advisor.

In addition, Governor Lamont announced that two of Connecticut’s principal economic development entities – the nonprofit Connecticut Economic Resource Center, Inc. (CERC) and DECD – will form an innovative public-private partnership known as the Partnership to Advance the Connecticut of Tomorrow (PACT). Through this collaboration, CERC will function as the outward-facing recruitment arm on behalf of the state, and DECD will continue to support, promote, and advocate for existing businesses while also serving as the central resource to help new businesses navigate state and local government to minimize lag time, enhance services, and expedite relocation. As part of his mandate, Commissioner Lehman will ensure tight alignment between CERC and DECD.

In recognition of the vital role manufacturing plays in the state’s economy, the Governor has appointed a chief manufacturing officer to oversee efforts to grow the state’s manufacturing sector. This new position will operate under the umbrella of the DECD and will seek better coordination over multiple agencies, assuring that training and education is available to meet job demands, maintaining supply chains, providing a regulatory process that protects safety and the environment but is not redundant or unnecessarily burdensome, and establishing Connecticut as welcoming to such industries are all vital components for growth.

Opportunity zones are another facet of the Governor’s vision for economic development. The federal Opportunity Zones program was designed to incent public and private stakeholders to work together to rebuild American cities. Eligible investors who make qualified investments within those zones may be eligible for significant capital gains tax benefits. Seventy-two urban and suburban areas across Connecticut have been federally designated as Opportunity Zones. Connecticut’s state government and its 27 municipalities with designated Opportunity Zones are eager to leverage this program to encourage investments in Connecticut.

CT innovation hubs continue to grow in the state, including incubators, accelerators, co-working spaces and maker spaces of all types. These include:

- The Borough496 incubator in Hamden, CT will offer below-market rent, mentoring and other services to entrepreneurs. It’s also an example of adaptive reuse of old buildings – in this case, the long-shuttered Newhall School.
• In Fairfield, CT Sacred Heart University’s new iHub, a partnership with Verizon, offers entrepreneurs access to university students, staff and services.

• Digital Health CT, an accelerator for digital health and medical technology startups opened in 2019 in Hartford. It’s a partnership of Hartford HealthCare, Trinity College and UConn.

State Budget Impacts
The State is investing in Connecticut’s future by positioning the state as a leader in effective workforce development efforts. This begins with supporting towns in their effort to provide every student with a high-quality K-12 education that lays the foundation for a lifetime of success, continues as students move through our excellent state college and university system, and culminates in our agencies’ collaborative approach to scaling the programs that have proven most successful in preparing the people of Connecticut with the skills they need and our businesses need to thrive in a 21st-century economy.

Apprenticeship pipelines have proven to be an excellent way to develop skills for good-paying careers in manufacturing and other industries. Fifteen million dollars has been authorized through the state bond commission to support the Apprenticeship Connecticut Initiative and the development of workforce pipeline programs for entry-level workers in manufacturing and other industry sectors in the state that are experiencing sustained workforce shortages. The initiative includes outreach to underserved populations and youth. Thus far, two of the state’s workforce development boards were awarded a combined $4.7 million to train workers for manufacturing jobs through this funding. The Workforce Alliance Manufacturing Careers Partnership will receive $3.45 million to connect qualified candidates to unfilled employment opportunities in central Connecticut and shoreline areas through its Skill Up for Manufacturing program. The Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board Manufacturing Industry Partnership will receive $1.25 million to address the shortage of skilled workers throughout the northwest workforce region (which includes Waterbury, Torrington and Danbury).

Strategic Initiatives

In 2019, the Partnership for Connecticut was launched to strengthen public education and promote greater economic opportunity in Connecticut. The Partnership aims to achieve three goals through the public outreach process: identify communities and organizations currently helping children and young adults graduate high school and get jobs; discover areas in which these communities and organizations need more resources to advance their goals; and identify proven and promising programs that could have a positive impact.

Through Connecticut’s leadership and the support of the Dalio Philanthropies, the Partnership seeks to raise $300 million over five years: $100 million from the State of Connecticut that will be matched by $100 million from Dalio Philanthropies and another
$100 million from other philanthropists and business leaders. The partnership plans to invest this funding over the next five years in programs to help disadvantaged youth who have become disengaged or dropped out of school.

In addition, Connecticut has been awarded a $27 million federal grant to help create more community-based early childhood development programs. The state’s Office of Early Childhood will be tasked with recruiting a culturally, racially and linguistically diverse early childhood workforce that is fairly compensated. The grant funding will help retain early childhood development workers, especially in low income neighborhoods. The funds will also be used to develop programs that would give parents a voice in early childhood programs in all communities.

II. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

The Unified State Plan must include a Strategic Planning Elements section that analyzes the State’s current economic environment and identifies the State’s overall vision for its workforce development system. The required elements in this section allow the State to develop data-driven goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce and to identify successful strategies for aligning workforce development programs to support economic growth. Unless otherwise noted, all Strategic Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs.

(a)(1)(A) Economic, Workforce, and Workforce Development Activities Analysis: Unified State Plan must include an analysis of economic conditions and trends in CT (including sub-state regions and any specific economic areas identified by the State).

Connecticut’s economy has been growing slowly since the end of the great recession. As of September 2019 Connecticut has now recovered 85% of the jobs lost from March 2008 to January 2010 one of the few states in the nation where employment remains below its pre-recession level. Nevertheless, employment remains on an upward track with total employment up 8,800 (0.5%) from one year ago and private sector employment up 10,500 (0.7%) September 2018 to September 2019.

The industries with the largest increases in demand are health care, professional scientific and technical services, social assistance and manufacturing. Demand in the health care industry overall is driven by the aging population. Restructuring within the industry is moving care away from the large institutions (hospitals and nursing are facilities) to ambulatory care. The largest projected increases through 2026 are in home health care services, offices of physicians, and outpatient care centers. Within professional scientific and technical services, computer system design, management consulting, and architectural & engineering will be adding the most jobs although every industry in this sector is projected to grow. Within social assistance, individual & family services will add the most
jobs. Within manufacturing, the largest increases will be in transportation equipment manufacturing which includes aerospace and shipbuilding followed by fabricated metal product manufacturing but several other manufacturing industries are also projected to gain. During the two-year period 2016Q2 to 2018Q2, Connecticut’s overall employment grew by 6,350 jobs, or 0.4%. The private sector increased 12,537 (0.9%), while the government sector declined 6,187 (-2.6%).

The three sectors with the largest two-year gains were Manufacturing, Other Services, and Transportation and Warehousing, which increased by 4,305, 4,095, and 3,568 jobs, respectively, from 2016 to 2018 shown in the figure below. The gains in Manufacturing and Transportation and Warehousing represent recent shifts in the Connecticut economy. Transportation and Warehousing growth is due primarily to the increased number of internet retailer warehousing distribution centers in the state, which began adding Connecticut locations in late 2015.

Increased on-line shopping has driven employment growth in Transportation and Warehousing and to declines in Retail Trade, which was down 3,691 in the two years preceding the 2018Q2 projection base. Despite these declines, Retail Trade remains one of the largest sectors – it averaged 180,000 jobs in 2018Q2. Finance and Insurance employment fell by 4,294 jobs during the two years ending 2018Q2, as banks and investment firms contracted. The insurance industry added nearly 800 jobs in this period.

Most of the decline in Government employment was at the state level. Education and Health each declined about 1,000 jobs, while Public Administration fell by over 2,000. Local Government also contracted. Other industries of note include Accommodations and Food Services, which continues to add jobs at a faster rate than the overall economy and Construction which was down over 1,000 jobs from 2016Q2 to 2018Q2, mostly due to a sluggish second quarter last year but which has since added jobs. As of March 2019 construction was up 2,500 jobs from the previous year.

Health Care and Social Assistance, the largest combined sector of the economy, continues to add jobs overall, driven by strong gains in Ambulatory Health Care and Social Assistance, up 4.9% and 3.8%, respectively, in the two years ending 2018Q2. These gains were tempered by losses in other components of the sector with Hospitals, down 1.5%, and Nursing and Residential Care Facilities, down 3.2%. Those two industries had respective employment peaks in 2012 and 2014.

Connecticut manufacturing continues to maintain strong employment growth that began in the first quarter of 2016. This growth is unique to the region. Our 2.8% growth during the two years that precede the short term projection period (2016Q2-2018Q2) compares favorably to the neighboring states of Massachusetts and New York, which were down 0.7% and 1.5%. Connecticut’s two-year Manufacturing growth outpaces the national average of 2.6% and is driven by strong gains in transportation equipment manufacturing.
Announcements from major employers suggest that growth in this sector will continue for the foreseeable future. Transportation equipment is Connecticut’s largest manufacturing industry, which includes both aerospace and shipbuilding and encompasses about 28 percent of manufacturing employment in the state.

Over the past two years, overall manufacturing growth was heavily concentrated in transportation equipment, accelerating a multi-year trend. In total, 11 out of 19 3-digit NAICS manufacturing industries added a combined 5,867 jobs over these growing sectors. Two year manufacturing declines occurred in 8 industries and amounted to losses of 1,790 jobs. The largest two year declines occurred in Computer and Electronic Products (-713) and Machinery Manufacturing (-498).

Aerospace products and parts manufacturing is a component industry of transportation equipment. In 2018, Connecticut’s Aerospace employment was the fifth highest in the country. This sector employs 2.1 percent of total private Connecticut employment, which is the third highest share in the country after Washington (3.0%) and Kansas (2.8%). Shipbuilding represents about 28 percent of transportation equipment manufacturing employment, and has continued to consistently add jobs, though growth has slowed in recent quarters. Unlike other manufacturing areas, shipbuilding has shown very little cyclical since 2000. This differs significantly from shipbuilding employment nationally, which peaked in 2007 at 161,952, lost 24.7% of its employment by early 2011 and was just over 86.4% of peak levels by the end of 2018.

The portion of the manufacturing workforce over age 54 continues to increase suggesting that the need to replace retiring workers will only grow in coming years. Over the past 10 years, the share of manufacturing workers over 54 has had one of the largest industry increases, up 11.0 percentage points to 35.4% in 2018. With more than a third of its workforce over age 54, manufacturing will need to hire many replacement workers in addition to filling the new jobs that are expected to be added in the short term.

Consistent with the aging population, employment in Connecticut’s health care sector has continued to expand. However there are structural changes within the sector which has implications for the outlook. Ambulatory care settings, such as Offices of Physicians, Home Health Care Services, and Outpatient Care Centers have been adding jobs which residential facilities such as nursing homes have been contracting. While employment at general hospitals increased in 2017, it declined slightly in 2018. Outpatient Care Centers have experienced large growth in the short term. From 2016 to 2018 that industry grew by 22.2%. In the past ten years it has nearly doubled, up 84.9% from 6,318 in 2008 to 11,650 in 2018. As with other sectors in the economy, the portion of the Healthcare and Social assistance workforce aged 55 and over is increasing. Since 2001 the sector has seen its over 54 workforce increase from 15.1% to 26.2% in 2018, levels slightly below the over 54 share for all industries.
The finance and Insurance sector of the economy has shed jobs during the past 10 years, down 19,259 jobs since 2008. Most of this decline occurred within the Insurance Carriers (-8,109 or 12.4%) and Credit Intermediation (-6,134 or 20.1%). This industry employs proportionally fewer younger and older workers than the overall economy.

Retail trade employment has been declining in recent years. Annual average declines began in 2015 down 0.1% from a year before. Prior to this period the industry seemed to track overall nonfarm employment change. From 2016-17 it fell 0.6% and accelerated its decline falling by 1.5% from 2017-18. As of May 2019, retail employment levels of 175,500 are just below the previous low of 176,400 reached in November 2008. The largest declines were seen in Grocery stores (-1.7%), Clothing stores (-4.7%), and Health & Personal Care stores (-4.3%), which all declined by over 580 jobs. Despite this challenging landscape for retail trade, Auto Parts, Accessories, and Tire Stores (+293 jobs, +6.3%), Building Material & Supplies dealers (+274 jobs, +2.1%), Furniture Stores (+128, +4.9%) and seven other detailed industries added jobs over the year. The overall trend for retail is the result of changes in consumer preferences derivative of online shopping and evident throughout the country. This reduced retail demand has increased demand for workers in the transportation and warehousing industry, which has been adding jobs since 2010.

A vast majority of job growth in Transportation and Warehousing has been driven by the Warehousing and Storage segment of the sector, which is up 1,729 jobs over the year. Other internet commerce-related industries such as Courier & Express Delivery Services (+647 jobs), and General Freight Trucking (+196 jobs) added jobs in continuance of multi-year trends. Taxi & Limousine Service and Other Ground Passenger Transportation were down a combined 204 jobs, which is likely impacted by the growing popularity of ridesharing services. The strong gains in Warehousing and Storage employment began in 2013 and have added 4,544 jobs through 2018, an overall increase of 55%. The 1,729 increase from 2017-18 alone is a 15.6% expansion, some of this increase may be attributed to the 2018 opening of a FedEx distribution center in Middletown which was noted to add between 500-1,000 jobs. Other media announcements indicate that additional warehouses and distribution centers are expected to open in coming years. Additional sources suggest that the nationwide shortage of truck drivers is contributing to warehousing expansion in Connecticut because that industry is shifting from long haul routes to shorter trips, and locations in the state can distribute to both New York and Boston.

The workforce age distribution of the Retail and Transportation & Warehousing industries differ in some ways from each other and from the overall Connecticut labor force. Retail has a much larger share of its workforce under age 25 than the overall economy, 25 and 12 percent respectively. As that sector declined, its under 25 workforce has fallen 18% over the past 10 years, from 53,737 to 43,899 in 2018. Its prime age workforce is down 3.2% while its over 54 workforce has increased over 10 years by 8,748 or 27.2% to 40,892 in 2018. Over the past ten years, Transportation and Warehousing grew 16.4%. By age cohort, 48.6% of that ten year growth occurred in the over 54 age cohort, 6.2% in the prime age
cohort and 23% in the under 25 cohort. This differs significantly from the overall economy, which was down 0.9% overall with the over 54 cohort up 30.4% and the prime and under 25 cohorts down -8.3 and -12.1% respectively. From 2017 to 2018, the industry experience a large uptick in under age 25 employment, in 2017 they were 8.7% of the labor force but accounted for 25.5% of growth through 2018.

ii. Emerging Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations.
Computer system design and related services is 27% of employment in the Professional, Scientific and Technical Services sector but represented 42% of the projected growth in that sector. Occupations within this industry with the largest projected employment increase are Applications Software Developers, Computer and Information Systems Managers, Computer Systems Analysts, Systems Software Developers, and Customer Service Representatives. While not necessarily “emerging” as these occupations are long established, the restructuring of the healthcare industry toward ambulatory and home care has increased demand for Personal Care Aides and Home Health Aides. Combined employment in these two occupations is projected to grow by over 10,000 with over 80,000 total openings to fill the new positions and replace workers who either exit the labor force or transfer to different occupations.

(a)(1)(A)(iii) Employers’ Employment Needs: With regard to the industry sectors and occupations identified in (A)(i) and (A)(ii) above, provide an assessment of the employment needs of employers, including a description of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required, including credentials and licenses.

Employers are seeking a wide range of knowledge, skills, credential, and licenses. In the large and growing health care sector, the largest demand is for Registered Nurses with a majority of job postings in this occupation currently seeking RNs with a Bachelor’s Degree even though an RN license is obtainable with an Associate’s Degree. Personal Care Aides and Home Health Aides require less education and training. Within the growing manufacturing sector, hiring is occurring at every education level. The occupations showing the most growth with the Computer Systems Design and Related Services generally require a bachelor’s degree.

A concern is finding enough qualified people to meet employer demand not only in manufacturing, but the state’s other industry sectors as Connecticut will face a surge in retirements. Forty-eight percent of all jobs in the state are identified as middle-skill and the demand for middle-skill jobs is expected to remain strong. Connecticut’s supply of high-skill and lower-skill workers exceeds demand, while the reverse is true for middle-skill workers. Overall labor market measures, such as a low unemployment rate and high employment to population ratio, suggest that demographics and slow population growth are the largest challenges Connecticut faces as it attempts to accelerate job growth.

Middle-skill jobs generally require some significant education and training beyond high
school but less than a bachelor's degree including associate’s degrees, vocational certificates, and on-the-job training (i.e., apprenticeships). Other qualities that are commonly lacking among recent hires or attempted hires are overall employability and technical skills. This includes deficits in advanced technical skills, math, writing, reading, English proficiency and computer skills. With the low unemployment rate in the state, employers are having difficulty filling positions at all skill levels and as a result job openings are near a record high. The Conference Board’s Help Wanted on Line index shows nearly 50,000 job postings in Connecticut with 25% requiring a high school diploma, vocational training, or an Associate’s Degree and 32% requiring a Bachelor’s degree or more.

II.(a)(1)(B) Workforce Analysis. The Unified State Plan must include an analysis of the workforce development activities, including education and training in the State, to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, as identified (a)(1)(B)(iii) above, and the employment needs of employers, as identified in (a)(1)(A)(iii) above.

The various entities, partners and stakeholders comprising Connecticut’s extensive workforce development system have planned and implemented a broad array of innovative initiatives addressing Connecticut’s workforce development priorities. They are described in detail in later sections of the plan.


Connecticut’s unemployment rate peaked in November 2010 at 9.3 percent and has since fallen to 3.6 percent as of October, 2019. Connecticut’s unemployment rate is at its lowest level since early 2002. Prior to 2011, Connecticut’s unemployment rate was characteristically at or below national levels. From early 2011 through late 2018, Connecticut’s unemployment rate remained persistently above US levels, with the largest spread being 0.7 percentage points in October 2014. During the first half of 2019, The US and Connecticut unemployment rates have converged.

Annual average labor force participation peaked in 2008 at 69 percent, a level not seen since the early 1990s. After reaching a low of 64.9 percent in 2013, it was 63.1% percent in 2018 after dropping from 66.6% in 2017. This drop corresponds with sharp declines in participation of the over 54 age cohort. That cohort is down 3.2 points since 2017 to 45.8%. That decline equates to an over age 54 drop of 22,000 since 2017 and mostly occurred in the age 55-64 segment of that group. The narrowing gap between labor force participation and employment to population ratios (EPR) corresponds with unemployment rate decreases in recent years. EPR peaked in 2007 at 65.7% a year before the Labor Force
Participation Rate (LFPR). Since toughing in 2013, it has an average year-over-year percentage point increase of 0.6 percentage points through 2018. From 2017 to 2018 it was down 0.2 points.

State-level age cohort labor force participation rate annual average data is available from 2001 through 2018. Breaking down the overall labor force participation rate into three component age cohorts helps pinpoint contributing demographic trends. The overall working aged population (over age 16) increased by 7,000 from 2017 to 2018, while the labor force fell by 17,000. This labor force decline was driven by unemployment declining by 15,000 while employment fell by 3,000 (Note these amounts are subject to rounding error). By age cohort, the working age population under 25 fell by 47,000, the prime age population grew 20,000 and the over 54 population was up 34,000. This labor force decline of 17,000 was driven by losses in the under 25 (down 29,000) and over 54 population (down 19,000). The prime age labor force grew by 31,000.

The younger 16 to 24 age cohort has LFPR below that of prime age workers due primarily to school enrollment. In the early 2000s, the cohort’s peaks and troughs largely corresponded with the overall labor force. Since the recession, the cohort has gradually fallen from a 2007 peak of 61.7% to a low of 49.3% in 2016. Unlike prime aged workers, which saw its LFPR and EPR diverge during the recession due to EPR shifts, young workers in Connecticut have had a multi-year long term trend downward from its 2007 peak. In 2018, the under 25 population had a LFPR of 52.1% and an EPR of 45.4, both down from a year before. From 2017 to 2018, the under 25 population decreased by 47,000 with corresponding employment decrease of 31,000 and an unemployment increase of 2,000 for an overall labor force decline of 29,000. As Connecticut’s labor force ages, the steady participation rate increase of the over 54 workforce from 2001-2017 had been positive labor market shift for the state. In 2018 that trend shifted with sharp LFPR and EPR drops of 3.2 percentage points and 2.5 percentage points respectively from 2017. These over 54 age cohort shifts correspond with one year labor force declines of 22,000 and Employment declines of 15,000. When looking at smaller age cohorts that comprise this over 54 group, most of the losses occurred in the 55-64 cohort, which had labor force declines of 19,000, of which 13,000 was due to employment decline from a year before.

In addition to annual average age cohort labor market data, information by gender, race, and ethnicity is also available and shows some interesting shifts within the Connecticut labor market. Breaking down the four available race/ethnic cohorts into percent shares shows that the largest shift in Connecticut’s labor force during the past 10 years has been the growth of the Hispanic cohort, which rose from 10.2% to 14.2% through 2018. Looking at unemployment rates, the unemployment rate for the Asian labor force has consistently been below other rates but recently converged with statewide and white populations as their rates fell. The rates for the Black and Hispanic populations in Connecticut have dropped as well, although those groups still trend above other cohorts.
The Quarterly Workforce Indicators (QWI) dataset allows for detailed analysis of industry employment by various demographic characteristics and employment measures. Total employment peaked in 2008. At that time, 13% of the Connecticut labor force was under age 25, 66.8% were between 25 and 54 (also known as prime age), and 20.2% were over age 54. By 2018, the share below 25 fell to 11.5%, the prime age share dipped to 61.9%, and the share over 54 rose to 26.6%. To put it another way, in 2018 (the latest available from the QWI) overall employment is at 99.1% of the 2008 peak and by cohort, the under 25 and prime age groups are, respectively, down 12.1% and 8.3% while the over 54 cohort is up 30.4%. The demographic shifts over the past ten years continue trends that began even earlier. In 1998, the share of Connecticut employment for those three age cohorts was 12.6%, 73.5%, and 13.9%, respectively. This means the portion of the workforce in prime age is down 11.6 percentage points over 20 years while the portion over 54 has almost doubled. The increasing portion of older workers also indicates that a large share of the workforce is approaching retirement age, heightening the need for replacement workers in coming years.

The sectors with largest percentage of workers under 25 are Accommodation & Food Services, Arts, Entertainment & Recreation, and Retail Trade. Two of these sectors, Accommodation & Food Services and Retail Trade saw their share of youth employment fall by 6.6 and 4.7 percentage points from 2008-2018. Arts, Entertainment & Recreation youth employment share increased by 7.6 percentage points. The Manufacturing and the Transportation & Warehousing sectors also had youth employment share increases, up 0.8 and 0.5 percentage points. Manufacturing also saw large increases in the over 54 age cohort, decreases in prime age employment, and overall industry growth in recent years. Transportation & Warehousing youth employment growth is driven by expansion of that industry. Employment is up 16.4% overall since 2008.

Prime age employment ranges from 49.9% to 69.4% of employment for sectors in Connecticut. Every sector except Accommodation & Food Services has seen a decline in prime age employment share over the past 10 years. The sectors with the largest concentrations of prime age workers are Finance & Insurance (69.4%), Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services (68.4%) and Information (67.6%).

**II.(a)(1)(B)(ii) Labor Market Trends:** Provide an analysis of key labor market trends, including across existing industries and occupation.

While most sectors experienced declines in the share of under 25 and prime age employment over the past 10 years, every sector had share increases of its over 54 workforce. This ranged between a 2.3 point increase in Arts, Entertainment and Rec. to an 11.1 point increase in Utilities. Large sectors with significant over 54 employment shares include Manufacturing, (35.4%) which had a 10.6 point increase in the past ten years and Educational Services (30.8%). These two sectors employ 25.1% of the over 54 workforce.
compared to 20.2% of the workforce overall. With more than 35% of its workforce over age 54, Manufacturing will need to hire many replacement workers in addition to filling the new jobs that are expected to be added in the short term. Educational Services growth has been hindered by the declining population of school-age children, but the large share of workers over 54 in that sector indicates that many replacement workers will be needed even amid overall employment declines.

Nationally, by 2026 the labor force participation rate for those over age 65 is expected to be nearly double its 1996 level. In addition to preparing to replace retiring workers, industries will need to make adjustments to accommodate older workers. Healthcare and Social Assistance is the largest sector in the state overall, and employs the most workers over 54, with over 71,000. This sector has had the largest total increase of over 54 workers, up 20,000 since 2008. This growth dwarfs the corresponding growth for prime age workers, which increased 8,500 over 10 years. Employment for workers under 25 in this sector fell 1,600 since 2008.

II.(a)(1)(B)(iii) Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce: Provide an analysis of the education and skill levels of the workforce.

40% of Connecticut’s population has a Bachelor’s degree or more compared to 33% for the nation. In Connecticut, 22% have Bachelor’s degrees (compared to 20% nationally) while 18% have graduate or professional degrees (compared to 13% nationally). 30% of workers are employed in occupations that require at least a Bachelor’s degree to enter the occupation. Many jobs within other occupations may require college degrees as well. Looking ahead, 43% of projected growth will be in occupations requiring at least a Bachelor’s degree. In addition, during the 2016-2026 projections period there is a projected increase of 14,000 in employment in occupations that require more than a high school diploma but less than a Bachelor’s with a total of 224,018 openings in this category.

II.(a)(1)(B)(iv) Skill Gaps: Describe apparent “skill gaps”.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics job openings are near a record high both nationally and in Connecticut. The Conference Board’s Help Wanted on Line show nearly 50,000 job postings in Connecticut with 25% requiring a high school diploma, vocational training, or an Associate’s Degree and 32% requiring a Bachelor’s degree or more.

II(a)(2) Workforce Development, Education and Training Activities Analysis.
The Unified State Plan must include an analysis of the workforce development activities, including education and training in the State, to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, as identified in (a)(1)(B)(iii) above, and the employment needs of employers, as identified in (a)(1)(B)(iii) above.
(A) The State’s Workforce Development Activities

Provide an analysis of the State’s workforce development activities, including education and training activities of the core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required and optional one-stop delivery system

On October 29, 2019, Governor Lamont signed executive order #4, directing the creation of the Governor’s Workforce Council (GWC), the new State Workforce Board. The Council is responsible for partnering with the business community and reducing barriers among state government agencies so that Connecticut can have the most aligned high-quality, and equitable workforce development system in the country. The following outlines strategies and activities to support the work of the GWC.

Connecticut Department of Labor
Registered Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship
The Office of Apprenticeship Training (OAT) administers Connecticut’s Registered Apprenticeship system, which is supported by the state’s general fund, federal funding, and industry support from registration fees. Registered apprenticeship is a proven solution for training and retaining talent and offers individuals the opportunity of “learning while earning.”

OAT provides registration, monitoring, technical assistance and consulting services for the administration of apprenticeship agreements per state regulations and standards. Registered Apprenticeship provides a structured training strategy that combines on-the-job training with related technical instruction. The office also qualifies employers for tax credits, works with the Department of Education, Department of Consumer Protection and other state agencies, and performs outreach to veterans, employer groups, unions and many community-based organizations to promote Registered Apprenticeship and Registered Pre-Apprenticeship throughout Connecticut.

Aggressive outreach by CTDOL/OAT has increased apprenticeship in all areas. Currently, 1,710 active employer-sponsors and 6,417 registered apprentices are involved in the program. In addition, 1,608 apprentices completed their apprenticeship training while 3,819 new apprentices were registered in the program this year – a significant increase over last year’s total of 2,474. CTDOL/OAT intends to add an additional 800 apprentices over the next three years. This year, the program expanded into the insurance, banking, barbering and healthcare sectors through new industry partnerships while continuing its expansion efforts in the manufacturing and construction sectors.

Systemic modifications, such as streamlining the Apprentice Sponsorship registration and compliance paperwork, to assisting in creating a more user friendly, self-service system, have been instituted. For example, Registered Apprenticeship (RA) sponsors and Related...
Technical Instructors (RTI) may request to have their programs listed on the state’s Eligible Training and Providers List available on the CTDOL website. This can lead to WIOA funding opportunities to support related instruction, OJT and supportive services.

Registered Apprenticeship and Non-Traditional Industries

Registered Apprenticeship programs have grown outside of the traditional industries as more industries require skilled workers and trainings tailored to specific occupations. CTDOL/ OAT apprenticeship opportunities are now available in new industries including:

- The Insurance Claims Representative national apprenticeship program was built in partnership with The Hartford insurance company, USDOL-OAT and Capital Community College. Apprentices participate in insurance-related instruction, paid-on-the-job training, mentoring, and academic coaching while working on the final year of their associate degrees. Upon successful completion of the one-year program, apprentices have completed their degrees, obtained non-credit certificates in Insurance Claims Operations, passed the Connecticut Adjuster’s license exam, and received their Federal Registered Apprenticeship completion certificate.

- The Nurse Residency apprenticeship program at Yale New Haven Hospital and throughout Yale Healthcare Network hospitals includes extensive mentoring by individually assigned experienced nurse practitioners/preceptors. Upon successful completion of the program, participants that are systemically trained for the specific nursing occupation receive a nationally recognized certificate of apprenticeship completion of the Nurse Residency Apprentice Program issued by the CT DOL/OAT.

- The Junior Software Developer Apprenticeship with Independent Software, LLC. trains apprentices in the core set of skills required to be effective as a junior software developer or software engineer. Apprentices are matched with other companies to continue to develop their skills and abilities upon completion of the A100 program,

- The Manufacturing Innovation Fund (MIF) Apprenticeship Program, supported through a $10.8 million state bond allocation, continues to provide financial assistance in the form of a wage subsidy to manufacturers and tuition reimbursement to approved Apprentice Related Instruction Training Providers. To date over 700 apprentices and over 200 companies have received support through this program.

This chart provides a summary of grants supporting the expansion of apprenticeship in Connecticut.
Apprenticeship Education Pathway
CTDOL/OAT has formalized the Apprenticeship Education pathway to move individuals from multiple entry points through their educational and apprenticeships programs culminating in a credentialed career and a degree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grant Name</th>
<th>Funding Source</th>
<th>Funding Amount</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Industry/Trade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Manufacturing Incentive Fund (MIF) Apprenticeship Program</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>$10.8M</td>
<td>Wage subsidies, tuition reimbursement for apprentices (up to $13,000 for wages; $3,750 for tuition; $2,000 for credentialing costs)</td>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Apprenticeship Initiative (AAI)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>$5M</td>
<td>Increase apprenticeships in high-demand industries. Tuition reimbursement for pre-apprentices/apprentices (up to $3,500)</td>
<td>Healthcare, Business services/Information technology, Advanced Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeship USA State Expansion Grant(s) and Building Pathways</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>$2.8M</td>
<td>Promote new apprenticeships Building pathways for women</td>
<td>Aerospace, Building trades, Healthcare, Banking, Advanced Manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeship State Accelerator Program</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>$200,000</td>
<td>Outreach to increase apprenticeships</td>
<td>Advanced Manufacturing, Construction, Business service, Healthcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apprenticeship CT Initiative</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>$15M</td>
<td>Workforce pipeline programs to train qualified entry-level workers for job placement with manufacturers &amp; employers in other industries experiencing work shortages</td>
<td>Manufacturing, other industries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT Apprentice Expansion Project</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>$1.06M</td>
<td>To expand the number of apprentices over the next 3 years, encourage increasing the diversity of apprentices and integration of apprenticeship into state workforce development, education and economic development</td>
<td>Manufacturing, Education, Other Industries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pre-Apprenticeship

Quality pre-apprenticeship programs are an integral piece of a pathway for employers and students. A student may earn on-the-job credits toward a registered apprenticeship if employed, on a part-time basis, after school, or as part of a Work Based Learning release program that may be established by the school and an apprenticeship employer sponsor. Pre-apprentices can carry up to 2,000 hours of on-the-job experience upon graduation into their registered apprenticeship program similar to how an Advanced Placement (AP) program is designed and recognized.

There are increasing amounts of careers that do not require a college degree yet require a certificate or credential inclusive or exclusive of post-secondary education. Career Technical Education (CTE), enhanced in high schools with industry recognized credentials, has recently been utilized as a workforce development pipeline.

CTDOL/OAT has partnered with the CT State Department of Education (SDE) to begin statewide strategic planning for CTE Perkins V programming implementation. Various plans will encompass policy considerations and the creation of Industry Councils at the local school district level for CTE credentialing, career exploration, career pathway development, business and industry led curricula alignment, Work Based Learning (WBL)
partnerships and articulation agreements with post-secondary institutions for college credits.

CTDOL/OAT, in partnership with SDE, has expanded CTE under Perkins V, thus increasing Perkins V Pre-apprenticeship and Apprenticeship opportunities. These include work-based learning and the development of industry recognized credentials. CTDOL/OAT has partnered with nearly 30 high schools and community colleges to credential their CTE courses and link them to the pre-apprenticeship program. Students enrolled at those schools now have the ability to enhance their theoretical knowledge with hands-on skill development. Additionally, through relationships built at these schools, CTDOL/OAT has been able to present the benefit of these credentials to school boards and encourage stable funding for Career Technical Education moving forward. Some new, exciting pre-apprenticeships include:

- **Goodwin College Insurance Pre-apprenticeship** - creates a talent pipeline for insurance distributors in CT. Students obtain an Insurance Sales and Service Certificate, sit for state licensing, and enter paid pre-apprenticeship. After completing the 150 hours of pre-apprenticeship, they move into their full-time job as an apprentice.

- **Women Can Weld** - The North Central Region Jobs Funnel Program partnered with the Ironworkers Local 15 Apprenticeship Training Program to conduct a pre-apprenticeship program targeted specifically for women to get an introduction into welding.

- **Future Bankers’ Apprenticeship Program** - pairs instruction to pre-apprentices at Crosby High School with on-the-job training in local banks.

- **Youth Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative** - focuses on high school students in addressing the hiring needs of Electric Boat, members of the East Advanced Manufacturing Alliance (EAMA), and other manufacturers.

**First Books Initiative**

This December, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and the First Books program partnered with the CTDOL Office of Workforce Competitiveness (OWC) to purchase high quality books to support literacy and learning for children visiting the American Job Centers (AJCs) with their parents. Through this initiative, OWC in partnership with The Workplace and the Northwest Regional Workforce Development Board, was awarded $5,000 in credits to purchase books for families receiving services at the AJCs. The books were provided to a cross sector of AJC customers to encourage reading and to promote parents as their children’s first teachers. This effort aligned well with AJC family centered approaches to support positive
engagement and pathways to success.
Activities included:

- Engagement of parents and grandparents at the AJCs in selecting the titles so that parents are in the center of the initiative;
- Introduction of learning at an early age, increase literacy levels, and teach parents the importance of reading to their children;
- Development of a lending library at the AJC; and
- Activities and celebrations to foster opportunities for parents and their children to receive culturally diverse books through the various service delivery models across the AJC continuum of programs and services.

RETAI N-CT
In September 2018, the Connecticut Department of Labor was awarded Phase I funding under the Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury/Illness Network (RETAI N) Demonstration grant, jointly funded by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), the Employment and Training Administration, and the Social Security Administration. This project tests the impact of early strategies that improve stay-at-work/return-to-work (SAW/RTW) outcomes of individuals who experience an injury or illness while employed. CTDOL has implemented a State-level intervention program designed to improve long-term SAW/RTW outcomes for workers with emerging musculoskeletal concerns to address the problem of growing work disability in the Connecticut workforce. The Phase I pilot is an eighteen (18)-month project focused on preventing long-term disability and job loss among workers with musculoskeletal injuries and disorders by providing early return-to-work facilitation and by encouraging best practices in occupational medicine. The project is led by CTDOL and involves other stakeholders, including the University of Connecticut Health Center, Capital Workforce Partners, The Hartford, community healthcare providers, and other State agencies.

The goals of the program are to:

- build capacity and public-private partnerships necessary to create specialized training for health care providers in RTW planning;
- create a uniform billing system that enables insurance companies to reimburse providers for RTW efforts;
- develop a State-based early RTW coordination program; and
- design metrics for the continuous evaluation and improvement of these systems.

Phase 2 funding is expected to be made available in early 2020, which will allow 4 to 5 Phase 1 grantees the opportunity to bring their pilot projects to scale. Funding of nearly $20 million is expected to be made available per state for that purpose and CTDOL will likely apply. This requires a project involving all five workforce development boards, at least four additional occupational health clinics, and several insurance companies providing workers’ compensation and/or STD/LTD group disability benefits.
**Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE)**

CSDE continues to support Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Programs (I-BEST) projects using Title II, WIOA funds. CSDE conducted a new competition in April 2017 in which six adult education providers applied for and were awarded funding to offer training programs which aligned with their local workforce development boards’ identified industry sectors. Certification programs include manufacturing, customer service, health occupations and auto technicians. These projects, entitled Program Enhancement Projects (PEP), are being conducted through three Regional Education Service Centers: (CREC, EdAdvance, Eastconn), New London Adult Education, Norwich Adult Education, and the Women and Families Center in Meriden. The total funding for the projects is $180,000 with the promise to support a minimum of 94 participants. CSDE will continue to offer the I-BEST program in its next program year.

**Connecticut Workforce Development Council**

The Connecticut Workforce Development Council has received a grant of $500,000 from the Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority (CHEFA) to provide a more customized approach to career planning ultimately leading to greater promise of labor market success. The CHEFA Grant Committee and Board of Directors recognized the need for funds to remove the barriers to employment, which usually are unpaid training costs, transportation, childcare, and work-related necessities (uniforms, tools, etc.). The grant is administered through case managers at the American Job Centers throughout the state. Funds are paid directly to vendors, not individuals, and are tracked through databases detailing demographics of individuals served, job sectors, amounts paid and other data. A possible second year of funding at the $250,000 level for FY 2020 is being considered by the CHEFA Grant Committee and Board of Directors and will be reviewed in January 2020.

**University of Connecticut**

The Next Generation Connecticut initiative intends to significantly expand educational opportunities, research and innovation in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines at the University of Connecticut. The broad objective is to leverage UConn’s strengths and resources to help build Connecticut’s future workforce, create jobs and invigorate the state economy. The cornerstone of the effort is a major increase in student enrollment, faculty expansion, development of facilities for enhanced STEM research and teaching, and expansion of critical programs at UConn’s Hartford and Stamford campuses.

Next Generation Connecticut aims to transform UConn into an elite public research institution, fueling Connecticut’s economy with new technologies, training highly skilled graduates, creating new companies, patents, licenses and high-wage jobs. Components include: hiring research and teaching faculty in STEM disciplines; building research facilities for materials science, physics, biology, engineering, cognitive science, genomics and related disciplines; constructing teaching laboratories; creating a STEM Honors program to attract high achieving undergraduate students; upgrading aging infrastructure; expanding Stamford
degree programs; providing student housing in Stamford; and relocating the Greater Hartford campus to downtown Hartford. This aggressive investment hopes to dramatically increase UConn STEM research and graduates, producing innovations and inventions contributing directly to sustainable economic growth in Connecticut, with high-wage jobs for a STEM-skilled and educated workforce.

**Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (CTECS)**

In 2017, CTHSS was renamed to the Connecticut Technical Education and Career System (CTECS) to better reflect its mission which is focused on education and workforce development. Since that time, the CTECS Central Office leadership, beginning with Superintendent of Schools Jeffrey Wihbey, CTECS schools principals and CTECS faculty, has actively engaged in a wide range of partnerships and collaboration with employers, post-secondary institutions, K–12 schools, workforce agencies and others.

Working for Students and Connecticut’s Future, the CTECS 2019 to 2022 strategic plan is central to accomplishing the system's mission. The plan is a product of one and a half years of gathering data, soliciting input, and reaching shared consensus with our stakeholders, industry, staff, students, parents and partners. It’s a three-year road map that will inform all decision making and daily work. It outlines what CTECS wants to achieve, how to achieve it, and how success will be measured. Each of the five goals in the plan is accompanied by a set of strategies which are the action steps we will take to achieve each goal. A number of performance measures will be used to monitor our progress.

Our goals and strategies are organized around five themes:

- **Culture, Climate, Instruction:** Cultivate and sustain safe, effective, collaborative schools for staff and students.

- **Industry Alignment and Collaboration:** Collaborate with key regional employers to enhance and expand a coordinated statewide effort to develop curriculum, career pathways and experiential opportunities that cultivate highly-employable, workforce-ready students; respond to industry needs; and prioritize economic development.

- **Access and Opportunities:** Partner and strengthen relationships with K-12 school districts and colleges to create clearly articulated career and technical education pathways and opportunities for a broader set of students and adult learners.

- **Systems of Excellence:** Redesign the CTECS operational model to facilitate flexibility, innovation and responsive education, to achieve success as a new, independent agency.

- **Human Capital:** Recruit, hire, develop and retain a diverse and high-quality CTECS workforce.
Working for Students and Connecticut’s Future reaffirms CTECS’ commitment to its mission of preparing students for successful careers and supporting Connecticut businesses and industries. The plan also demands close collaboration with various industries throughout the state, and the provision of ample opportunities for students to engage in hands-on, career development experience. Going forward these efforts and partnerships will become increasingly important elements of the state’s broad workforce development strategy, particularly in occupations in critical industries demanding specific technical skills.

State Board of Education – Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education
In September 2018, the CSDE met with the CT-DOL to discuss Connecticut long-term industry and occupational projection data. In November 2018, the Assistant Director of Research and Information in the Office of Research and Information at the CT-DOL matched Connecticut industry and occupational data and projections to the National Career Clusters Framework. The CSDE examined each of the five WIBs occupational areas of growth and utilized an article published by the CT-DOL and the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (CDECD) pertaining to Connecticut’s long-term industry and occupational projections for 2016–2026. Through a triangulation of these data, and knowing the data are most complete for industries having payroll employment covered by unemployment insurance, top clusters for Connecticut emerged.

In February 2019, the CSDE convened a core Perkins V leadership group consisting of key stakeholders to: analyze Connecticut Workforce Needs, establish Program Career Clusters and Pathways, and inform the CTE Transition and State Plans.

After consideration of the Perkins V leadership group analysis, stakeholder feedback, and the National Forum on Educational Statistics (NCES) and the School Courses for the Exchange of Data (SCED) coding system, the approved Perkins V Connecticut Career Clusters that will drive the pathways and programs or programs of study (POS) to be supported, developed or improved at the State and local levels are:

- Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources;
- Architecture and Construction;
- Business Management and Administration;
- Family and Consumer Sciences;
- Finance;
- Health Science;
- Hospitality and Tourism;
- Information Technology;
- Manufacturing;
- Marketing;
- Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics; and
- Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics.
Partnering in CTE
In Connecticut, the five regional WIBs are geographically aligned to the six RESCs across the state. The CSDE partnered with the CT-DOL and the Perkins V Leadership Workgroup to create a map that shows WIB/RESC alignment. The CSDE is working with the CT-DOL to establish a communications pipeline between WIBs and eligible recipients to stay up-to-date with workforce data, pathway and POS development, and high-skill, high-wage and in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

United States Department of Labor Job Corps
Job Corps is a national, federally funded educational and vocational training program administered by USDOL, that helps low income youth (ages 16-24) gain workplace skills, train for high-demand occupations, 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 job. CTDOL has an assigned staff member who provides on-site support to the Hartford and New Haven Job Corps Centers.

Connecticut P20-WIN
Connecticut’s Preschool through Twenty and Workforce Information Network – P20 WIN – represents a groundbreaking approach to education and workforce training-related data sharing in Connecticut. P20 WIN provides a secure data vehicle for producing critical information to understand patterns over time and inform policy and strategy decisions to improve outcomes of education and training programs for Connecticut students. With P20 WIN, Connecticut can evaluate how well public education and training programs prepare students for additional education and careers in Connecticut. The Connecticut Office of Early Childhood (OEC), the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), The Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU), the University of Connecticut (UCONN), the Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges (CCIC) and Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL) are the State entities actively participating in P20 WIN. An inter-agency data governance structure and data sharing agreements support collaborative decision-making about data access and use. P20 WIN provides a systematic, secure and repeatable process to gather and analyze critical data to understand the impact of investments in education and workforce training programs, leading to better outcomes. Information regarding P20 WIN is available at [http://www.ct.edu/p20win](http://www.ct.edu/p20win).

(A) The Strengths and Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities

Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development activities identified in (A), directly above.

The preceding discussion of Connecticut’s workforce development activities addresses an
inventory of selected noteworthy initiatives, programs, and services responsive to the goals that serve as the focus for this Unified State Plan. The process of developing Connecticut’s Unified State Plan included review of the Strengths, Weaknesses and Opportunities.

**Strengths**
Connecticut continues to transform its workforce system into a business and industry driven model and design its services to meet local and statewide industry demands. The state incorporates the key elements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) through its sector partnerships, career pathways development and system collaboration efforts.

Connecticut’s workforce development efforts are supported and encouraged by the strong relationships among executive leadership in key State agencies and key administrative and program staff in each organization. State, regional and local partners have a demonstrable track record of successful collaboration on applying for and winning significant national competitive grant awards that address strategic priorities, developing innovative partnerships responsive to employer priorities, and effective sharing of information and best practices.

The leadership role of the local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) – collaborating with CTDOL, other key State agencies and numerous local partners and stakeholders – is a key asset in Connecticut’s ability to develop innovative strategies, programs and services responsive to the needs of jobseekers, workers and employers. The WDBs and their partners have developed numerous effective programs, shared successful efforts and adjusted strategies as results dictate.

Connecticut has an extensive network of committed, mission-driven, effective community-based organizations and non-profit service providers delivering effective on workforce programs and services accessible to key target populations. Connecticut has an active philanthropic sector that is increasingly engaged in supporting workforce development-related initiatives, including local community foundations, local United Ways and corporate foundations.

Outlined throughout this plan are numerous examples of workforce programs that strive to address the essential components of a comprehensive approach to career pathways responsive to employer needs and focused on good career opportunities.

**Improvement Opportunities**
The newly created Governor’s Workforce Council (GWC) brings together many of the most influential leaders in Connecticut’s workforce ecosystem to concurrently address business and workforce needs. A successful workforce development system depends upon collaboration, alignment, innovation, equity, performance accountability, and access to sufficient information and data. The GWC shares a commitment to eliminating administrative and statutory barriers to success wherever possible and supports
Connecticut’s efforts to improve outcomes for its workers, students, and businesses by creating a comprehensive vision and strategy for growing the economy through innovative, accessible, and easily navigable workforce programs.

Continuous professional development is required for workforce system staff in order to remain knowledgeable of current labor market conditions, as well as the latest initiatives and strategies. Cross agency staff training allows for increased knowledge of partner programs, creating a more holistic system. There are opportunities to establish more consistency around elements of the service delivery strategies so customers can more easily navigate services within the system. Many examples of local best practices and successful strategic implementation exist, but there is a need to take these best practices and identify how, or if, they can be appropriately implemented in consistent ways throughout the state.

**Weaknesses**

*Resource Challenges*
Insufficient funding limits the ability to take effective practices to scale and sustain them. Prospective participants’ needs and demands for services have overwhelmed available resources and capacity of workforce programs and services across the state workforce system. Eligibility requirements can limit flexibility, innovation and responsiveness. As a result, some programs struggle to provide the optimal amount of assistance that customers may need. Individuals without work experience and/or poor educational achievement continue to have difficulty entering and competing in the CT workforce.

*Participant Challenges*
The very low literacy levels of many prospective participants of workforce programs – compounded by lack of work-readiness (“soft”) skills – limit prospects for career advancement and tax the capabilities of programs with limited resources. Many young people involved with the juvenile justice system are at-risk of future involvement with criminal justice system as adults. Criminal records are a practical impediment to employment for many individuals who aspire to productive careers.

*System Challenges*
Each of the State agencies engaged in Connecticut’s workforce/talent-development efforts collects data and conducts analysis to support its priorities, investments and programs. However, the multiple systems are stand alone and do not interface with each other which hinder the ability to compile critical data and insight and bring together key sources of information to assess challenges and identify opportunities. Data sharing between agencies is not always available and does not allow for cumulative system outcome reporting.

**(B) State Workforce Development Capacity**

Provide an analysis of the capacity of State entities to provide the workforce development activities identified in (A), above.
Connecticut’s capacity to implement proposed workforce development activities and provide coordinated, aligned, integrated, comprehensive workforce development programs and services to jobseekers, workers and employers is strong, and improving. Governor Lamont and the Governor’s Workforce Council support a series of initiatives and investments to address Connecticut’s workforce challenges, ranging from early childhood development, to strengthened career and technical education, to industry-specific enhancements in higher education, to focused training for targeted workers.

Likewise, the General Assembly has raised the broad workforce development, education and training agenda to a new level of attention and support through an array of investments in innovative programs. Many of these workforce development activities are described in the preceding section. Connecticut businesses and employers have increased their active support for and participation in numerous practical partnerships to help build the skills of the workers they need for their companies to prosper. The capacity of Connecticut’s workforce system to meet the challenges ahead is manifest in numerous examples. At both State and regional/local levels, an array of sector-specific workforce partnerships are in place to prepare targeted jobseekers and incumbent workers to meet employers’ needs. The statewide network of comprehensive American Job Centers and satellite offices provide accessible facilities and presence in key communities. The P20WIN longitudinal data system provides increasingly useful information to guide system investment strategies.

(C) State Strategic Vision and Goals

The Unified State Plan must include the State’s strategic vision and goals for developing its workforce and meeting employer needs in order to support economic growth and economic self-sufficiency.

(1) Vision: Describe the State’s strategic vision for its workforce development system.

Core to Governor Lamont’s vision for Connecticut is a nimble workforce ready to meet the needs of the 21st century economy. In October 2019, Governor Lamont signed Executive Order No. 4 directing the creation of the Governor’s Workforce Council, a body that will be responsible for partnering with the business community and removing barriers among state government agencies so that Connecticut can have one of the most aligned, high-quality, and equitable workforce development systems in the country.

Connecticut and the New England region are experiencing significant workforce shortages across numerous industries. Business and government need solutions that source untapped pools of talent to support the overall growth of our economy. Governor Lamont recognizes that addressing the workforce shortage necessitates that a key source of talent, workers with families, have access to the training, education and work supports needed to sustain employment.
Two-generational or whole-family approaches recognize that many workers have families and that supporting all members of a family to thrive contributes to job stability and economic opportunity, while also preparing our next generation of workers for success. In its governing statute, the Governor’s Workforce Council is charged with reducing barriers to higher education and quality workforce training with an emphasis on two-generational/whole-family approaches, including wraparound services, mentoring, and career navigation and coaching.

It is imperative that Connecticut not only expand education and training to address the skilled worker shortage, but that the state also provide workers with family supports to ensure their success in the workplace (e.g. quality child care and elder care, transportation, health, and housing). A work Supportive Services subcommittee of the Governor’s Workforce Council has been created for this purpose.

Connecticut has the opportunity to lead by breaking down silos within and outside of government and partnering with industry, philanthropy, and academia to meet and stay ahead of demand. With planning, CT can promote a nimble workforce that is ready to meet the needs of our 21st Century economy and an infrastructure that supports workers with families. Connecticut’s WIOA state plan provides an opportunity to make this workforce development strategy a reality for the entire state. Executive Order #4 states as follows:

WHEREAS, the State’s workforce development system is made up of workforce training providers, educational institutions, economic development and human services agencies, labor unions, private employers, state and local governments, and other partners, all working together to serve students, job seekers, those currently employed, and employers; and

WHEREAS, the State of Connecticut is, thanks to the efforts of those partners, a leader in workforce development; and

WHEREAS, high-quality workforce development opportunities are increasingly essential to maintaining our residents’ world-class quality of life, ensuring their access to good jobs at good wages, supporting our strategic industry clusters, investing in and retaining our young entrepreneurs, and creating vibrant cities and towns where talented employees want to work, play, raise families, and contribute to their communities; and

WHEREAS, according to the Center on Education and the Workforce at Georgetown University, since the 2008 recession, 99% of new jobs have required some postsecondary education, and, therefore, those with a high school diploma or less have been disadvantaged; and

WHEREAS, according to the McKinsey Global Institute, individuals without postsecondary credentials are four times more likely to be employed in highly automatable jobs than
workers with a bachelor’s degree or higher, and that members of racial minorities have a significantly higher probability that some or all of their current job functions will be automated; and

WHEREAS, a successful workforce development system depends upon collaboration, alignment, innovation, equity, performance accountability, and access to sufficient information and data, and a commitment to eliminating administrative and statutory barriers to success wherever possible; and

WHEREAS, the State of Connecticut can improve outcomes for our state’s workers, students, and businesses by creating a comprehensive vision and strategy for growing our economy through innovative, accessible, and easily navigable workforce programs;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, NED LAMONT, Governor of the State of Connecticut, by virtue of the power and authority vested in me by the Connecticut Constitution and by the statutes of the State of Connecticut, do hereby ORDER AND DIRECT:

1. The Connecticut Employment and Training Commission (CETC), established pursuant to Section 31-3h of the Connecticut General Statutes, shall also be known as the Governor’s Workforce Council.

2. The Governor’s Workforce Council, through its chair, shall serve as the principal advisor to the Governor on workforce development issues and coordinate the efforts of all state agencies and other entities in promoting workforce development throughout the state.

3. In addition to the responsibilities of the CETC enumerated in federal and state law, the Governor’s Workforce Council shall convene stakeholders, including businesses, state agencies, quasi-public and independent entities, boards, councils, and commissions, public and private education and training institutions, workforce development boards, non-profit institutions, labor unions, and the State’s Chief Manufacturing Officer, to:

   a. Develop a sustainable framework for coordination among all stakeholders in the state’s workforce development system, and report no later than January 1, 2020, and each year thereafter to the Governor and General Assembly about workforce coordination efforts and on how to further improve such coordination;

   b. Support state agencies and municipalities in their efforts to recruit businesses to Connecticut, such as by facilitating new pathways and programs to create the necessary supply of workers;

   c. Develop recommendations on potential state and federal statutory reforms to support the continuous improvement of workforce development services;

   d. In compliance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, recommend an updated state plan for workforce development, which plan shall be submitted to the United States Department of Labor in March 2020, and review and recommend
changes to regional workforce development plans consistent with such state workforce development plan; and

e. Study the future of work and the resulting implications for Connecticut’s workforce needs and opportunities and report on its findings to the Governor and General Assembly by January 1, 2022.

4. The Governor’s Workforce Council shall review the state’s workforce development system and report to the Governor and the General Assembly by January 1, 2021. The report shall identify the workforce needs in Connecticut and recommend ways to:

a. Emphasize data-driven outcomes, consistently measure outcomes across different programs and agencies, and improve labor market and programmatic data systems across state agencies;

b. Reduce the cost of education and training borne by individuals;

c. Improve the use of funds and resources under applicable state and federal programs;

d. Reduce barriers to higher education and quality workforce training with an emphasis on two-generational and whole-family approaches, including through wraparound services, mentoring, and career navigation and coaching;

e. Assist industry and labor in ongoing efforts to close racial and gender gaps in healthcare, education, building trades, STEM, and other fields;

f. Improve opportunities for work-based, credit-bearing and non-credit bearing learning such as internships, apprenticeships and project-based learning with workplace application. Increase access to portable and transferable dual-credit coursework in high schools;

g. Strengthen the bridge from high school into post-secondary training and education;

h. Increase emphasis on career readiness in our public schools and universities by strengthening and supporting teaching of essential employability skills and habits of mind for the 21st century workplace, such as teamwork, professionalism, adaptability, complex problem-solving, situational awareness, cultural competencies, and resilience;

i. Emphasize lifelong learning and provide opportunities for up-skilling to workers throughout their careers;

j. Support businesses in shifting from degree-based hiring requirements to a skills-based focus because skill-based hiring can address inequities and improve job matching;

k. Remove barriers for employers to engage as partners in the creation of a talent pipeline they need to be successful, such as train-to-hire and up-skilling initiatives for incumbent workers;

l. Increase the speed of developing new courses and programs at state universities and colleges and other related educational institutions or workforce training providers in order to meet the needs of employers and to improve the labor market outcomes of graduates;
m. Bring transparency to the credentials conferred by public higher education institutions by translating credentials wherever possible to the skills and competencies developed to attain those credentials;

n. Improve and standardize processes for enrollment, transfer, and credit for prior learning between and among training providers and educational institutions;

o. Retain skilled individuals within Connecticut; and

p. Introduce and mainstream best practices from academic research and from other cities, states, regions, and countries.

5. State agencies shall assist the Governor’s Workforce Council as it conducts its review and makes its recommendations, including by providing it with all relevant information and data about agencies’ workforce development programs and services, funding streams for these programs and services, and the outcomes of those programs and services. State agencies shall enact appropriate data-sharing agreements with one another and with the Governor’s Workforce Council to facilitate such analysis.

6. Recommendations from the Governor’s Workforce Council shall integrate public contributions, include all regions of the state, and focus on providing workforce opportunities for all of Connecticut’s workers, and, therefore, incorporate strategies to provide opportunities for people of any age, ancestry, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression, as well as to justice-involved persons, individuals with disabilities, military service members and veterans, immigrants and refugees.
The Governor’s Workforce Council (GWC) held its first meeting on November 21, 2019 at Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven. GWC membership:

**Governor’s Workforce Council | Members and Committee Structure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Council Members</th>
<th>Ex-Officio Members</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>· Chairperson – Garrett Moran, Year Up, President (retired)</td>
<td>· Amy Porter, Department of Aging and Disability, Commissioner</td>
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<tr>
<td>· Vice Chairperson - Kelli-Marie Vallieres, Sound Manufacturing, CEO</td>
<td>· Beth Bye, Office of Early Childhood, Commissioner</td>
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<tr>
<td>· Chris Swift, The Hartford, CEO</td>
<td>· Colin Cooper, Department of Economic and Community Development, Chief Manufacturing Officer,</td>
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<tr>
<td>· Cindi Bigelow, Bigelow Tea, CEO</td>
<td>· David Lehman, Department of Economic and Community Development, Commissioner</td>
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<tr>
<td>· Cliff Asness, AQR, Managing Principal</td>
<td>· Deidre Gifford, Department of Social Services, Commissioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Dave O’Neill, Indeed, COO</td>
<td>· Jeffrey Wihbey, Connecticut Technical High School System, Superintendent</td>
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<tr>
<td>· Erika Smith, ReNetx, CEO</td>
<td>· Jennifer Widness, Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges, President</td>
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<tr>
<td>· Jay Williams, Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, President</td>
<td>· Josh Geballe, Department of Administrative Services, Commissioner</td>
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<tr>
<td>· Jim Loree, Stanley Black + Decker, CEO</td>
<td>· Jordan A Scheff, Department of Developmental Services, Commissioner</td>
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<tr>
<td>· Juan Hernandez, 32BJ SEIU, District Director and Vice President</td>
<td>· Kurt Westby, Department of Labor, Commissioner</td>
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<tr>
<td>· Judy Olian, Quinnipiac University, President</td>
<td>· Maria Pirro-Simmons, Department of Correction Unified School District #1, Superintendent of Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>· Kevin Graney, Electric Boat, CEO</td>
<td>· Mark Ojakian, Connecticut State Colleges &amp; Universities, President</td>
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<tr>
<td>· Leslie Torres-Rodriguez, Hartford Public Schools, Superintendent</td>
<td>· Melissa McCaw, Office of Policy and Management, Secretary</td>
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<tr>
<td>· Margaret Keane, Synchrony, CEO</td>
<td>· Miguel Cardona, State Department of Education, Commissioner</td>
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<tr>
<td>· Marna Borgstrom, Yale New Haven Health, CEO</td>
<td>· Peter Denious, Connecticut Economic Resource Center, President and CEO</td>
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<tr>
<td>· Monette Ferguson, ABCD Inc., Executive Director</td>
<td>· Scott Gaul, Office of Policy and Management, Chief Data Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>· Oni Chukwu, Aventri, CEO</td>
<td>· Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz</td>
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<tr>
<td>· Peter Bevacqua, NBC Sports, President</td>
<td>· Timothy Larson, Office of Higher Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>· Peter Salovey, Yale University, President</td>
<td>· Tom Katsouleas, University of Connecticut,</td>
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<tr>
<td>· Ravi Kumar, Infosys, President</td>
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<td>· Dr. Ruth Levy, Region 4 Schools, Superintendent (retired)</td>
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<tr>
<td>· Sal Luciano, Connecticut AFL-CIO, President</td>
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<tr>
<td>· Representative Toni Walker, CT House District 93</td>
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<td>· Senator Tony Hwang, CT Senate</td>
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Partner Committee Members
Alex Johnson, Capitol Workforce Partners, President & CEO
Bill Villano, Workforce Alliance, President & CEO
Cathy Awwad, Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board, Executive Director
John Beauregard, Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board, President and CEO
Joseph Carbone, The WorkPlace, President & CEO
Alice Pritchard, Connecticut State Colleges and Universities system, Chief of Staff

Social Venture Partners
Mark Argosh
Tom Robey
Sylvia Shepard
Patrick Hackett
Susan Adamsen
Courtney Fero
Shannon Marimon
Alysica Angus
Jennifer Gerber
Joe Smialowski
David Allon

Committees
VC = Vice Chair
SVP = Social Venture Partners

Manufacturing

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| Business Leaders | Other Members | Colin Cooper
| Jim Loree (Chair) | Sal Luciano | Lieutenant Governor Susan |
| Kelli-Mari Vallieres (VC) | | Bysiewicz |
| Kevin Graney | | Jeff Whibey |
| | | John Beauregard |
| | | Tom Robey (SVP) |
| | | Sylvia Shepard (SVP) |
### Healthcare + Bioscience

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<td>Kurt Westby (CAO) David Lehman</td>
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### IT + Business Services

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### Data, Performance & Planning

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### Education + Training

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The GWC will conduct a strategic analysis of Connecticut’s workforce development system that includes an analysis of program funding, performance data, supply and demand, educational and training gaps. Governor Lamont asked the GWC to produce and deliver a strategic plan and recommendations to his office by January 2021. Therefore, Connecticut anticipates providing even more details on specific CT workforce strategies to the federal government in March 2021. The state remains confident that the new GWC committee and partner structure will guide Connecticut to meet this ambitious timetable.

**(2) Goals:** Describe the goals for achieving this vision based on the analysis in (a) above of the State’s economic conditions, workforce, and workforce development activities. This should—(A) Include goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including preparing youth and individuals with barriers to employment and other populations. (B) Include goals for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers.

The Governor’s Workforce Council serves as the principal advisor to the Governor on workforce development issues and coordinates the efforts of all state agencies and other entities in promoting workforce development throughout the state. The GWC is working to ensure that the statewide strategic vision not only exists, but is actively used to drive the Connecticut workforce system’s goals, strategies, staff, partners, and decisions. Connecticut’s growth more than ever depends upon fostering an innovative, entrepreneurial and inclusive economic environment in which its residents can build strong careers and businesses can find highly-skilled employees.
Through the Governor’s Workforce Council, Connecticut is creating a comprehensive vision and strategy for growing its economy through innovative, accessible, and easily navigable workforce programs and a workforce development system that includes collaboration, alignment, innovation, equity, performance accountability, and access to sufficient information and data. This includes a commitment to eliminating administrative and statutory barriers to success wherever possible and the improvement of outcomes for the state’s workers, students, and businesses.

**ADS Vocational Rehabilitation Services**

Connecticut’s Department of Aging and Disability Services has adopted a complimentary set of strategies reflecting a commitment to increase employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities through the provision of vocational rehabilitation and support employment services. Details are available in the distinct plans for each of the Department’s Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment programs included in the Unified State Plan.

Goal A: Increase employment opportunities for eligible individuals of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

Goal B: Provide coordinated services to students with disabilities to prepare for careers and postsecondary education after exit from high school.

Goal C: Utilize Innovation and Expansion authority to identify services that can benefit groups of individuals with disabilities to increase access to career information, adaptive technology, and credential attainment.

**Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)**

Two Senior Community Service Employment Program grants, administered by the Department of Aging and Disability Services and The WorkPlace, under Title V of the Older Americans Act, allow the state to serve low-income, unemployed individuals, ages 55 and older, statewide. Funded through the United States Department of Labor, SCSEP is the only federal workforce development program designed to serve older workers exclusively.

Program participants receive subsidized on the job training with local non-profit agencies. In doing so, they receive valued skills training and serve the community. SCSEP also provides participants resources to address barriers to finding and retaining employment and job development. Through these actions, SCSEP participants gain valuable experience and skills needed to gain employment outside of the program.

**Goal A:** Provide coordinated job skills training and supportive services to prepare participants for employment in growing labor markets.

**Goal B:** Increase employment opportunities for eligible individuals in SCSEP.
**3) Strategies:** Describe the strategies the State will use to align core programs, any Combined State Plan partner programs included in this Plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs, and any other resources available to the State to achieve fully integrated customer services consistent with the strategic vision and goals described above. Also describe the strategies to strengthen workforce development activities in regard to weaknesses identified in section (II)(a)(2).

CT has embraced the Two-Generational (2Gen)/Whole Family Approach to service delivery, where possible, that focuses on creating opportunities for and addressing the needs of both children and adults together so that children and families get the education, workforce training, and social supports they need to reach their full potential and contribute to Connecticut’s growth.

2Gen requires the workforce system to innovate — collaborating across agencies and sectors in new ways, sharing data, leveraging existing resources to drive down costs and promoting economic success for the whole family. Connecticut’s 2Gen approach strives to provide a stable workforce to Connecticut’s economy and healthy children who are ready to thrive. This work is developed and supported by the public sector, the private sector, including nonprofits, philanthropy, academia, business, and parents.

In 2015, Connecticut became the first state in the nation to enact a 2Gen initiative in statute.\(^1\) The statute established what is now the 2Gen Advisory Board.\(^2\) The bipartisan, statewide 2Gen Advisory Board brings together the executive, legislative, and judicial branch, along with the private sector and parents, to advise the state on the 2Gen approach. Three action-oriented work groups of the 2Gen Advisory Board, focused on parent engagement, workforce, and benefits cliffs, and work collaboratively to develop solutions that promote family economic success.

The 2Gen Advisory Board work groups are cross-sections of the Board, whose membership includes various agencies and branches of government, the public and private sector, and parents. Each group is staffed by the Statewide 2Gen Coordinator, designated “leads” from the 2Gen Advisory Board, and a technical consultant through the regional “Whole Family Approach to Jobs project,” focused on improving whole family policy and practice in New England.\(^3\) The Governor’s Office and the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) are active members of the Benefits Cliffs and Workforce work groups, with the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston engaged in a consulting capacity. The 2Gen Workforce Work Group developed the below recommendations for Connecticut’s 4-year workforce development strategy:

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1 Sec 401 of Public Act No. 15-5.
2 A nonpartisan commission of the legislature, what is now the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity, is the administrative agency for the Board in statute.
3 Connecticut is a member of the Whole Family Approach to Jobs cohort, a six-state group convened jointly by the Administration for Children and Families and the National Conference of State Legislatures, allowing for communication across state lines and with federal officials.
- Prioritize expanding local partnerships with human service agencies to better support parents engaging in workforce development. This could include: surveying parents to identify barriers to fully participating in the labor force; creating local maps of services (including child care, after school, transportation routes) as well as a resource map of work supports (Husky, child care, emergency vouchers); and establishing a coordinated network of service providers beyond mandated partners (but inclusive of them). The network should have regular information sharing meetings at the local level so that staff are aware of services and are able to make warm referrals. Coordination at the local level should have a goal of routinely identifying policy barriers to coordination and lifting them to the state level for resolution as necessary.

- Amend the state’s SNAP Employment and Training Plan (SNAP E&T) to augment case management and utilize a portion of SNAP E&T 50/50 reimbursement for supportive services for emergency needs. E.g. Colorado’s *Creating a Pilot Program for Emergency Employment Support Services* (HB 19 – 1107).

- Train WIOA front line staff in family-centered coaching and benefits cliff counseling, which may include bettering connect families with resources for making career decisions in light of the cliff effect.

- Identify 2-3 key metrics that would help local workforce boards and the state assess barriers for workers with families to workforce participation and include them in the state data system.

- Survey employers for non-standard work hours (outside M-F, daytime) and identify gaps in child care services and transportation in coordination with OEC and DOT, and establish a plan for meeting employer and parent needs.

- In consultation with the Chief Data Officer, expand upon Connecticut’s Preschool through Twenty and Workforce Information Network (P20 WIN) to integrate data systems so that coaches/case managers for WIOA can access documentation from SNAP and Husky applications in “read-only” mode and use that documentation for WIOA requirements.

- Utilize the one-stop career centers as “hubs” of information and resources both in web-based platforms and as locations known for a set of coordinated services for families.

In 2017 statute designated the Office of Early Childhood as the lead coordinating agency for 2Gen in the executive branch. In 2018, a statewide 2Gen Coordinator position was developed, now based out of the Office of Early Childhood. The Office of Early Childhood has led in cross-agency data sharing, smoothing cliffs in its benefits programs, incentivizing whole family approaches in its home visiting programs, and partnering with academia to pilot innovative 2Gen research projects that link child care and workforce.
2Gen workforce development practices are informing workforce policy in Connecticut. Through OEC and through other philanthropically-funded initiatives, best practices have been implemented at the community-level. The following are examples of community-level 2Gen efforts related to a whole family approach to workforce:

- **SNAP Employment & Training (E&T) and Child Care**: OEC is partnering with CSCU to offer families the opportunity to receive child care funding to support their enrollment in and completion of a SNAP E&T certificate. SNAP E&T participants with young children will receive a subsidy to pay for child care for both class and study time. OEC will pilot this project starting January 2020 at two colleges to stress test the procedure, measure the success of completion when child care is identified and child care costs are provided, and develop a protocol to provide this to a broader SNAP E&T population in spring 2020, where early childhood and manufacturing higher education programs will be included.

  - The total sample size for FY20 is an estimated 160 participants. Under federal SNAP E&T rules, child care is considered a supportive service. All supportive service expenses offered to SNAP E&T participants are eligible for a 50% reimbursement by the federal government. Therefore, the state will draw down federal resources as it invests in child care for this population.

- **Bristol Manufacturing and Child Care**: Due to a growing labor shortage within area manufacturers, the leadership of Bristol Adult Education and Rowley Spring and Stamping, a local manufacturer, created a partnership in 2013 to train adults for a career in manufacturing, calling it the Adult Education Diploma and Certification (AEDAC) program. Upon completion of the program, participants qualify for jobs where they can earn livable wages and access full benefits. In 2019, OEC, the University of Connecticut, and Bristol Adult Education partnered to recruit, implement and evaluate the AEDAC, targeting parents with a child under age 6 by offering free on-site child care. By mitigating the child care barrier, parents with young children have the opportunity to complete the 12-week program and ultimately earn a higher wage for their family. UConn is evaluating the project on measures of program attendance and completion, job placement, future earnings, as well as key family stability indicators.

- **Adult Education and Child Care**: OEC is investing in a small-scale demonstration project at four adult education centers that will provide on-site child care to a cohort of students enrolled in adult education courses, with the goal of increasing enrollment, retention and graduation among families with young children. The communities of Bristol, Danbury, New London and Vernon served 42 families with 58 children in spring 2019. An estimated 52 families were served in the fall 2019 semester. OEC, University of Connecticut, and the State Department of Education developed this project after many conversations with parents and adult education providers who consistently cited child care as a major barrier to enrollment and completion. In addition to the anecdotal
feedback we received, recent literature supports the linkage of child care and other support services to increase family economic mobility. UConn is measuring outcomes: attendance, retention and graduation, along with family stability, community connections, receipt of supportive services, and other key family indicators.

- Meriden Family Resource Centers (FRC): Developed partnerships with Meriden Adult Education and other workforce development agencies so that the FRCs can become a single point of entry for many supportive services. Meriden FRCs also incorporated a coaching model that takes a strength-based approach and long-term family success planning.

- Norwalk’s Maritime Odyssey Preschool: Developed a cohort of parents who received training in Early Childhood Education provision throughout the year. Parents were supported by free child care and stipends paid for by CAHS and OEC. Parents received a Child Development Associate credential at the end of the year, are then employed by Maritime when possible, and offered the opportunity to continue to college towards higher levels of teacher certification.

- Connecticut Working Cities Challenge cities: Danbury, Hartford, East Hartford, Middletown, and Waterbury, were funded by a three-year grant administered by the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston to engage in cross-sector, collaborative leadership, driven by data and family engagement, to spur workforce development and job-creation in low-income neighborhoods. While not originally marketed as a 2Gen cohort, the cities have discovered in the design phase that their economic improvement initiatives necessitate a whole family approach.

- Secure Jobs Connecticut: In 2015, twenty-five private funders and the Department of Housing spearheaded Secure Jobs Connecticut, a three-year pilot designed to increase the income of families transitioning from homelessness to housing by connecting them to the education, training, and the supports they needed to secure and maintain employment. Four strategies helped to bridge the gap between the housing and workforce systems at the local level: utilization of a Secure Jobs navigator, network-building beyond housing and workforce organizations, case conferencing which included stakeholders from different organizations who focused on solutions for the whole family, and flexible dollars used to immediately remove individual barriers to employment, such as bus passes and childcare. A majority of clients (60%) were enrolled in at least one of the two major funding sources for workforce services: WIOA (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) and JFES (Jobs First Employment Services). The Secure Jobs pilot resulted in increases in the number of parents (59%) working and an increase in their wages. However, at an average of $11.74/hour those wages were not high enough for the families to make ends meet. In Connecticut, the hourly wage needed to afford a typical 2-bedroom apartment is $24.72. Connecticut philanthropy launched Secure Jobs 2.0 in October 2019 and added creating a clearer pathway to help
families obtain higher wages jobs by way of systems change that centers on improvements of access, speed, responsiveness and effectiveness of service delivery within and across organizations. Department of Labor staff have been a key partner not only in providing leadership to the pilot but also on-the-ground assistance to local communities.

**Board of Regents for Higher Education**
The Connecticut Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR) is the governing board for the Connecticut State College and University (CSCU) System. The CSCU System is comprised of 17 public institutions of higher education, including 12 community colleges, four state universities, and one online degree-granting institution.

The mission of CSCU is to contribute to the creation of knowledge and the economic growth of the state of Connecticut by providing affordable, innovative, and rigorous programs. CSCU’s learning environments transform students and help individuals achieve their personal and career goals.

The statutory responsibility of the 17 institutions that make up the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities is to provide access to quality and affordable higher education to the people of the state of Connecticut. The BOR is charged with setting policies to carry out that responsibility while aligning with the following goals:

- to ensure that no qualified person be denied the opportunity for higher education on the basis of age, sex, gender identity or expression, ethnic background or social, physical or economic condition,
- to protect academic freedom,
- to provide opportunities for education and training related to the economic, cultural and educational development of the state,
- to assure the fullest possible use of available resources in public and private institutions of higher education,
- to maintain standards of quality ensuring a position of national leadership for state institutions of higher education,
- to apply the resources of higher education to the problems of society, and
- to foster flexibility in the policies and institutions of higher education to enable the system to respond to changes in the economy, society, technology and student interests

CSCU educates more students than any other institution in Connecticut. The size, geographic reach, and diversity of programs and talent give CSCU the flexibility and scalability to be an essential partner in any initiative that drives economic growth and the continued professional and personal growth of Connecticut residents. For students and taxpayers alike, CSCU represents a phenomenal return on investment. For every dollar students invest in their education, they will garner $6.60 in higher future earnings, with an
average annual rate of return of 22.2%. For every $1 of public funding in CSCU, the state will receive $3.80 in added tax revenue and public sector savings.

As of the fall 2018 semester, CSCU serves more than 140,000 noncredit, certificate-seeking, undergraduate, and graduate students in hundreds of academic fields, with credentials ranging from manufacturing technology, cyber security, and allied health, nursing, education, and social work. Ninety-five percent of these students are current Connecticut residents who are building their futures in the state. CSCU educates 40 percent of all the higher education students and 68 percent of all public higher education students in Connecticut. In the last two decades, CSCU institutions have conferred over 260,000 degrees and certificates.

Improvements and Achievements for Fiscal Year 2019

- Students First, CSCU's long-term strategy to improve student outcomes and fiscal sustainability is well underway. It will unify the existing 12 community colleges into a single accredited institution – maintaining access to all current campuses and satellites – while implementing a Guided Pathways approach to improve student success.
- CSCU announced the “Team Works” Advanced Manufacturing Workforce Development Strategic Plan, developed collaboratively with stakeholders across education, government and industry. CSCU’s advanced manufacturing centers and programs at the community colleges are prepared to address the state’s need for a skilled workforce and are collaborating with the Workforce Development Boards to fill the manufacturing pipeline.
- The BOR voted to make the institutional aid application available for undocumented students.
- CSCU was awarded a number of grants, including from the Lumina Foundation for $291,300 to fund an adult learner policy; Third Sector selected CSCU to receive training and assistance in leveraging innovative financing to fund wraparound support services to students; the United States Department of Labor awarded CSCU $8 million to build upon successful Advanced Manufacturing Apprenticeship programs; the United States Department of Education awarded CSCU a $25.8 million GEAR UP grant that will assist the state in its efforts to increase the number of low-income students prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education.
- Today, community college graduates automatically gain acceptance and seamlessly transfer their credits in more than 25 concentrations toward a four-year degree, potentially saving students thousands of dollars in the process of attaining a world-class degree. Seeing the success of the TAP program between CSCU institutions, several private universities have now signed up to participate.
- CSCU institutionalized the partnership with the Department of Social Services and is now the second community college system in the country to provide workforce education to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients.
- All CSCU schools are engaging female students and students from underrepresented populations in programming to peak their interest and pursuit of Science, Technology,
Engineering and Math (STEM). These efforts bring in partners from the Boys and Girls Clubs, the Connecticut Science Center, local school districts and other organizations to promote access and equity.

- The state universities, through partnerships with local K-12 school systems, tackles these issues head on, working together to address the equity gap early and better preparing students, regardless of their backgrounds, for the rigors of a college education.
- CSCU collaborated with the State Department of Transportation to offer the UPass program, giving students unlimited public transportation for a fee of just $20 per semester. For the current semester, CSCU has made 60,000 passes available to students at all the participating institutions.

CSCU’s Challenges

- The single greatest challenge facing CSCU has been insufficient funding to make the critical investments those students and institutions need to thrive. The lack of funding is driven by two distinct factors: diminishing state support and declining enrollment.
- Successive years of budget cuts since 2015, as well as rescissions, lapses, and holdbacks, have reduced CSCU’s state appropriations from $351.99M to $286.23M, a 19% reduction. These budget cuts are compounded by a 9% reduction in enrollment overall since 2013, and the associated loss of tuition and fee revenues.
- CSCU provides affordable and accessible learning to students no matter how much they or their families earn. A large number of students require assistance from state or federal financial aid to pursue an education. In 2017, 48% of community college students and 35% of university students received a Pell grant. More than 8,000 students receive nearly $20M in Roberta B. Willis Scholarship awards from the state annually.
- Despite these resources, more and more students and their families, particularly at the university level, are taking on significant debt to finance their educations. Narrowing attainment gaps and increasing completion rates will depend on making college affordable, providing necessary supports, and offering flexible schedules and more online options for working adult students. Understanding the challenges students face will help policymakers identify the resources and policies needed to help them overcome barriers to completion.
- CSCU has already taken decisive steps, through Students First, to ensure that the promise of community college is there for future generations of Connecticut residents. Out of necessity, institutions have had to find new ways of educating and serving students with ever-diminishing resources. This has required fundamentally rethinking the way CSCU delivers instruction and services, manages resources, and governs institutions.

WIOA Related Policy and Funding Solutions

CSCU has identified a number of innovative solutions to the challenges the system faces which align with the WIOA system. Implementing any of these will require additional resources from policymakers.
• Partnerships with K-12—expanding pathways from high school is essential for Connecticut to reach its goal of increasing college completion rates, closing the achievement gap, and increasing high school student engagement.
• Partnerships with Business—CSCU has been dedicated to addressing the needs of business and industry for a skilled workforce. The state can help to meet employer demand by partnering to promote internships or apprenticeships for Connecticut college students and graduates. Early exposure to employment opportunities while in higher education programs can help students and businesses to see their future in Connecticut. CSCU colleges and universities can also address the incumbent worker training needs of the state’s small and mid-sized employers.

Moving Forward
Access and affordability remain paramount to CSCU’s mission. Connecticut cannot continue to ask students and their families to absorb the cost of budget deficits. As enrollment challenges have hit nearly every institution in our system, CSCU has worked to better coordinate enrollment and marketing strategies. The system is exploring ways to attract more nontraditional students like adult learners with flexible schedules. And CSCU institutions are making progress on better outreach to school counselors and other K-12 groups across the state.

The BOR will continue to pursue structural changes for the future and will accelerate efforts in the coming year. Every day, CSCU institutions collaborate with local communities and businesses to produce not just the next generation of Connecticut’s workforce but the leaders and informed citizens needed for the future of Connecticut.

In the 2019 session of the Connecticut General Assembly, Public Act 19-117 was passed including the establishment of a last-dollar scholarship program intended to ensure that Connecticut high school graduates who are attending college for the first time will be able to attend a Connecticut community college without any out-of-pocket charges for tuition or mandatory fees. The Board of Regents has established policies related to the implementation of PACT, the Pledge to Advance Connecticut:
• PACT will provide grants to eligible community college students that, when combined with other available financial aid, will reduce the cost of tuition and fees to $0.
• The program will begin in the fall of 2020.
• Generally, eligible students must graduate from a Connecticut high school and reside in Connecticut, complete a federal financial aid application, enroll for 12 credits or more for both the fall and winter/spring semesters, and meet Satisfactory Academic Progress.
• Eligibility for assistance under PACT continues for three years from initial participation, for up to 72 credit hours, provided that students maintain eligibility.
• Provisions are made for students with disabilities and for appeals.

The proposed policy has been crafted to meet the requirements of the law while aligning administratively with other forms of financial assistance that are already offered by the
colleges.

Projections for the cost of the program range from $7 million to $15 million per year. The statute requires the state to identify a funding source during the 2020 legislative session. In the event that insufficient resources are made available to CSCU, the program is designed to allow for pro-rating of grants or awarding on a first-come-first-served basis. There is no requirement in the law or the proposed policy that CSCU dedicate existing state appropriations or tuition revenue to this program.

Performance Goals

Using the table provided in Appendix 1, include the State's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA. (This Strategic Planning element only applies to core programs.)

Refer to Appendix 1.

Assessment

Describe how the State will assess the overall effectiveness of the workforce development system in the State in relation to the strategic vision and goals stated above in sections (b) (1), (2), and (3) and how it will use the results of this assessment and other feedback to make continuous or quality improvements.

The Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL) Performance and Accountability Unit and WIOA Administration Unit, in collaboration with colleagues in comparable functions at ADS and CSDE, anticipate the development and maintenance of a dashboard tool to capture and summarize selected data concerning program effectiveness and the aggregate impact of Connecticut’s workforce system in addressing the vision, goals, and principles described above.

Broad measures to be reviewed regularly will include:

1) Business engagement and delivering value to business/employer customers.
2) Measurable skills development in terms of educational attainment and workforce credentials that matter to Connecticut businesses.
3) Securing jobs in demand occupations showing promise for long-term growth in industry sectors valuable to Connecticut’s economic expansion.
4) Earned wages that help jobseekers and workers attain financial security and demonstrate career advancement.
5) Workforce system investments that generate a quality return.

State Strategy

The Unified State Plan must include the State's strategies to achieve its strategic vision and goals. These strategies must take into account the State’s economic, workforce, and
workforce development, education and training activities and analysis provided in Section (a) above. Include specific strategies to address needs of populations provided in Section (a).

Economic development is most effective when approached with a clear vision, an eye for long-term stability and growth, and a strong plan of execution. While the state needs to continue to manage its finances responsibly and to streamline government, it must also make the required investments to move our economy forward and innovate in ways that will benefit all Connecticut residents.

As mentioned, key components of Governor Lamont’s vision to transform the state’s economic development strategy include aggressive business recruitment, collaborative work across agencies to better support existing businesses and onboard new ones, as well as a strategic and long-term economic policy focus, including in the important area of opportunity zones.

Led by the State of Connecticut’s Office of Workforce Competitiveness, the State agencies responsible for administration of the core WIOA programs encompassed by this Unified State Plan (Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL), Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), the Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS), and the five Workforce Development Boards propose and will support a set of broadly-conceived strategies intended to achieve the vision and goals. These strategies will serve as a framework for Connecticut’s implementation efforts, with corresponding detailed State and local implementing actions to be developed.

1. Describe the strategies the State will implement, including industry or sector partnerships related to in-demand industry sectors and occupations and career pathways, as required by WIOA section 101(d)(3)(B), (D). “Career pathway” is defined at WIOA section 3(7). “In-demand industry sector or occupation” is defined at WIOA section 3(23).

The State will be implementing new strategies this year following the signing of Governor Lamont’s Executive Order #4 in October 2019. The newly formed GWC and six committees will be focused on establishing a cohesive industry sector and career pathway strategy for CT.

Furthermore, this selection from the EO#4 establishes the GWC’s charge:

The Governor’s Workforce Council shall review the state’s workforce development system and report to the Governor and the General Assembly by January 1, 2021. The report shall identify the workforce needs in Connecticut and recommend ways to:
a. Emphasize data-driven outcomes, consistently measure outcomes across different programs and agencies, and improve labor market and programmatic data systems across state agencies;
b. Reduce the cost of education and training borne by individuals;
c. Improve the use of funds and resources under applicable state and federal programs;
d. Reduce barriers to higher education and quality workforce training with an emphasis on two-generational and whole-family approaches, including through wraparound services, mentoring, and career navigation and coaching;
e. Assist industry and labor in ongoing efforts to close racial and gender gaps in healthcare, education, building trades, STEM, and other fields;
f. Improve opportunities for work-based, credit-bearing and non-credit bearing learning such as internships, apprenticeships and project-based learning with workplace application. Increase access to portable and transferable dual-credit coursework in high schools;
g. Strengthen the bridge from high school into post-secondary training and education;
h. Increase emphasis on career readiness in our public schools and universities by strengthening and supporting teaching of essential employability skills and habits of mind for the 21st century workplace, such as teamwork, professionalism, adaptability, complex problem-solving, situational awareness, cultural competencies, and resilience;
i. Emphasize lifelong learning and provide opportunities for up-skilling to workers throughout their careers;
j. Support businesses in shifting from degree-based hiring requirements to a skills-based focus because skill-based hiring can address inequities and improve job matching;
k. Remove barriers for employers to engage as partners in the creation of a talent pipeline they need to be successful, such as train-to-hire and up-skilling initiatives for incumbent workers;
l. Increase the speed of developing new courses and programs at state universities and colleges and other related educational institutions or workforce training providers in order to meet the needs of employers and to improve the labor market outcomes of graduates;
m. Bring transparency to the credentials conferred by public higher education institutions by translating credentials wherever possible to the skills and competencies developed to attain those credentials;
n. Improve and standardize processes for enrollment, transfer, and credit for prior learning between and among training providers and educational institutions;
o. Retain skilled individuals within Connecticut; and
p. Introduce and mainstream best practices from academic research and from other cities, states, regions, and countries.

(2) Describe the strategies the State will use to align core programs, any Combined State Plan partner programs included in this Plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs, and any other resources available to the State to achieve fully integrated customer services consistent with the strategic vision and goals described above. Also describe the strategies to strengthen workforce development activities in regard to weaknesses identified in section (II)(a)(2).
Representatives of State agencies responsible for administering core WIOA programs (CTDOL, ADS and CSDE) joined by representatives of other critical workforce system collaborators and stakeholders will participate in ongoing integrated State and local-level monitoring and oversight to identify gaps to be addressed and opportunities for effective program and resource alignment. Lead responsibility to review and assure alignment of programs and resources falls to the Governor’s Workforce Council. The Connecticut Department of Labor’s Performance and Accountability Unit and Office of Research are charged with system performance review to ensure value and productivity of investments, analyze labor market information to identify gaps, needs and opportunities for innovation and improvement, and provide insight and guidance to the Governor’s Workforce Council on appropriate actions.

OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS
(a) State Strategy Implementation – State Board Functions

Describe how the State board will implement its functions under section 101(d) of WIOA (i.e., provide a description of Board operational structures and decision making processes to ensure such functions are carried out).

Governor Lamont’s Executive Order No. 4 sets expectations and requirements for the Governor’s Workforce Council. The Council and its Chair will take a lead role in advising the governor on the state’s workforce development strategy and supporting the state’s economic growth.

The Council will also coordinate among the important stakeholders in the workforce system, including businesses, state agencies, quasi-public and independent entities, boards, councils, and commissions, public and private education and training institutions, workforce development boards, nonprofit institutions, labor unions, and the state’s Chief Manufacturing Officer.

ADD LATEST GWC PLANNING AND LOGISTICS

(1) Implementation of State Strategy

Describe how the lead State agency with responsibility for the administration of each core program or a Combined State Plan partner program included in this plan will implement the State’s Strategies identified in II(c) above.

(A) Core Program Activities to Implement the State’s Strategy

Describe the activities the entities carrying out the respective core programs will fund to implement the State’s strategies. Also describe how such activities will be aligned across the core programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan and among the entities administering the programs, including using co-enrollment and other strategies, as appropriate.
The CTDOL WIOA Administration Unit administers the WIOA Title 1B funding for CT’s workforce development system which includes three of the core required partner programs – Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth. The administration of the funds includes but is not limited to the following functions; policy and procedure development, monitoring – both programmatically and fiscally, development of grants and contracts, reporting, and management information system support.

Through these functions, CTDOL’s WIOA Administration Unit is able to assist with the strategies and alignment of the core program activities of WIOA Title 1B with other required and non-required partner programs in the American Job Center network. This is accomplished through various means including the assignment of liaisons to the workforce development boards (WDBs) who have regular communication with the staff at the WDB and who also attend regularly scheduled meetings of the WDBs in order to keep abreast of their planning, priorities, policies and strategies for the ensuring that a full complement of programs and services are available to the job seekers and employers in the region. Technical assistance is also provided through regular meetings of the WIOA Administration Unit with the WDBs on various WIOA Title 1B topics including the negotiations of service delivery by and through required and non-required partner programs; ensuring MOUs and appropriate cost sharing mechanisms are in place. Co-enrollment is a specific target of these efforts as well, with significant progress being made with regard to the co-enrollment of Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) participants in the WIOA Title 1B program for Dislocated Workers. The intent moving forward is to replicate the successful attributes of this work to increase co-enrollment across programs whenever appropriate. These combined efforts serve to lead and strengthen the commitments of the required partner and non-required partner programs in meeting the goals and objectives as outlined in the state’s strategy in II(c) above. Core WIOA program activities in Connecticut will be aligned as partners build upon existing inter-agency relationships and program collaborations.

American Job Centers (AJC) Customer Flow:

- Walk-in customers at comprehensive American Job Centers will be greeted at the main reception desk by a team of CTDOL and/or WDB partner staff, as front desk coverage will be a shared responsibility between the two partners.

- CTDOL will provide Unemployment Insurance staff experts at affiliate and comprehensive offices to answer Reemployment and Unemployment Insurance-related inquiries from customers.

- Generally, the Career Centers in each comprehensive American Job Center are staffed jointly by CTDOL and WDB staff (with the exception of Hamden/New Haven), with each partner committed to assigning a minimum of one staff member on a full time basis.

- When a job seeker enters an American Job Center seeking services, the AJC staff will
first determine whether or not the customer is registered in the CTHires system, which is used to track the services provided to each job seeker. If the customer is not registered, he or she will be guided to a computer and asked to complete the CTHires customer registration. If the customer needs assistance in completing the registration process, staff assistance will be provided.

- American Job Center customers are provided with some form of orientation to the employment services that are available to them through all the various partners. Job Center staff discuss the customer’s job search plans and provides customers with the opportunity to sign up for employment readiness core workshops, such as Successful Job Search Strategies, Interviewing Strategies and Techniques, and Fundamentals of Resume Writing. Additional workshops are available depending on the region. If the customer needs one-on-one job search assistance, career counseling, or a resume critique, every effort will be made to provide that service. If the customer is interested in self-service activities, s/he can utilize CTHires to conduct job searches, post a resume, or access online courses, and visit AJC Career Centers for access to computers, fax machines, copiers, resume paper, and free postage for mailing applications and resumes. Customers will also be informed about the various services available under WIOA.

- Customers who self-identify as veterans or eligible spouses will be assessed for significant barriers to employment and other characteristics that qualify for one-on-one job search assistance from a CTDOL Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialist. Jobseekers with a self-disclosed disability may be referred to either a Disability Program Navigator or Disability Employment Initiative representative (depending on region). Jobseekers with disabilities may also be referred to ADS for service. All customers have the option of accessing the universal services available to everyone in the center.

- Staff is assigned to each of the career centers in the comprehensive American Job Centers to support and assist jobseekers in whatever way needed. Jobseekers needing to improve computer skills will be referred to a computer skills workshop or drop-in computer skills classroom to work on developing or enhancing their computer skills.

- Customers interested in WIOA services will be connected to the appropriate WIOA representative or WIOA information session.

- All American Job Center (AJC) customers will be asked if they are receiving public assistance benefits (i.e. TANF, SNAP, HUSKY, Care 4 Kids) and referred to the appropriate WIOA service entity to assist with any special needs beyond those offered by the AJC. Such referrals will be documented and outcomes noted.

Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL) services and WDB Title I services have been co-located wherever/whenever possible with Title II/Adult Education and Title IV/Vocational Rehabilitation Services. It is understood that space availability and cost may be barriers to
achieving the objective of co-location with Adult Education, but the two Vocational Rehabilitation programs of ADS have been successful in achieving a model of part-time co-location in each of the WDB regions. If/where co-location is not feasible, all staff in each of the comprehensive American Job Centers will be trained to become familiar with services provided by Adult Education and ADS and be able to make an intelligent, informed decision about when to refer a customer to one of these agencies. In turn, all staff at Adult Education and ADS has been trained to become familiar with the services available at the American Job Centers across Connecticut, capable of making referrals to those Job Centers for any customer.

The American Job Centers are hubs from which jobseekers can be referred to sector-focused programs in targeted sectors such as Manufacturing, Health Care or Construction. Job Developers from organizations like ADS have joined the Regional Business Service teams in each region.

American Job Center staff will be familiar with these targeted sector grants and programs in each region and capable of making informed referrals to them. In some situations, targeted sector program staff may be co-located at an American Job Center. Accessible printed program information is made available to jobseekers.

The regional WDBs deliver Adult and Dislocated Worker program activities through the American Job Center system via comprehensive and affiliate centers. Career services are provided to a wide range of jobseekers, with specialty programs directed to returning veterans and individuals with disabilities. Services include career coaching, guidance on job search techniques, skill and interest assessments, advice and support through peer groups, individual employment planning, and job development and placement. Occupational training is provided through access to Individual Training Accounts (ITAs). Business Services Teams engage employers and provide recruitment and hiring assistance, as well as access to an array of training resources for incumbent workers and new hires.

**Priority of Service**

Section 134(c)(3)(E) of WIOA establishes a priority requirement with respect to funds allocated to a local area for adult employment and training activities. Under this section, one-stop center staff responsible for these funds must give priority to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient in the provision of individualized career services and training services. Under WIA, priority was required to be given to public assistance recipients and low-income individuals when States and local areas determined that allocated funds were limited. Under WIOA, priority must be provided regardless of the level of funds. WIOA also expanded the priority to include individuals who are basic skills deficient as defined in WIOA section 3(5).

Veterans and eligible spouses continue to receive priority of service for all DOL-funded training programs, which include WIOA programs. However, when programs are statutorily
required to provide priority for a particular group of individuals, such as the WIOA priority described above, priority must be provided in the following order:

- First, to veterans and eligible spouses who are also included in the groups given statutory priority for WIOA adult formula funds. This means that veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient would receive first priority for services provided with WIOA adult formula funds.
- Second, to non-covered persons (that is, individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are included in the groups given priority for WIOA adult formula funds.
- Third, to veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA's priority groups.
- Fourth, to any other populations that may be identified by the Governor or Local Board for priority.
- Last, to non-covered persons outside the groups given priority under WIOA.

Local areas established written policies and procedures to ensure priority for the populations described above for participants served in the WIOA Adult program.

CTDOL-Administered Services
WIOA Title 1 and Wagner-Peyser services are available through Connecticut’s affiliate and comprehensive American Job Centers. CTDOL will provide the following services:

- Wagner-Peyser Labor Exchange: Under the Wagner-Peyser Act, CTDOL Employment Services (ES) receives federal funding to provide universal access to an integrated array of employment-related labor exchange services, including job search assistance, job referral, and placement assistance for jobseekers, reemployment services to unemployment insurance claimants, and recruitment services to businesses with posted job openings. During the last program year a total of 35,352 Wagner-Peyser customers benefited from employment services, including: assistance with career choices and job searches; workshops on résumé writing, interviewing, and career exploration; information about specific companies and labor market trends; and, one-on-one career counseling. An additional 4,347 individuals received résumé services at CTDOL-sponsored events and in the AJC centers. Staff with board-certified credentials from the Professional Association of Résumé Writers provided résumé preparation services. CTDOL meets the reemployment needs of many UI claimants through the Unemployment Insurance Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (UI RESEA) program, which serves claimants who are either profiled as most likely to exhaust benefits or receiving Unemployment Compensation for Ex-service members (UCX). Selected claimants report for services in the Bridgeport, Hamden, Hartford, Montville and Waterbury American Job Centers. DOL’s RESEA program design includes an increased UI presence in the AJCs and the extensive involvement of UI staff. Specifically, each RESEA customer meets one-on one with a UI expert to discuss the rights and responsibilities of the unemployment insurance program. Ongoing staff training includes an emphasis on enhancing the skills needed to assist claimants with their reemployment efforts; RESEA program representatives have been trained to effectively access labor market information specific to a claimant’s job skills and employment prospects, develop a
reemployment plan to meet the claimant’s needs and determine appropriate referrals to reemployment services or training. CTDOL completed more than 9,000 initial RESEAs during the 12-month period ending December 31, 2018.

Each RESEA must include the following minimum components to serve the needs of the claimant.

- UI eligibility assessment and referral to adjudication, as appropriate, if an issue or potential issue(s) is identified;
- Requirement for the claimant to report to an AJC;
- Orientation to AJC services;
- The provision of labor market and career information that addresses the claimant’s specific needs;
- Registration with the state’s job bank;
- Enrollment in Wagner-Peyser funded Employment Services;
- Development or revision of an individual reemployment plan that includes work search activities, accessing services provided through an AJC or using self-service tools, and/or approved training to which the claimant acknowledges agreement; and
- The individual reemployment plan must contain a referral to at least one mandatory reemployment service and/or training.

In June of 2019, CTDOL received a Fidelity Bonding Demonstration Grant to help persons with criminal records, including ex-offenders recovering from opioid and other drug addictions obtain employment. These bonds provided to employers will help to reduce the risk of hiring individuals whose criminal backgrounds pose barriers to securing employment and in turn decrease recidivism. CTDOL plans to educate employers and the public on the availability of the bonds, which provide up to $25,000 coverage per employee over a six month period and encourage employers to use them as a hiring tool for persons with criminal records.

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) helps individuals return to suitable employment as quickly as possible following employment loss. Participants are part of worker groups certified by the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) whose jobs were believed to be affected by increased imports or a shift in production to a foreign country. Benefits to eligible workers include job training, job search assistance, relocation and readjustment allowances; health coverage tax credit; and wage subsidies for individuals 50 years of age and older who return to lower-paying work. TAA activity during the program year included:

- Worker group certifications: Petitions filed on behalf of workers from 18 companies were approved, with the workers determined by USDOL to be adversely affected by foreign trade and certified as eligible to apply for TAA; petitions filed on behalf of workers from four companies were denied.
• Individual applications: 631 individuals were identified by USDOL as potentially eligible to apply for TAA benefits and 223 eligibility determinations were issued in response to submitted applications.

• Training: 132 individuals entered TAA-approved training programs and 518 were active in training, with training payments totaling nearly $2.7M.

• Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA): $8,038,018M was provided for 14,541 weekly TRA claims, including 3,245 weeks of basic TRA, 9,724 weeks of additional TRA, and 1,572 weeks of completion TRA. Individuals who satisfy applicable program requirements may receive one or more types of TRA income support: up to 26 weeks of basic TRA; up to 65 weeks of additional TRA, and up to 13 weeks of completion TRA.

• Reemployment/Alternative Trade Adjustment Assistance (R/ATAA): $86,908 in payments was issued to eligible workers.

In addition to the regular activities of the program, recent additions to administrative staff have helped position the Connecticut TAA program to better serve its participants, employers and field staff. A unit supervisor is responsible for providing technical support to administrative and field staff, while the new TAA Employer Liaison assists Trade employers throughout the entire two lifecycle of a certification and is the single-point of contact for guidance and technical support. The duties of the newly created TAA Petition Coordinator are being fulfilled by our current Rapid Response Coordinator. This individual is responsible for identifying and filing petitions for certification consideration and to increase the number of petitions filed, leading to increased worker participation levels.

As of October 2019, Connecticut is seeking to add five TAA Navigators (one for each comprehensive American Job Center). The Navigators will work directly with participants and through their assigned case managers to assist them in receiving the maximum benefits and services available to them through Trade and other workforce development programs. The ultimate goal is to provide them with all the tools, guidance and support necessary to find suitable employment after their Trade impacted job. Connecticut will pursue both the Petition Coordinator and Navigator positions, which are modeled after Oregon’s Trade program and have been met with great success.

The Connecticut Department of Labor recently developed internal processes and procedures to making appropriate referrals and keeping in step with USDOL’s emphasis on promoting work-based training opportunities (on-the-job training and Apprenticeship) for TAA participants. This includes promoting the program to employers through Business Service Representatives and educating participants regarding these opportunities.

**Veterans Services:** CTDOL advocates for and assists Connecticut veterans and covered persons with their employment and training needs through job search assistance, referral to
supportive services, individualized career services that may include case management, and the provision of information about other state and federal programs. CTDOL ensures priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses and encourages their use of American Job Center (AJC) resources. One-on-one assistance is available to those individuals in the AJCs, either on a walk-in basis or by appointment. CTDOL staff assisted 1344 eligible veterans under Wagner-Peyser with 713 participants receiving services through the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) program during the most recently completed program year 2018.

JVSG-funded Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists provide intensive services and facilitate placements to meet the employment needs of veterans and eligible spouses who have significant barriers to employment or have otherwise been designated by the U.S. Department of Labor Veterans’ Employment and Training Service (VETS) as qualifying for DVOP services. These barriers and designations include the following:

A special disabled or disabled veteran, as those terms are defined in 38 U.S.C. §4211(1) and (3); special disabled and disabled veterans are those who:

- are entitled to compensation (or who, but for the receipt of military retired pay, would be entitled to compensation) under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs; or,
- were discharged or released from active duty because of a service-connected disability;
- Veterans who had active military service, in whole or in part, during the Vietnam Era, which is Aug. 5, 1964, through May 7, 1975; for veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam, the timeframe is Feb. 28, 1961, through May 7, 1975.
- a homeless person, as defined in Sections 103(a) and (b) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11302(a) and (b)), as amended;
- a recently-separated service member, as defined in 38 U.S.C. § 4211(6), who has been unemployed for 27 or more weeks in the previous 12 months;
- an offender, as defined by WIOA Section 3 (38), who is currently incarcerated or who has been released from incarceration;
- a veteran lacking a high school diploma or equivalent certificate;
- a low-income individual (as defined by WIOA Section 3 (36));
- Veterans ages 18-24;
- Transitioning Service Members in need of intensive services (specifically, TSMs who have been assessed as not meeting Career Readiness Standards; are ages 18-24, regardless of whether they meet Career Readiness Standards; or are active duty service members being involuntarily separated through a Service reduction-in-force); and wounded, illness, or injured service members receiving treatment at Military Treatment Facilities or Warrior Transition Units (MTFs – WTUs) and the spouses and family caregivers of such wounded, ill, or injured service members.

Individualized career services include comprehensive and specialized assessments of skill levels and service needs, development of an individual employment plan to identify the
employment goals, suitable objectives and appropriate combination of services for the participants to achieve the employment goals, group counseling; individual counseling and career planning, and short-term prevocational services that may include development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training. Veterans and eligible spouses who do not qualify to receive intensive services from a DVOP may receive these services from other AJC staff.

DVOPs will continue to employ effective outreach strategies to identify veterans and encourage their enrollment in the workforce system. Outreach locations include, but are not limited to the Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs State Veterans Home; U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Clinics and Vet Centers; Connecticut State Colleges and Universities; local homeless affairs, libraries and town halls; community and veterans organizations including Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and The American Legion; and military reserve and national guard units. DVOPs also participate in re-entry and ex-offender meetings and serve on a number of advisory boards including those of members of Connecticut’s delegation in the United States Congress.

Local Veterans’ Employment Representatives (LVERs), also funded by JVSG, conduct outreach to area employers to assist veterans in gaining employment and facilitate the employment, training, and placement services furnished to veterans in the state’s AJCs. LVERs are available to:

- plan and participate in job and career fairs;
- conduct job searches and workshops and establish job search groups, in conjunction with employers;
- coordinate with unions, apprenticeship programs and businesses or business organizations to promote and secure employment and training programs for veterans;
- inform Federal contractors of the process to recruit qualified veterans;
- promote credentialing and licensing opportunities for veterans; and
- coordinate and participate with other business outreach efforts.

Coordination of Services: In providing services under JVSG, the DVOP will assess the need for intensive services, determine whether case management is necessary, and make appropriate referrals to other services available through CTDOL or other workforce partners. Veterans and eligible spouses with significant barriers to employment (SBE) will be classified as job-ready or not job-ready. Those deemed not job-ready will receive individualized career services from the DVOP and other AJC staff such as CTDOL Career Development Specialists and WIOA partners. Referrals to other agencies and organizations providing supportive services, including the Department of Veterans Affairs, will assist veterans with addressing barriers and resolving issues that hinder their ability to secure gainful employment. AJC services such as job search and career planning, résumé-writing assistance, career counseling, and prevocational services will also help the veteran attain job-ready status. Once a veteran is determined to be job-ready, the DVOP will work with the LVER to make
employment connections while continuing to provide case management and other intensive services as appropriate. CTDOL has implemented a case conference system whereby any CTDOL or partner staff member may refer a job-ready veteran to an LVER for job development or job referral services, including veterans who do not qualify for JVSG but are served exclusively by the Wagner-Peyser, WIOA Adult, or WIOA Dislocated Worker programs.

**JVSG Staff Development:** The DVOPs and LVERs participate in required online and classroom courses facilitated by the National Veterans’ Training Institute (NVTI) and are afforded opportunities to earn credentials such as Certified Professional Résumé Writer (CPRW). CTDOL supports the participation of JVSG staff in the annual National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) Veterans Conference which provides training and networking opportunities.

**Employer Outreach and Business Support:** CTDOL organizes an annual career fair for veterans, *Heroes 4 Hire*, which serves hundreds of veterans and includes the participation of more than 100 employers. To better assess employers’ ongoing service needs, CTDOL staff will engage in extensive, post-event employer follow-up. Proven methods of community outreach are utilized to maximize veteran attendance and promote the American Job Center system. CTDOL’s LVERs also collaborate with the sponsors of other career fairs including those organized by local chambers of commerce, and the annual Mohegan Sun Vets Rock.

LVERs will perform structured outreach to better engage employers, identify new contacts, and maintain established relationships. Service delivery strategies include the provision of routine follow-up after veterans are referred, more frequent employer visits, and a goal of offering assistance to every employer in the state. CTDOL will rely on LVER staff to help increase the employer penetration rate and enhance relationships with business organizations. Additional collaboration with specific employers to more regularly assist with their hiring needs is also planned, similar to an existing partnership with Yale University that provides for periodic “Meet and Greet” events for veterans seeking employment. LVERs also strive to meet the hiring needs of federal contractors and promote employers’ apprenticeship opportunities for veterans.

CTDOL staff members make referrals to the University of Connecticut’s Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans (EBV) program, which supports business initiatives for veterans through experiential and small business management training. Staff also provides information to EBV participants each year about JVSG services. Additionally, CTDOL maintains relationships with partners of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), such as SCORE, and the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), which also includes the involvement of the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development and the University of Connecticut. JVSG staff attends the SBA’s Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC) meetings and cover outreach tables to promote AJC services to veterans and
to further support entrepreneurial development services.

**Homeless Veterans:** Services to homeless veterans will be coordinated with the grantees of the U.S. Department of Labor’s Homeless Veterans’ Reintegration Program (HVRP), the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs’ Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSVF) program, and CTDOL’s own Homeless Veterans’ Employment Program (HVEP). CTDOL’s DVOPs, for example, participate in regularly scheduled outreach at HVRP grantee locations to provide individualized career services and ensure the enrollment of HVRP participants in Wagner-Peyser. HVEP staff help identify homeless veterans and make referrals to HVRP, SSVF and JVSG and provide supportive services of their own to help connect homeless veterans with housing and employment. JVSG staff also participates in annual Stand Down events that provide supplies and services to homeless veterans.

**VA Vocational Rehabilitation Participants:** CTDOL has a long history of collaborating with state and federal agencies to provide services to veterans who may benefit from vocational rehabilitation. CTDOL continues to maintain those relationships and explore new approaches to improve effectiveness. A Memorandum of Understanding between CTDOL, the Hartford Regional Office of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs/Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Division, and the U.S. Department of Labor Veterans’ Employment and Training Service, defines the partnership in place to assist veterans served under the auspices of Title 38, Chapter 31 of the United States Code.

**Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE)**
The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) administers core programs and services listed in the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (WIOA Title II). Each local and regional board of education must establish and maintain a program of adult classes or provide for the participation in a program of adult classes for its adult residents (Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-69).

**CSDE-Administered Activities**
- to support shared governance structure, CSDE will participate in the Governor’s Workforce Council meetings.
- to strengthen interagency partnerships, CSDE will:
  - have members of the CSDE Adult Education Unit serve as members of the five regional Workforce Development Boards.
  - share system infrastructure costs.
  - provide services through the One-Stop system.
  - make funding available to each of Connecticut’s five designated local workforce areas.
  - review and evaluate proposals with a team including representatives of the WDBs and One-Stop system partners.
  - assess local workforce areas’ needs and WDBs’ goals in conjunction with each WDB.
  - refer students to One-Stop Centers, monitor, act on referrals from One-Stop Centers.
  - provide appropriate training for One-Stop partners.
to strengthen coordination and collaboration with key educational sectors and employers, CSDE will:

- align Integrated Basic Education and Training (I-BEST) training curriculum with employer/labor market needs. (I-BEST is Connecticut’s contextualized integrated education and training program strategy.)
- partner with community colleges to assist adults’ transition to postsecondary education and training.
- work with the One-Stop system to address the needs of local customers and employers and link adult education strategically to other employment and training services.
- work with the State’s longitudinal data system and use a common intake form to provide consistently defined and applied data from adult education programs.

To continue to invest in integrated technology to meet the unified technology requirements of WIOA and other Federal initiatives, CSDE will:

- work to interface the Connecticut Adult Reporting System (CARS) with the State’s common intake and reporting system.

To support engagement in continuous research and analysis to realize the potential of state’s workforce programs and delivery systems, CSDE will

- continue to offer the I-BEST program and ensure that it is aligned with labor market needs.

To assist the entire WIOA partnership deliver a unified message, CSDE will:

- participate in coordinated system-wide efforts to increase awareness of the Connecticut workforce system.

**Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS) Administered Activities**

The department’s Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Supported Employment (SE) programs will assist individuals with disabilities to prepare for, secure, retain, advance in or regain employment.

Housed within the Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS) are two Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) programs. The general VR program, situated within the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS), serves individuals with all types of disabilities except those with the primary disability of legal blindness. The Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB) serves consumers that are legally blind, as well as current or former transition-age consumers with visual impairments. Consumers who are legally blind and deaf or hard of hearing are served by either BRS or BESB. The Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS) projects their core programs, including the two VR programs and the Senior Community Services Employment Program, will collectively assist approximately 9,700 individuals in FFY 2020. Approximately 9,600 consumers are individuals with disabilities and 100 individuals are older workers.

**Connecticut Department of Social Services Administered Activities**

The CT Department of Social Services (CTDSS) administers SNAP E&T, a work program
designed to help SNAP recipients gain skills that will help increase self-sufficiency. SNAP E&T offers short-term vocational programs that are job focused and employer driven. Offerings range from 1-day security guard programs to 2-year associates degrees. The program operates on a third party reimbursement model. Partners investing nonfederal funds in allowable employment and training activities can leverage those funds and receive a fifty percent reimbursement. In addition to leveraging funds, these partnerships allow CTDSS to leverage the expertise and experience of each partner.

The SNAP E&T components included in the CTDSS state plan of operations include; Education/Vocational Training, Supervised Job Search, Work Experience and Job Retention. These activities are delivered through eighteen partnerships that include five nonprofit organizations, a private nonprofit college, and all twelve community colleges within the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) system. The current partners delivering services are; Capital Community College (CCC) located in Hartford, Gateway Community College (GCC) located in New Haven, Housatonic Community College (HCC) located in Bridgeport, Asnuntuck Community College (ACC) located in Enfield, Northwestern CT Community College (NWCC) located in Winsted, Three Rivers Community College (TRCC) located in Norwich, Naugatuck Valley Community College (NVCC) located in Waterbury, Middlesex Community College (MXCC) located in Middletown, Quinnebaug Valley Community College (QVCC) located in Danielson, Norwalk Community College (NCC) located in Norwalk, Manchester Community College (MCC) located in Manchester, Tunxis Community College (TCC) located in Farmington, Goodwin College located in East Hartford, Community Culinary School of Northwestern CT located in New Milford, Connecticut Center for Arts and technology (ConnCAT) located in New Haven, Opportunities Industrialization Center located in New London, Capital Workforce Partners located in Hartford and Homeless Hospitality Center located in New London. In addition to the partnerships with service providers, CTDSS also partners with the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) system office to help coordinate statewide initiatives. CTDSS partners with CTDOL through an MOU, which allows data sharing needed to fulfill the annual reporting requirements, included in the Agricultural Act of 2014, also known as the 2014 U.S. Farm Bill. In addition to the data share agreement, CTDSS utilizes CTDOL labor Market information (LMI) to approve programs based on the availability of jobs in selected employment fields.

As mandated in the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018, SNAP E&T participants receive case management. Our current contractors provide case management services that are unique to their SNAP participants and beyond what they provide to their other non-SNAP clients. This includes employability assessments, progress monitoring, monthly case notes and coordination with other service providers. Case management services can also include referrals to other services such as Adult Basic Education or other support services to enable the participant to remain engaged in his or her activity. While skills building are the focus of the program, CTDSS balances the need for immediate employment with the goal of moving participants to self-sufficiency. There are circumstances when the component will be
Supervised Job Search or Work Experience.

Successful participants who begin employment after participating in an E&T component may participate in Job Retention services. Job Retention provides support services to participants for a minimum of 30 days and a maximum of 90 days. Examples of supports offered are reimbursements for expenses that are reasonable and necessary; including equipment or tools, clothing or uniforms, and transportation needed to maintain employment.

As of October 14, 2019, there were 212,861 households, comprised of 364,474 individual recipients, receiving nutrition assistance from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. These low-income households include approximately 54,400 individuals who are not exempt from SNAP general work requirements. The Connecticut SNAP population is a diverse group with varying degrees of work readiness.

In addition to direct food benefits, SNAP in Connecticut also includes free educational opportunities. SNAP E&T is a skills based, employment focused, work program. The SNAP E&T program’s primary goal is to assist SNAP recipients in gaining skills and utilizing work-related activities that will lead to paid employment. SNAP E&T is voluntary, with a focus on vocational training. SNAP recipients, who are not receiving TFA, are encouraged to participate by self-enrolling with the provider of their choice. Successful participants gain skills needed to find employment or improve employment in the current job market. The resulting outcome is increased self-sufficiency and decreased dependence on public assistance.

**Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)**
CTDSS administers the CSBG federal block grant (approx. $8M annually) with assistance from the CT community action agency network. The purpose of CSBG is the reduction of poverty, revitalization of low-income communities, and empowerment of low-income families and individuals to become fully self-sufficient.

CSBG can provide an array of services - employment work supports, child and family development, community empowerment, independent living. CSBG has identified the following national performance indicators for states to follow: 2,943 persons employed; 1,741 maintain job for at least 90 days/achieve a “living” wage; 27,311 receive employment supports such as skills/competencies; and 599 completion of ABE/GED.

**Child Support**
CTDSS administers the statewide child support program. The goals of the child support programs are to assist families in reaching independence through increased financial and medical support, establish paternity for children born out of wedlock, and connect non-custodial parents with the Fatherhood Initiative.
(B) Alignment with Activities outside the Plan

Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be aligned with programs and activities provided by required one-stop partners and other optional one-stop partners and activities provided under employment, training (including Registered Apprenticeships), education (including career and technical education), human services and other programs not covered by the plan, as appropriate, assuring coordination of, and avoiding duplication among these activities.

Preceding sections have described numerous programs and activities provided by education, human services, training and economic development partners that may be considered outside of the plan. CT believes that in order to be prudent and effective, these programs must be managed with a unified workforce strategy and vision led by Governor Lamont.

Activities conducted for and services provided to jobseekers, workers and employers through the core WIOA programs covered by this Unified State Plan represent a significant portion of the state’s larger workforce development system. Other vital entities and stakeholders in the broadly conceived workforce system include the Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS), Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), Board of Regents for Higher Education/Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (BOR/CSCU); Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) K-12 comprehensive schools system, Connecticut Technical High School System (CTHSS), Office of Early Childhood (OEC), an extensive network of private colleges and universities represented by the Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges (CCIC), proprietary schools, regional/local Chambers of Commerce, sector-focused business associations, organized labor, community-based organizations (CBOs) and non-profit service providers. Collectively this spectrum of stakeholders represents more workforce development-related resources and programs, serving more participants, than do the core WIOA programs covered by this Unified State Plan. The stakeholders in Connecticut’s broad and informal workforce system identified above have an impressive history and track record of collaboration in developing effective strategies and minimizing duplication.

State agencies, educational institutions and workforce partners will participate in the efforts of the Governor’s Workforce Council to align activities across programs. The Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS), for example, collaborates and cooperates in a coordinated manner through a set of specific agreements with a wide array of organizations, entities and programs among workforce-related partners and stakeholders not specifically covered by this Unified State Plan, to pursue and achieve their respective objectives. Details are available in the state plan for vocational rehabilitation and supported employment services incorporated in this Unified State Plan.

In CT, two entities receive federal funds for SCSEP. The State Unit on Aging, as the State
Grantee and The WorkPlace, as the National Grantee, are active statewide partners. With the State Unit on Aging now part of ADS, the actions and goals of SCSEP are now included in this combined state plan to provide a roadmap for serving older workers along with individuals with disabilities under the other Bureaus of ADS. Memorandums of Understanding and Infrastructure Agreements were developed to cultivate partnerships. Through these partnerships, the regular use of shared office and meeting space at the American Job Centers rounds out the services for older workers and workers across the life span. With a dedicated presence at the AJC, SCSEP staff work collaboratively to integrate services delivered through the AJC. Co-location limits the likelihood that older workers will miss opportunities to avail themselves of the quality services delivered through the American Job Centers. Co-location improves the connection between SCSEP staff, The WorkPlace and AJC staff through the visible presence as well as collaborative conversations centered on the best menu of services for each individual.

Another example of an “outside” collaboration, is with the Office of Early Childhood (OEC). The OEC will be an engaged partner with entities that prepare and provide training for individuals working with young children and their families across any setting. The OEC will partner with workforce entities to ensure individuals entering and re-entering the workforce have access to high-quality and stable child care through our School Readiness Program, Child Day Care Centers, Smart Start, Preschool Development Grant program, and Care4Kids child care subsidy program.

The child care subsidy program is an integral partner within Connecticut’s workforce system. Funded by the federal Child Care Development Block Grant Act, Care4Kids provides a child care subsidy to parents who are either enrolled in TFA, enrolled in an approved education and training program, or who are employed. The childcare subsidy is intended to make child care more affordable, therefore, allowing parents to enter the workforce and stay employed. The child care subsidy can be used for all types of early childhood settings, including licensed centers and family child care homes, and unlicensed family, friend or neighbor. The CCDBG reauthorization of 2014 is requiring states to implement significant policy shifts that address continuity of care and quality of care for the child. The focus on continuity provides more child care stability for working parents. The OEC will be available to provide information to the Workforce Development Boards and various workforce partners on the importance of high-quality childcare and early childhood resources. In addition to providing materials at the American Job Centers, the OEC offers information and training through the Child Care Resource and Referral Service and Child Care 211 Infoline.

(C) Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Individuals
Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality, customer-centered services, including supportive services to individuals including those populations identified in section II (a)(1)(B). The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

Key State agency and local WDB partners were engaged in the statewide process of planning for WIOA implementation at State and local levels, emphasizing coordination of services and resources to provide high quality customer services and requisite support services. The Commissioners of CTDOL, ADS and CSDE are responsible for the review, endorsement and modification of the Unified State Plan to ensure coordination objectives are met.

Commitments to service and resource coordination among these State agencies are captured in Memoranda of Understandings (MOUs) executed by the local workforce boards and the respective State agency Commissioners. Representatives of these State agencies participate in the planning efforts of each of Connecticut’s five WDBs to develop and update local WIOA plans, emphasizing cross-agency coordination consistent with provisions described in the endorsed Unified State Plan.

Furthermore, the CSDE will solicit eligible agencies to provide services to eligible individuals who are 17 years old or older, are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under Connecticut law, are basic skills deficient, do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, or are English language learners through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process. Adult education programs will serve as the major Unified Plan Partner entry point for individuals who lack basic skills. Once a participant has enrolled, adult education provider staff will refer participants to an American Job Center or Youth Provider to conduct a workforce assessment and develop an educational/career plan. Once participants meet adult education exit criteria, they will be referred to the American Job Center for evaluation. A unified referral management system will help local programs track participants as they move from agency-to-agency. This system will allow programs to give timely assistance to participants if they get stuck or seem to be dropping out. Information will be shared with adult education partners about adult education eligibility requirements, as well as dates, times, and locations of sites where adult education is offered.

The ADS and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) programs offer a wide range of services to eligible individuals, including guidance and counseling, mobility training, rehabilitation technology, adaptive equipment, rehabilitation teaching, job coaching, on-the-job training, low vision services, as well as a variety of skills assessments. ADS/BESB provides services on a statewide itinerant basis through its office location in Windsor. ADS/BRS provides services in 14 offices across Connecticut where consumers may apply for assistance. In one of these locations, BRS is co-located with at least one core partner program. In several other locations, offices are in close physical proximity to partners. As long-term lease obligations,
and other logistical issues prevent movement toward increasing the number of co-locations, it is believed that formalizing referral processes and creating a service delivery structure that encourages partner collaborations will lead to improved coordination in services.

BRS and BESB have assigned staff to the primary American Job Center (AJC) locations in each of the five WDB regions to engage clients in services and to act as a dedicated liaison to the AJC. Staff serves on relevant committees and work groups at the AJCs. Through this approach, BRS and BESB staff become aware of initiatives, employment opportunities within each region, as well as workshops and training opportunities for consumers to register for and participate in.

**SCSEP** participants may register with the local American Job Centers. The first visit to an American Job Center can be overwhelming when an older worker is returning to the labor market. Older workers may be individuals seeking employment after being employed in a particular field for a length of time; individuals who have been out of the workforce for a length of time; or individuals who have recently exhausted unemployment compensation. As a required WIOA partner, SCSEP staff presence at the AJC will increase visibility of the program as well as promote familiarity and willingness to actively engage in services through AJC. The shared cubicle and meeting space promote interaction between SCSEP and AJC Staff. These interactions increase collaboration and sharing of resources to support older workers. Older workers who come to the AJC can also be referred to SCSEP as they seek assistance. Older workers can meet their SCSEP program coordinator at the AJC as well as attend monthly job club meetings at the AJC. However, since this co-location occurs on a part-time basis and SCSEP participants often access services on differing days and times, a second action to improve participant enrollment is the establishment of a single point of entry at the AJC for SCSEP’s older workers. This staff person would guide the SCSEP participant through the enrollment process at the AJC to support ongoing and regular use of the AJC.

An additional aspect of this coordination includes cross referral processes already in place between the SCSEP Grantees. With services that overlap in some areas of the state and due to the limited resources of each grantee, ADS and The WorkPlace work together and determine who and how to best serve the participant. This program coordination streamlines program point of entry and services and maximizes limited resources.

The 2016-2020 draft State Workforce Plan for the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) addresses the need to further coordinate SCSEP with other labor market and job training initiatives through the following strategies:

**Strategy:** SCSEP will develop and implement marketing strategies aimed at increasing awareness of SCSEP services within labor market and job training initiatives.

During the last SCSEP Work plan, strides were taken to improve the partnership between
SCSEP and the one-stop system. The CT State Department on Aging (SDA) met with one-stop administrators to provide information about older workers and about SCSEP. Each of the state’s SCSEP offices has a working relationship with the local one-stop. In some areas that relationship is very strong as sub-grantee staff is co-located in the office. Staff provides information about SCSEP to potential enrollees. In other regions where co-location is not available, SCSEP continues to refer participants for workshops and job development services. The one-stops continue to be valuable resources for SCSEP participants across the state and the state will endeavor to continue cultivating these partnerships.

**Strategy:** SCSEP grantees will endeavor to revitalize the partnerships with each one-stop in their service area by providing information about SCSEP and seeking out ways to help support their efforts.

**Strategy:** SDA will develop a comprehensive webpage listing job skills training and job development services available to older workers throughout the state.

(D) **Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Employers**

Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, any Combined State Plan partner program included in this plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality services to employers to meet their current and projected workforce needs and to achieve the goals of industry or sector partners in the state. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

**State Level**

Connecticut’s Interagency Business Engagement Steering Committee consists of workforce system partners (CTDOL, OWC, Aging and Disability Services, Adult Education, Economic and Community Development, Workforce Development Boards and the state’s community colleges and university system) who continue to work collaboratively in developing a statewide vision that enhances and aligns the services offered to Connecticut businesses. The Committee supports the coordinated approach of its five Regional Interagency Business Engagement Teams to improve communication among all partners and develop innovative solutions to ever-changing business challenges. All workforce partners contribute content for the *Interagency Employer Resource Guide* and *Employer Reference Card* publications which offer road maps to the many programs, services and incentives available to business. These publications are maintained by CTDOL and are available in print and electronic format and provide an important marketing tool for the business services professional. The Committee also hosts an annual Interagency training for front line staff serving employers which provides a platform for the consistent communication of the statewide vision and an opportunity to educate all staff on the resources available to support the efficient delivery of programs and services to Connecticut businesses.
The Office of Workforce Competitiveness (OWC) engages with employers and workforce system stakeholders to promote strong employer and association-led industry partnerships, sector strategies and career pathways initiatives and support effective service strategies for the workforce system’s business customers. OWC maintains a list of industry sector partnerships and initiatives to coordinate state efforts and to inform and connect new entrants to share ideas and best practices. State Board meetings have included presentations from industry sector leaders and offered an opportunity for members to share this information with their constituencies. OWC has maintained a strong relationship with the CT Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) and through their leadership and funding resources, CT has successful manufacturing and IT sector partnerships. The Manufacturing Innovation Fund and the Tech-Talent Initiative (described in previous sections) have provided millions of dollars to CT businesses to support and foster their growth. DECD recently hired a Manufacturing Professional to lead that sector and he is also an ex-officio member of the Governor’s Workforce Council.

OWC sponsors business breakfast seminars to provide information to business owners, human resources professionals, union leaders, etc. on current workforce issues. Presentations are given by staff from state agencies, colleges, businesses and non-profits. Recent topics have included: Creating an Inclusive Workplace with Assistive Technology, Cyber security Threats – What Every Employer Needs to Know, Effective Participation in Unemployment Compensation Proceedings, Drug Testing in the Workplace, Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)...How to Avoid Mistakes, Medical Marijuana in the Workplace, The Basics of Workers’ Compensation, and Wage and Hour Basics and Compliance for Employers. These seminars occur on a monthly basis and can be accessed through the businessct.com Web site, which provides streamlined access to business resources, industry sector partnerships, training assistance and incentives. Recently created publications – Connecticut’s Industry Sector Partnerships, Employer Resource Guide, and Employer Resource Card offers a roadmap to the many programs, services and incentives that may be available to business. The publications are also available electronically through the businessct.com Web site.

OWC has been participating in workforce development technical assistance opportunities such as the National Governors Association (NGA) Center for Best Practices multistate collaborative project that supports state efforts to analyze and understand the on-demand economy in their respective states and to take action to identify policies to support economic opportunity for on-demand workers. Through the project, states will share best practices and develop innovative ideas to improve economic outcomes and growth.

Local Level
Each comprehensive American Job Center has organized Business Services functions to serve business customers in a single, unified, coordinated Regional Business Services Team structure. The Team consists of experienced business services professionals from a variety of partner organizations including the state’s Workforce Development Boards, the Departments of Labor, Economic and Community Development, Aging and Disability
Services (ADS), Education, regional community colleges and technical high schools, and regional/local economic development officials.

The Regional Business Services Teams coordinate services across programs and agencies to provide each business customer with effective strategies and aligned services that meet their needs. Monthly working meetings among the Regional Business Services Teams support information sharing and cross-training on partner programs and lead to the coordination of service strategies and effective service strategies for the varied business customers. Program descriptions, services and incentives available to business customers are published in the Employer Resource Guide and Employer Resource Card. Business services are marketed extensively, consistent with a focused business outreach strategy in each region. Social media tools such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are utilized as a low cost option to market workforce and education training programs, job fairs, events and available jobs.

Guiding principles of the Business Services Teams are:
- It’s not about us – It’s all about the Business!
- We are committed to providing service to Business customers that is seamless.
- Business customers in the CTHires databank must post all job openings for which recruitment support is provided.
- All posted job openings will be communicated and made accessible to the full network of prospective jobseekers.
- All job openings and recruitment efforts will be communicated to all Business Services Team members within 24 hours of becoming known.

Furthermore, from the perspective of the ADS VR programs, the primary goal of coordinated activities with employers is to establish long-term partnerships that foster a mutually beneficial relationship for both the employer and VR consumers. These long-standing relationships are built on genuine interest in the work of each employer, their needs and their priorities. This could mean that an actual job opening for a particular client may not come along for some time, but the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor is nonetheless a resource employers can turn to for information, referrals to other service providers, and to learn about job site accommodations and provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Other valuable services such as informational interviews, job shadowing opportunities and work assessment site hosting can be offered. Company tours can be arranged for consumers to teach about a wide variety of careers, particularly important to transition-age youth clients who may otherwise have very limited exposure to actual job sites.

ADS is enthusiastic about CT’s collaborative strategy that offers employers a seamless and coordinated team approach to placing job orders and identifying qualified candidates for employers.

In addition, CSDE promotes workforce preparation skills including literacy instruction,
employability skills, career exploration and development, and links to employment, employment services and other options to respond to the evolving workforce needs of Connecticut’s business community and to promote individual self-sufficiency. Providers develop partnerships with local businesses for on-site workforce education classes to assist employees perform specific job tasks and increase productivity. Adult Education services are also included in the Employer Resource Guide and the Employer Resource Card that are published by DOL and distributed to employers.

(E) Partner Engagement with Educational Institutions

Describe how the State’s Strategies will engage the State’s community colleges and area career and technical education schools, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job- driven education and training system. WIOA section 102(b)(2)(B)(iv).

Connecticut education leaders and their key staff participate in decision-making processes defining and driving workforce system policy and strategy at both State and local levels. At the State level, Connecticut’s Commissioner of Education (executive leader of Connecticut’s K-12 public schools system), and the President of the Board of Regents for Higher Education/Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (executive leader of a system of public 4-year universities and 2-year community colleges) are directly engaged in all phases of workforce development planning, strategy design, oversight and coordination. In addition, the Director of the Connecticut Technical High School System (CTHSS) ensures that the contributions of CTHSS are included, critical information is shared, and opportunities for coordination of programs and services are pursued, addressing the shared goal of ensuring that youths and adults (students) are ready for productive work in Connecticut’s key industry sectors.

Connecticut’s Preschool through Twenty and Workforce Information Network – P20 WIN – is a groundbreaking approach to education and workforce training-related data sharing in Connecticut. P20 WIN provides a secure data vehicle producing critical information needed to understand patterns over time and inform policy and strategy decisions to improve education, training and employment outcomes for Connecticut students. This new system allows Connecticut to evaluate how well our public education and training programs prepare students for additional education and careers in Connecticut. Executive leadership and senior research staff from the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR), the University of Connecticut (UCONN), the Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges (CCIC) and Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL) actively participate in P20 WIN. An inter-agency data governance structure and data- sharing agreements support collaborative decision-making. Going forward, P20 WIN provides a systematic, secure and repeatable process to gather and analyze critical data to understand the impact of investments in education and workforce training programs, supporting coordination, alignment and integration consistent with WIOA principles, leading to better outcomes. Connecticut’s P20 WIN longitudinal data analysis capability will allow for improved understanding of how Connecticut’s various education and training providers and programs – including K-12, CTHSS, Community colleges –
perform in helping students complete programs of study and perform in the workforce.

**CSDE: Partner Alignment with Educational Institutions**
CSDE will promote partnerships among local adult education providers and institutions of higher education, especially community colleges, to promote the successful transition of participants to postsecondary education and training. CSDE will rely on information from the workforce development system to track the progress of participants who have exited from their programs and have entered postsecondary education and training.

**ADS: Partner Alignment with Educational Institutions**
Both Vocational Rehabilitation Programs at ADS are actively involved in a variety of transition school-to-work initiatives, with extensive collaboration and coordination at the administrative and service delivery levels of the organization. Through a cooperative agreement with the State Department of Education, the roles and responsibilities of the VR programs and the public educational system are clearly defined, including financial responsibilities and coordination of services and staff training. Representatives from both VR programs serve on an interagency transition task force and appointed representatives from the Connecticut State Department of Education serve on the State Rehabilitation Council to BESB and to BRS. VR program information is presented at in-service training programs for public school teachers and guidance counselors on issues affecting students who have disabilities.

Regarding higher education, the Board of Regents has a cooperative agreement addressing services available in the university setting for students with disabilities. This agreement is with both VR programs and describes responsibilities to ensure that students with disabilities achieve equal access to classroom instruction, internships, and school-sponsored activities.

VR Program staff members participate and present information at BESB-organized in-service training programs for public school teachers and guidance counselors on issues affecting students who are blind or visually impaired. BESB Children’s Services Program provides a comprehensive training series every year for school district staff about low vision aids and adaptive technology, braille instruction, expanded core curriculum activities and resources available to facilitate the education and transition of students served by BESB.

**(F) Partner Engagement with other Education and Training Providers**

Describe how the state’s Strategies will engage the State’s other education and training providers, including providers on the state’s eligible training provider list, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training.

The Governor’s Workforce Council Education and Training Committee will engage education
and training providers to infuse new certificate programs to the eligible training provider list. The GWC has significant representation from business leaders from many industry sectors and will be identifying training gaps and educational solutions to those gaps.

The CSDE will work with other core programs and One-Stop partners to ensure that adult education and literacy activities are in alignment and to develop career pathways which provide access to employment and training services for individuals in adult education and literacy activities. The CSDE will collaborate with the DOL to assist local providers in partnering with One-Stop Centers to develop career pathways and provide access to employment and training services. Professional development will be provided to local programs, including orientation to adult education programs and services for One-Stop partners and other agencies. Local adult education providers will refer adult learners to the Workforce Development Boards’ Eligible Training Providers Lists for information about training opportunities in their region.

ADS liaison counselors work closely with the American Job Centers to make referrals for services within each agency’s programs. When appropriate, ADS consumers may be eligible for training offered on DOL’s eligible training provider list. Consumers take an active role in the process of pursuing these trainings, and VR Counselors are available to provide assistance. If there is a barrier to the ADS consumer accessing the trainings as a similar benefit to what ADS offers, the ADS counselor can approve payment to fund the DOL training. When ADS consumers access these DOL services, their names are automatically entered into the CTHires database allowing for optimal performance reporting.

**G) Leveraging Resources to Increase Educational Access**

Describe how the State’s strategies will enable the State to leverage other Federal, State, and local investments that have enhanced access to workforce development programs at the above institutions, described in section (E).

**CSDE: Leveraging Resources to Increase Educational Access**

The funding of adult education programs in Connecticut braids state, local, federal, and private funding. There are 41 adult education programs in the state that provide mandated programs and continuing education classes. The state provides up to 65% of the funding for local adult education according to a needs-based formula. Last year the state provided over $20,000,000 in funding and school districts contributed over $16,000,000. The state also received approximately $5,000,000 in federal WIOA Title II funds which are distributed through a competitive RFP process. In addition many local adult education programs receive philanthropic and corporate contributions.

**H) Improving Access to Postsecondary Credentials**
Connecticut recognizes the value and importance of postsecondary credentials and certificates to workers and businesses, and that they vary significantly by industry sector and specific occupation. A variety of sector-specific initiatives are underway within each of Connecticut’s five local workforce areas, most in conjunction with the appropriate local WDB.

In addition, the GWC committees will also be focused on examining characteristics of gaps in supply and demand, identifying high quality credentials and certifications, and ensuring swift access to training for CT residents. The GWC will solicit input from industry associations, unions, companies large and small to identify credentials of value, stackability, and ensure that proper marketing and messaging reaches students and job-seekers to improve WIOA program performance. The goal is to identify and verify the credentials employers value and that actually contribute to hiring, productivity and opportunity for career advancement.

Customers credential needs range between a GED, a RA, and a college degree. Two programs on the spectrum are described as follows:

**CSDE** offers three programs leading to a high school equivalency diploma: Adult High School Credit Diploma (AHSCD), General Educational Development (GED), and the National External Diploma Program (NEDP). Local adult education programs also provide basic skills and workforce education through its highly successful contextualized integrated education and training program, I-BEST. All participants in adult education, including those in Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language, will learn about career pathways and will be taught the skills needed to succeed in postsecondary education and training. Participants who earn the high school equivalency diploma will be referred to community colleges and other institutions of higher education to transition to postsecondary education and training.

With regards to Registered Apprenticeships, the CTDOL/OAT will continue to implement strategies to support expansion, diversification and integration of RAP and further our commitment to new programs. CTDOL/OAT staff provide outreach, marketing and technical assistance statewide.

Elements of our strategy include:
- Creatively applying RA as an important workforce and career solution
- Encouraging utilization of WIOA funding where applicable, to support training programs and supportive services
- Building strategic and scalable partnerships in new sectors

Describe how the State’s strategies will improve access to activities leading to recognized postsecondary credentials, including Registered Apprenticeship certificates. This includes credentials that are industry-recognized certificates, licenses or certifications, and that are portable and stackable.
• Building communication links and convening meetings to introduce employers to apprenticeship
• Cultivating relationships with Boards of Education, Superintendents, Career Technical Advisors and high school Guidance Counselors,
• Fostering a better understanding with CT’s Community Colleges of linking their programs to workplace-based related instruction
• Establishing the Connecticut Apprenticeship and Education Committee to:
  – coordinate and identify potential pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship training program integration;
  – leverage funding;
  – identify CTE programs within high schools and programs within higher education institutions for careers in various industries for credentialing as best practice models;
  – consult with members of insurance, manufacturing, health care, finance, biotechnology, STEM, education, construction, hospitality and any other appropriate industry to coordinate and identify potential pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship training programs;
  – consult with SDE for the development of a best practices guide to help local and regional boards of education to incorporate relationships with the industries in their middle and high schools in accordance with Student Success Plans (SSP) and capstones;
  – working with workforce development system partners and the American Job Centers (AJCs) to incorporate apprenticeship into the workforce development system’s business model so that Workforce Board and AJC personnel can emphasize to their employees and job seekers the importance of an industry-recognized credential awarded through an apprenticeship;
  – increasing the numbers of low-income individuals and underrepresented populations in apprenticeship programs; and
  – on-going modernization of Connecticut’s apprenticeship IT system to enhance data collection capabilities and reporting of programmatic data.

Furthermore, Registered Apprenticeships are also being considered throughout the corrections system for Service Guide Dog Training, Barbering and Hairdressing apprenticeships. The goal of apprenticeships within the correctional facilities is intended to offer an opportunity to build work skillsets, job experience, potential licensure and earn an industry recognized credential that may lead to an apprenticed career or other career opportunity upon return to society. Other considerations for Registered Apprenticeship include Peer Recovery Navigator and Certified Recovery Specialist training programs to combat the opioid crisis, Childcare development apprenticeships as well as Para-professional to educator pathways utilizing apprenticeships. Through these efforts, CT will be poised to enhance the state’s economy and growth while expanding registered apprenticeships which will support middle to high skilled jobs.
(I) Coordinating with Economic Development Strategies

Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be coordinated with economic development entities, strategies, and activities in the State.

Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development
The Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) is the state of Connecticut’s leading agency responsible for strengthening Connecticut’s competitive position in the rapidly changing, knowledge-based economy. DECD is focused on support for existing businesses and jobs with a wide range of programs and services to help companies prosper; promote Connecticut industries and businesses both domestically and across the globe; and strengthen Connecticut’s communities by provided funding and technical support for local community and economic development projects. The agency oversees a broad range of initiatives and programs in the following areas: business development, opportunity zones, brownfield redevelopment, arts, historic preservation, community revitalization and tourism.

DECD is executing a vision to dramatically improve the state’s economic development performance in conjunction with the Connecticut Economic Resource Center, Inc. (CERC) through a public-private partnership. In addition, underway, the state is developing a long-term comprehensive, data-driven strategic plan as well as a cluster strategy for recruitment and retention of companies.

The needs and priorities of Connecticut’s in-demand and emerging industries and businesses are:
- fiscal stability of the state’s finances to ensure a stable and predictable environment that will yield private investment confidence
- build on the state’s strengths (talent, location, quality of life)
- focus on innovation, key business sectors to stimulate business development, including offshore recruitment
- focus on talent development
- streamline governmental processes/regulation
- comprehensive multimodal transportation and infrastructure plan
- collaborate with key partners to improve business climate

The state and its economic development partners are focused on key economic drivers such as Insurance/Financial Services, Manufacturing, Bioscience, Software, Data Services and Technology, and Tourism. The need for skilled talent in critical growth occupations in these key industry sectors has been identified as a strategic priority requiring a continued close cooperation and coordination of workforce and economic development efforts. The agency works closely with industries to address challenges and opportunities facing all businesses.
DECD is a strategic partner with the Department of Labor with the recent launch of the Governor’s Workforce Council to ensure alignment between industry needs and developing the talent pipeline. In addition, in the area of manufacturing and tech talent, DECD has resources in place to promote innovation and growth.

Governor Lamont’s administration plans to reform the way state government provides incentives to private companies looking to add jobs or make significant capital investments in Connecticut. The foundation of the state’s strategy is taking shape with a focus on four key programs, including two new concepts. Led by the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) Commissioner David Lehman, the state’s overall goal is to move toward a performance-based, “earn-as-you-go” system, meaning employers won’t reap state incentives until they create a certain number of jobs or make a certain level of investment.

The new strategy will not require the state to borrow money up front to incentivize job growth as the Department of Economic and Community looks to reduce its bond obligations. The objective is to develop a competitive strategy that works for taxpayers and grows the economy. The major programs the state will now focus on include:

- a modified Small Business Express program that will no longer offer state loans or grants, but instead morph into a loan guarantee program run by private banks – emphasis would shift toward woman-owned companies, underserved communities and distressed municipalities

- a Grow CT Rebate will reward companies in specific industries (finance and insurance, advanced manufacturing, health care, bioscience, technology, and digital media) that create at least 25 jobs paying above-average wages.

- a greater focus on two existing incentive programs: the Urban and Industrial Site Reinvestment Tax Credit - which will be available to projects that add significant new economic activity and jobs at an old industrial site or urban center; and the Sales and Use Tax Relief Program that exempts businesses from paying the sales and use tax when they acquire tangible personal property, equipment and services from Connecticut Innovations, the state’s quasi-public venture investor that oversees the program.

The state and its economic development partners are focused on key economic drivers such as Insurance/Financial Services, Manufacturing, Bioscience, Software, Data Services and Technology, and Tourism. The need for skilled talent in critical growth occupations in these key industry sectors has been identified as a strategic priority requiring a continued close cooperation and coordination of workforce and economic development efforts. DECD is a strategic partner with the Department of Labor and with the recent launch of the Governor’s Workforce Council strives to ensure alignment between industry needs and developing the talent pipeline. In addition, in the area of manufacturing and tech talent,
DECD has resources in place to promote innovation and growth which include the following:

**Chief Manufacturing Officer**
This newly created position is an important ambassador for the industry on matters of workforce development, business climate, regulations, etc. and will collaborate with private, public, academia, local, state and federal government partners to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to strengthen Connecticut’s manufacturing sector.

**Manufacturing Innovation Fund (MIF)**
Connecticut manufacturing is booming, fueled by a robust supply chain of 4,500 businesses. Nearly one of every ten Connecticut employees now works in the manufacturing sector – and the demand for skilled manufacturers continues to accelerate. To advance manufacturing even faster, the state government established a $75 million Manufacturing Innovation Fund (MIF), a partnership of the state Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) and the Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology, Inc. (CCAT). Among its many initiatives, the MIF supports innovation and growth in the state’s advanced manufacturing sector. The fund assists manufacturers to develop or modernize critical equipment, support technological advancement, encourage research and development, and provide critical workforce training. The objective is to strengthen the supply chain network of small/medium manufacturing companies and ensure a productive, flexible, well-trained advanced manufacturing talent pool with competitive skills. DECD provides administrative oversight, with the counsel and support of an eleven-member advisory board, the majority from manufacturing companies. To date, DECD has directly invested approximately $27.7 million in workforce development through the Manufacturing Innovation Fund (MIF). This funding supports incumbent worker training and pipeline development by way of pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships and youth programs.

**Connecticut Tech Talent Fund**
The $10 million Connecticut Tech Talent Fund is a resource for both workers and employers to ensure Connecticut has the workforce talent needed to fuel growth in key industry sectors in the digital economy. To date, $4.5 million has been deployed to provide matching grants to companies hiring tech interns from local colleges and universities to specialized technology training programs focused on building capacity in the areas of Full Stack Development and Data Science and Analytics. This funding and programming meets a critical area of skills demand for Connecticut companies.

**CSDE: Coordinating with Economic Development Strategies**
CSDE will participate in and support efforts of the Governor’s Workforce Council to assist Connecticut business employers by continuing to develop and implement contextualized integrated education and training I-BEST programs that address the workforce needs of those businesses.

(b) **State Operating Systems and Policies**
The Unified State Plan must include a description of the State operating systems and policies that will support the implementation of the State strategy described in section II Strategic Elements. This includes:

**(1) The State Operating Systems** that will support the implementation of the State’s strategies. This must include a description of:

**(A) State operating systems that support coordinated implementation of State strategies (e.g., labor market information systems, data systems, communication systems, case-management systems, job banks, etc.).**

As administrative entity for WIOA implementation in Connecticut, CTDOL has lead responsibility to ensure that appropriate operating systems are in place and used effectively by all WIOA and workforce system partners, with appropriate oversight by the state board. CTDOL is currently working to refine the details of these necessary operational systems, including the state-level labor market information system, communication system, case-management system, job bank, and data/reporting systems. A description of Data Collection and Reporting elements is included below.

**Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL)**
Data collection and reporting for the six core WIOA programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser, Adult Education and Literacy Activities, and Title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973) will occur within separate case management systems located at each of three State agencies including the Connecticut Departments of Labor (CTDOL), Education (CSDE), and Aging and Disability Services (ADS).

CTDOL has contracted with Geographic Solutions to implement a web-based case management system, CTHires, to provide virtual services to individual jobseekers and employers, and to collect data required by WIOA for reporting on self-services and staff-assisted services for the Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser, and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and Foreign Labor Certification, TANF/Jobs First Employment Services Program and the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) Program.

**Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE)**
All adult education providers funded by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), Adult Education Unit, collect and report through the Connecticut Adult Reporting System (CARS). The data entered in CARS are used by CSDE to meet reporting requirements at the Federal and State levels. CARS data are the basis for completing the Federal reporting requirements of the National Reporting System (NRS).

CARS is a longitudinal database containing student information. The Student ID created
for each new student in CARS is unique to that student across adult education providers and fiscal years. Students returning to adult education in a future fiscal year maintain the same CARS Student ID. Students who transfer from one adult education provider to another, or prepare in adult education and then register for the GED test are also able to utilize the same CARS student ID.

**Connecticut Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS)**
The ADS maintains an approved vocational rehabilitation case management system for both of the department’s vocational rehabilitation programs. This system runs locally on servers housed within ADS and contains case information relevant to individual consumers and reportable data. The vendor has maintained an active relationship with the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) who governs data collection for public vocational rehabilitation programs. RSA data elements have been adjusted to be compatible with the WIOA- Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) document.

SCSEP uses the SCSEP Performance and Results Quarterly Progress Reporting System (SPARQ) developed and maintained for the US Department of Labor. It is an online system and both grantees and sub-grantees have access to the system for data entry. Information about SCSEP locally, statewide and nationally can be accessed through this system.

**WIOA Annual State and Local Area Reporting**
Reporting processes for the WIOA Annual State Performance Report will involve CTDOL obtaining electronic files for each report period from the three Connecticut State agencies for each of the six WIOA core programs. The WIOA Annual Local Area Performance Report is a subset of the WIOA Annual State Performance Report, covering only the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs. Individual records in each of these electronic program files will be matched against the CTDOL database that stores the WIOA unique identifiers to determine if such identifier already exists. If it exists, the unique identifier will be appended to the record. If it does not exist, CTDOL will assign a unique identifier for each participant and will append it to the participant record. This process will ensure a common unique identifier across the six WIOA core programs, and will ensure that this unique identifier will be the same for every period of participation.

These same electronic files will be matched to each of the electronic files for each of the six WIOA core programs to determine if an individual was co-enrolled in one or more of those programs. If the participant was co-enrolled in another core program, the specific code value identified in the WIOA Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) that applies to those services will be appended to the participant record.

These same electronic files will be used to obtain employment information for each program participant who has a social security number and an exit date from one or more of the six WIOA core programs. CTDOL currently is responsible for reporting wages, entered employment rates, and employment retention rates for individuals who exit the Wagner-Peyser, Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, and Trade Adjustment Assistance programs.
Each program’s electronic file containing the assigned WIOA unique identifier, co-enrollment data, wages, and employment information will be returned to each of the three State agencies for use in their Federal report submissions.

**Eligible Training Provider (ETP) Performance Report**
CTDOL will use the CTHires case management system to collect data and generate the Eligible Training Provider Performance Report on all students in programs, and on WIOA participants, as required under WIOA.

**Effectiveness in Serving Employers Report**
CTDOL will assume the role as lead agency in the Effectiveness in Serving Employers Report. Connecticut will be reporting on the Employer Penetration rate and Employee Retention.

**(2) State Workforce System Policies**

The State policies that will support the implementation of the State’s strategies: (e.g., co-enrollment policies and universal intake processes where appropriate). In addition, describe the State’s process for developing guidelines for State-administered one-stop partner programs’ contributions to a one-stop delivery system, including benchmarks, and its guidance to assist local boards, chief elected officials, and local one-stop partners in determining equitable and stable methods of funding infrastructure in accordance with sec. 121(h)(1)(B). Beginning with the State plan modification in 2018 and for subsequent state plans and state plan modifications, the State must also include some guidelines.

As lead administrative entity for WIOA implementation in Connecticut, CTDOL has responsibility to ensure that an appropriate and comprehensive set of state workforce system policies is established and are in place to guide effective WIOA service delivery. CTDOL has demonstrable experience and expertise in this role, having been responsible for administrative oversight and direction of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) implementation in Connecticut. Building on a foundation of administrative policy developed during that time, the CTDOL’s WIOA Administration Unit has systematically drafted and developed the necessary inventory of WIOA-related workforce system policies. The CTDOL WIOA Policy Manual can be found at http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/wia/wioa.htm. The policy manual is designed to be updated as necessary to account for changes and improvements in WIOA service delivery over time.

**Data Collection and Reporting**
Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL) maintains and operates an automated Workforce Development Business System to support the operational and management needs of the State of Connecticut’s One-Stop employment service delivery system under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). To address these operational, management, and reporting needs, CTDOL requires that state and contractor staff funded
under the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser and National Dislocated Worker grant programs enter data into the new CTHires system. Staff delivering services under the Trade Adjustment Assistance program also record data for this federal program into the new CTHires system.

CTDOL also requires authorized representatives of contractor agencies funded under WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs to sign a Data Access Agreement, to ensure the protection of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) in their possession. United States Department of Labor (USDOL), Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 39.11 is appended to the Data Access Agreement. In addition, staff members of these agencies that will access the new CTHires system are required to sign a form entitled *Acknowledgment of Receipt of Confidential Information* to advise them of responsibilities with respect to confidential information.

(3) **STATE PROGRAM AND STATE BOARD OVERVIEW**

(A) **State Agency Organization**

Describe the organization and delivery systems at the State and local levels for the programs covered in the plan, including the organizational structure. Include an organizational chart.

**Department of Aging and Disability Services**

The mission of the Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS) is to maximize opportunities for the independence and well-being of people with disabilities and older adults in Connecticut. The primary customers of the agency are individuals with disabilities and older adults. In the employment-based programs, business/employers are a dual customer.

The Department has four programmatic bureaus, including:
- Bureau of Aging Services (Aging)
- Bureau of Disability Determination Services (DDS)
- Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB)
- Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS)

Programs, policies and practices are designed to promote employment, independence, equal access, self-sufficiency and self-advocacy. ADS is the designated state agency for the two VR programs. Consumers with disabilities who need help finding employment may apply for assistance at the applicable ADS offices. They may seek assistance to prepare for, secure, retain, advance in, or regain employment in a competitive and integrated setting. Services may include vocational counseling, benefits counseling, job search assistance, skill training and career education, school-to-work transition services, on-the-job training in business and industry, assistive technology services for mobility, communication and work
activities, vehicle and home modifications, supported employment services, restoration services for a physical or mental condition and assistance accessing transportation options. Once eligibility has been determined, consumers work with a VR counselor to develop an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) to identify the target employment goal and the services that ADS can provide to assist them in reaching that goal. The IPE also identifies the consumer’s responsibilities to help reach the desired job goal.

**ADS-SCSEP**
As the state SCSEP grantee, ADS relies on its sub-grantee, who is under contract to provide services in the grant’s service areas of Fairfield, Litchfield and New Haven Counties. Consumers seeking assistance in these areas can contact the sub-grantee or the State SCSEP Coordinator at ADS. In areas served by The WorkPlace, consumers can contact their local offices or the State SCSEP Coordinator at ADS, as well, to be directed to local services.

**CT Department of Education**
The Connecticut State Department of Education is committed to quality adult education programs which are accessible to all Connecticut adults and lead to mastery of the essential proficiencies needed to function as productive citizens in work, family and community environments. Connecticut’s adult education programs are governed by Connecticut General Statutes, which require local school districts to offer education programs necessary to acquire basic literacy skills, elementary education, English language proficiency, secondary school completion and/or preparation for equivalency or proficiency examinations. Local school districts and other eligible agencies providing mandated adult education programs are reimbursed by the Connecticut State Department of Education on a cost-sharing, sliding scale based on the relative wealth of a district.

By supplementing Connecticut’s commitment of state and local adult education dollars with WIOA Title II dollars, Connecticut expands its provider network while enhancing and supporting programs and services that are more comprehensive, cost-effective and responsive to community needs. In addition to the local school districts, volunteer programs, community based organizations and other agencies provide adult education services in Connecticut by recruiting and retaining educationally and economically disadvantaged adults. By focusing on the needs of learners, families, communities and employers, adult education programs succeed in improving the skills of Connecticut’s learners, enabling thousands of residents to attain a secondary school diploma, helping to close the skills gap in the workplace, assisting non-English speakers to learn English, easing the transition to post-secondary education, preparing residents to attain U.S. citizenship and helping families to break the intergenerational cycle of illiteracy.

**CT Department of Social Services**
CTDSS provides a wide range of services to children, families, older adults, persons with disabilities, and other individuals who need assistance in maintaining or achieving their full potential for self-direction, self-reliance and independent living. CTDSS delivers a wide
variety of services to children, families, adults, people with disabilities and the elderly, including health care coverage, food and nutrition assistance, child support services, independent living services, energy assistance, and program grants. CTDSS administers Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program; the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, among others. With a staff of about 1,900, the department provides services to more than 1 million Connecticut residents of all ages.

CT Department of Labor
The Connecticut Department of Labor is committed to protecting and promoting the interests of Connecticut workers. In order to accomplish this in an ever-changing environment, we assist workers and employers to become competitive in the global economy. We take a comprehensive approach to meeting the needs of workers and employers, and the other agencies that serve them. We ensure the supply of high-quality integrated services that serve the needs of our customers.

The CT Department of Labor’s WIOA Administration Unit has administrative responsibilities for the WIOA Title IB funded programs as well as a multitude of other federal, state and discretionary funded programs providing workforce development programming.

These programs include: Trade Adjustment Allowance, National Dislocated Worker Grants, including Disaster Relief, Rapid Response, State Youth Employment Program, Department of Children and Families Youth Employment Program, STRIVE, Second Chance Initiative, Opportunities for Long-term Unemployed a.k.a. Platform to Employment, Mortgage Crisis Job Training Program, Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative. The administrative functions of this unit includes but is not limited to policy and procedure development, monitoring – both programmatically and fiscally, development of grants and contracts, reporting, and management information system support.

CTDOL local office staff members deliver direct services within American Job Centers under the Wagner- Peyser, Trade Adjustment Assistance, Unemployment Insurance, and Veterans programs. Examples of services provided under these programs include: assessment of skills, vocational counseling, provision of labor market and other information, provision of referrals to employment and to supportive services for individuals, recruitment services for employers, unemployment insurance, and rapid response assistance for employers and their employees. These services are designed to assist individuals to obtain employment to ultimately achieve self-sufficiency, and to assist employers to secure qualified employees to assist them to become competitive.

CTDOL’s Unemployment Insurance (UI) Operations, UI Tax, and ES Board of Review are separate divisions within CTDOL. These divisions work closely with the Employment and Training Division and the local American Job Centers to provide seamless customer services. Jobs First Employment Services (JFES):
The Connecticut Department of Labor’s (CTDOL) Welfare to Work unit administers the Jobs First Employment Services (JFES) program, which serves recipients of Temporary Family Assistance (TFA). TFA is Connecticut’s cash assistance program for low-income families or pregnant women using federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funding. TFA eligibility is administered by the Connecticut Department of Social Services (CTDSS). The CTDOL administers the JFES program in partnership with the Department of Social Services (DSS) and the five Workforce Development Boards (WDBs). The WDBs operate as intermediaries that subcontract with other organizations to provide services to JFES participants at American Job Centers (AJCs) located throughout the state. Services include job search assistance, vocational education, adult basic education, unsubsidized employment, subsidized employment, case management, community service and other support services such as in-home assessments, case management and transportation benefits. All JFES participants are eligible to receive childcare subsidies through the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood (CTOEC). The ultimate goal of the JFES program is to enable participants, through employment, to become independent from cash assistance and be self-sufficient.

The Jobs First Employment Services program (JFES) has implemented a number of initiatives since the last CT WIOA state plan was submitted. First, CTDOL implemented the JFES CTHires electronic case management system in March 2018. Connecticut was the first state in the country to successfully implement a TFA/Welfare to Work system in partnership with Geo Solutions.

In April 2014, DOL began its initiative to implement a new web-based system known as Connecticut Helping Individuals and Employers Reach Employment Success (CTHires). This system will support the JFES program partners including Department of Social Services (DSS), Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) and subcontracted case management entities.

CTHires is a powerful online job seeker/workforce services system, accessed as a website from home, work or at an American Job Center. It was specifically designed for job seekers, caseworkers, employers, training providers and workforce professionals. The system provides fast access to a complete set of employment tools in one website.

Features to help job seekers:
- Create and send résumés and cover letters to employers,
- Research training providers,
- Review available jobs and apply online,
- Set-up job search agents to automatically review job postings and send notifications of jobs that match specific skills sets,
- Track individual job search efforts and résumés sent,
- Research regional labor market information, and
Utilize the email/message center to contact employers and case workers directly.

Features to help employers:
- Define skills and post job orders to find potential candidates,
- Research labor market information on salaries and economic data,
- Set-up a Virtual Recruiter search agent to automatically find candidates within the system that match the job skills of the job order, and
- Communicate with job seekers, agency staff, training providers and others within the system email and message center.

The launch for features and programs offered through CTHires ran in a phased approach. Phase I, which occurred in December 2015, included Wagner-Peyser, Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) programs. Phase II brought the JFES module and Phase III will bring in the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) program.

The JFES program launched into CTHires in March 2018, making this a universal system for all the workforce development programs as WIOA, Wagner-Peyser and TAA launched as part of Phase I, in December 2015. The JFES module brought many benefits for the program, including:

- Improved compliance with JFES state and federal requirements for tracking participation hours and timeliness of service delivery,
- Developed a participant-directed and goal-driven employment plan which enables the participant and their Case Manager to collaborate on any modifications,
- Increased tracking of monetary penalties for noncompliance in cases where a participant must be referred for a potential sanction,
- Shared information with core partners including other workforce programs, state agencies, family service agency and childcare partners,
- Streamlined off-site auditing with comprehensive reporting components, and
- Enhanced data collection to ensure staff is capturing information accurately and timely.

After March 2018, the program development transitioned to developing the remaining requirements not required at the program launch date. These requirements include more specific JFES reports that rely on the use of Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) data from Department of Social Services (DSS). From March 2018 through November 2019, additional features have been or will be added to the JFES system, including:

- Overall improved functionality on system screens to save time on data entry,
- Enhanced attendance record functionality with an automated work participation report for federal TANF reporting needs,
• Increased alerts to notify case management staff of participant updates or system issues in a more timely manner,
• An automated interface with the subsidized childcare program to track participant applications, eligibility and enrollment in a child care program,
• Improved interfaces with DSS to track participant engagement in services and financial transactions for participation and transportation benefits, and
• Multiple program reports to track a wide variety of outcomes for JFES participants from employment and training outcomes, wage information, credential attainment, caseloads, timeliness of barrier resolution or management and access to supportive services, and progress in daily job searching tasks such as resume development.

2Gen Approach
The CTDOL Deputy Commissioner and the JFES Unit Director have been very involved in the state’s 2Gen Initiative. As a result, the CTDOL JFES unit is looking at the entire JFES program through the 2Gen lens and is pursuing a number of enhancements to the program that are in the spirit of 2Gen.

Family Centered Coaching
The Connecticut Department of Labor Jobs First Employment Services Unit is partnering with the Connecticut Association for Human Services for (1) 2 day training session on the topic of Family Centered Coaching. The training would be held on October 21, 2019 and October 29th at the DOL Central Office in Wethersfield. The trainees include approximately 35 individuals, including the staff in the DOL Jobs First Employment Services Unit, representatives from each of the 5 Workforce Development Boards and some of their frontline Jobs First program supervisors. In November, 2019, all JFES case managers around the state will also receive Family Centered Coaching training. This training is in conjunction with the State of Connecticut’s 2Gen Initiative.

As DOL looks at the JFES program through the 2Gen lens, this training will be the foundation of the Jobs First Employment Services program going forward and will shape the way JFES participants are connected to the JFES program and the customer flow will be driven by the principles learned in this training as we partner with the Workforce Development Boards to implement these changes. The DOL JFES Unit Director and Operations Coordinator have already been through this training and have a clear understanding of the value of the training and the impact it can have on the JFES program and its participants. The Family Centered Coaching approach puts the client in the driver’s seat where the client identifies the goals and challenges for themselves and their families. It focuses on the whole family unit rather than just the individual themselves. It also takes into account that families need different things at different times to move forward. This approach also incorporates a Mental Health screening component. Right now, approximately 50% of the clients referred to the JFES orientation session actually show up. We are moving from a group orientation session to a one on one orientation session which incorporates all of the principles of Family centered Coaching. We think this will improve the attendance rate at this orientation and
lead to a greater level of engagement of these families who are living in poverty.

**Implementation of Financial Literacy Workshops for Jobs First Employment Services (JFES) Participants:**
The Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL) has partnered with the Connecticut Association for Human Services (CAHS) to provide the “Money Matters” financial literacy workshop to all Jobs First Employment Services (JFES) participants within 90 days of being granted Temporary Family Assistance (TFA), Connecticut’s cash assistance program. The workshops are facilitated by CAHS volunteers and are held in all of the American Job Centers (AJCs) across the state. The goal of the workshop is to help JFES participants take steps toward financial empowerment. An additional three months of one-on-one financial coaching will be offered to all JFES participants. While financial empowerment includes the concept of financial literacy, the main focus is to build the skills needed to create a budget, manage money and make “smart” financial decisions. CAHS works to empower and equip CT residents to become financially stable and financially capable so they can build a secure future. These financial literacy workshops are being implemented statewide in November and December 2019.

In October 2018, CTDOL partnered with DSS, IRIS and Workforce Alliance to implement a pilot in New Haven which involved embedding a JFES case manager at the local Refugee Resettlement Agency (IRIS) in order to allow a more seamless transition for Refugees into the JFES program. This pilot was designed to remove some of the historical barriers that refugees have faced in transitioning into the JFES program, including confusion around who was supposed to serve them and to what extent, language barriers, transportation barriers and other bureaucratic obstacles. This Pilot has been referred to as a national model by representatives in the federal government who oversee services to refugees.

In April 2019, CTDOL launched a pilot in partnership with Uber and the Workforce Development Boards in the Eastern and Northwest regions. The pilot program was designed to provide an alternative transportation option for JFES clients living in these 2 regions where public transportation can sometimes be a problem for clients to seek or accept work. In July, 2019, that Pilot was expanded to include the South Central and Southwest regions as well. As of October 2019, four of the five workforce regions in Connecticut were piloting the use of Uber/Lyft for their JFES participants and it has been very impactful for people who do not live near public transportation systems.

CTDOL recently completed a Pilot program in partnership with the DSS Office of Child Support Services and the Judicial Department’s Office of Child Support Enforcement. Our three agencies came together to design a program that better connects dads who are unemployed and have child support obligations and attempts to connect them with employment services at our American Job Centers around the state with the goal being to help them become employed so that they can then meet their child support obligations. We piloted the program in Hartford, Waterbury and New Britain and will expand this program.
statewide in January. It’s a much more dignified approach for the dads who come into our offices and gives the Judicial Magistrates much better information on what level of effort the dads are putting into their job searches.

A pilot was introduced in SFY 19 to certify 6 staff associated with the Jobs First Employment Services (JFES) program in the art of Employment Interviewing. The six staff that comprised the pilot included one representative from the CT Department of Labor, and one representative from each of the five Workforce regions. The five regional staff consisted of front-line JFES Case Managers, workshop presenters, job coaches, and supervisors from Workforce Development Boards.

The CEIP credential is offered through the Professional Association of Resume Writers and Career Coaches (PARW/CC). PARW/CC was founded in 1990, becoming an industry leader as at a time when there were no other organizations for career professionals to exchange information and enhance skills to provide professional services to the general public. Besides the CEIP certification PARW also offers educational opportunity additional industry-recognized credentials, including Certified Professional Résumé Writer (CPRW), Certified Professional Career Coach (CPCC), and Certified Empowerment & Motivational Professional (CEMP).

The pilot CEIP group is currently creating a workshop to be presented in each Workforce region specifically for JFES clients. The JFES staff serves clients who currently are receiving cash assistance through the Connecticut Department of Social Services. The majority of JFES clients come with multiple barriers to employment, including lack of transportation, childcare, reading and math deficiencies, as well as having little or no work history. These barriers present unique challenges when clients attempt to enter the workforce, so the goal of the new workshop will be to help JFES clients learn how to go through the interview process by giving them skills and tools for interviewing in today’s job market. The workshop will cover the basics, such as what to wear and what to bring, as well as more in-depth information such as non-verbal communication, developing strategies to respond to common interview questions, questions to ask the employer, and how to appropriately follow up after the interview. The strategies for interview responses will cover unique situations such as having no work experience, or multiple short-term periods of employment (otherwise known as “job hopping”) and potential barriers such as criminal history. Additionally, the workshop will include an hour dedicated to clients participating in mock interviews, which can be a very insightful learning experience that will show clients specifically how they can improve their interviewing skills.

With the success of the pilot CEIP group, the CT Department of Labor saw the value in dedicating time and resources to have all staff of the JFES and Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs, state wide, obtain the CEIP certification. Being CEIP certified has added, and will continue to add, validity to staff member skillsets when it comes to their capabilities as interviewing professionals. This certification process
represents an enormous step forward for Connecticut in building the capacity of its workforce professionals and the quality of the guidance being given to clients concerning their job interviews. Front-line staff for JFES and WIOA is co-located in the American Job Centers throughout the State of Connecticut. The CT Department of Labor JFES staff work closely with PARW/CC to coordinate the certification efforts through 4 sessions occurring within the state program year 2020. In each session, a blend of JFES and WIOA staff obtain certifications, starting with a motivational and educational kick-off meeting hosted by CT Department of Labor JFES staff that explain the expectations and give an overview of CEIP certification.

Revamped customer flow- CTDOL is currently reviewing the customer flow for the JFES program and plans to make dramatic changes to the current flow. First, CTDOL’s JFES Unit will be forming a workgroup along with representatives of the 5 WDBs. We intend to change the current flow which requires the client to attend an initial group JFES orientation and instead, have the client attend a one on one meeting with their case manager which will incorporate many of the strategies learned in the Family Centered Coaching training. A mental health screening tool, the Patient Health Questionnaire-2, will also be incorporated into one of the first couple of appointments.

CTDOL’s JFES unit is in the process of reviewing the informational packets that are provided to all JFES clients at their initial orientation to the program. The plan is to include more information pertaining to both employment and barrier removal. Informational brochures on Apprenticeship opportunities, a Connecticut Career Paths booklet, new Job Search strategies booklets and details on the barrier removal services available to JFES clients will all be included in the updated packets.

In SFY 17, Language Line was purchased and launched for the JFES Case Managers to use with their non-English speaking clients. Language Line services translates 240 languages by using 10,000 professionally trained individuals. Language line is accessed by calling a 1-800 number, entering a special code and asking for the language needed for the interpreter services. The interpreter services are available 24/7. The Language Line services are available statewide in all 5 workforce development regions.

For the Job’s First program, Language Line insures that non-English/limited-English speaking individuals would be able to hear and understand all the program requirements, and benefits of the program in their own language. The Job’s First Staff would be able to provide the best possible service to their clients by being able to understand what their clients need. This utilization of Language Line helps bridge language and cultural barriers to help strengthen client and case manager relationships, as well as build trust. The service has proven a valuable and critical tool for JFES case managers and has remained funded consistently since its launch.

“Do What You Are” is an assessment tool used to determine a Personality Type based on
the book of the same name and research completed by Paul Tieger. Personality Types include sixteen different combinations of four unique personality indicators and tendencies, represented by a series of letters (INTJ, ENTP, INFP, etc.). These types were coined by Carl Jung, the father of analytical psychology, and the letters are a convenience to shorten the types. The letters were developed by Katharine Cook Briggs, who co-authored the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). “Do What You Are” also utilizes this shorthand. The theory is individuals that belong to a specific Personality Type are likely to behave in a certain way. Paul Tieger, in collaboration with Career Team LLC, developed a web-based version of the assessment that was purchased by the JFES Program in SFY 17. Shortly after the roll-out of this new tool, CT Department of Labor held a kick-off presentation featuring Paul Tieger and Career Team, so all JFES case management staff received training on how to use the tool and the theories behind it.

A total of 1,500 licenses (300 each) were distributed to each of the 5 Workforce Board Regions for SFY 17. The assessment for “Do What You Are” tests individuals on these indicators and tendencies to provide clients with their own Personality Type and then makes the connection from Personality Type to potential alignment with suitable employment prospects. Clients receive a printable report that details information on their Personality Type and employment options to consider.

The “Do What You Are” assessment tool has been in use for over 3 years by the JFES Case Management staff. For SFY 20, it will be a prerequisite for Job’s First clients to attend a new Interviewing workshop created by JFES staff that has received the Certified Employment Interview Professional credential. Prior to attendance in the Interviewing workshop, clients must complete the “Do What You Are” assessment and bring a copy of the “Do What You Are” printed report listing their Personality Type and possible employment prospects to their case manager. Requiring the client to bring the “Do What You Are” report to the Interviewing workshop will help the workshop presenter to guide the Interviewing workshop’s content by tailoring their interviewing advice towards the unique characteristics of their clients.

For SFY 20, the JFES unit recommended each Workforce Development Board (WDB) purchase desktop scanners that are compliant for use with the JFES and CTDOL electronic business system, CTHires. The paperwork burden on JFES participants and staff can be quite large, and all documentation is currently saved in a paper file which creates, at times, bulky records and ongoing needs for secured physical storage facilities. In an effort to go paperless, the JFES unit at CTDOL advised the WDBs of an implementation schedule as to when and how documents can be scanned into the electronic business system in order to avoid having to maintain a paper system.

This implementation schedule started on October 1, 2019 and continues in four phases through May 1, 2020. The JFES program staff will be scanning in documents including pay stubs to verify employment, verification forms for attendance in federally-mandated work
activities, letters sent to the participant for appointment reminders or engagement needs, and electronic copies of the employment plan.

When possible, CTDOL is also advising the JFES staff to shred physical paper forms after securely scanning the documents into the business system. Some forms also allow the ability to bypass physical printed copies altogether. For example, the JFES Employment Plan can be signed using an electronic signature pad in CTHires. If the participant agrees, this plan can be emailed as opposed to printed so the participant can retain a copy while the master record remains in the CTHires business system. Lastly, this effort will enhance the CTDOL JFES unit’s ability to monitor cases off site, reducing the need to travel and review physical paper copies for questioned items. All documentation required for case reviews will now be securely stored within CTHires. The DOL JFES Unit is partnering with Capital Workforce Partners, the State Office of Early Childhood (OEC) and their 36 vendor organizations to pilot an initiative that involves having OEC vendors come to a handful of JFES Orientations to give a brief presentation about their home visitation program that is designed to improve parenting skills, ensure child safety, ensure that women bring their pregnancies to successful full term births and improve the employability of the parent who may want to work. OEC estimates that almost all of our JFES participants would be eligible for one of the home visitation programs that they offer. We agreed to start small and gauge the potential level of interest on the part of our JFES clients and then proceed accordingly. If this model proves to be successful, we would expect to expand this model statewide. This partnership has great potential for expanding 2Gen footprint in Connecticut. We are hoping to launch this 3 week pilot with all the appropriate stakeholders in early 2020 at the Hartford AJC.

The DOL JFES Unit is also working with the State Office of Early Childhood on a second initiative. This initiative involves educating OEC vendors who conduct these home visits to parents, to assist them in becoming employed or get into training. Currently, these vendor staff has limited knowledge of all that is offered through the American Job Centers. CTDOL is pursuing the possibility of having a tour/information session(s) conducted by a DOL Unit Director in each of the 5 comprehensive offices to increase their familiarity with what we have to offer. We would expect this to happen in early 2020.

The DOL JFES Unit is required to produce an Annual report on the details of the program. For the first time ever, the DOL JFES unit produced their Annual Report for SFY18 in the form of a customized video rather than a printed document. The 8 minute video was produced in partnership with the Media team at Middlesex Community College and the 5 Workforce Development Boards in Connecticut. The video featured both program data as well as several success stories of JFES clients and their employers telling their stories in their own voices on camera which resulted in a very powerful video. The DOL JFES Unit is currently working on their video for the SFY19 Annual Report which will feature a number of refugees who are participating in the New Haven JFES Refugee pilot.
In 2018, the CTDOL JFES Unit launched a second video project in partnership with Middlesex Community College and the 5 Workforce Development Boards. This time, the goal was to create an updated video that would be shown to all JFES clients at the JFES Orientation sessions around the state. This video would replace the old video which was more than 10 years old. The video was integrated into the JFES Orientation sessions in early 2019 and has been incredibly well received by our JFES participants who say that they find the video to be very inspiring. CTDOL’s JFES Unit works in close partnership with the 5 WDBs to identify the training needs of the JFES case managers around the state. The CTDOL JFES Unit is responsible for organizing and implementing many of the professional development activities that the JFES case managers attend throughout the year. The grid shown below outlines the various trainings that the JFES case managers have attended throughout the past 4 years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Topic</th>
<th>Facilitator(s)</th>
<th>First Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family-centered coaching Training</td>
<td>Liz Fraser</td>
<td>10/21/2019</td>
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<td>CEIP- Certified Employment Interviewer Professional</td>
<td>PARW/CC Self-study guide</td>
<td>10/10/2019</td>
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<td>CEIP -Certified Employment Interviewer Professional</td>
<td>PARW/CC Self-study guide</td>
<td>7/12/2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Successful Interviewing-Building Magic</td>
<td>Jay Block</td>
<td>6/14/2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two Gen Overview</td>
<td>Sarah Griffen</td>
<td>6/14/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Mike Fazio- Workforce 180</td>
<td>6/14/2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diversity Skills Training</td>
<td>Carol Boin and Carlos Figeroa-CREC</td>
<td>4/25/2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advanced Facilitation/ Presentation Skills Training</td>
<td>Cindy Maher (Leading Edge Coaching and Development)</td>
<td>2/8/2019</td>
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<td>211/ Care 4 Kids Overview</td>
<td>Annie Scully, Kate Quigley (211ct) Troy Moore, Care 4 Kids</td>
<td>1/18/2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEIP- Certified Employment Interviewer Professional</td>
<td>PARW/CC Self-study guide</td>
<td>1/2/2019</td>
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<td>Employer Engagement Training</td>
<td>Mike Fazio- Workforce 180</td>
<td>10/11/2018</td>
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<td>Developing Awareness, Skill-Building and Motivation</td>
<td>Cindy Maher (Leading Edge Coaching and Development)</td>
<td>6/22/2018</td>
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<td>Domestic Violence Training</td>
<td>Linda Blozie (CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence)</td>
<td>11/9/2018</td>
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<td>Your Money, Your Goals</td>
<td>Faye Griffiths-Smith-UConn Extension</td>
<td>10/12/2018</td>
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<td>ADS Referral Training</td>
<td>Alicia Kucharczyk</td>
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<td>Motivational Interviewing</td>
<td>Tiffany Parkhouse</td>
<td>6/6/2018</td>
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<td>Professional Ethics &amp; Case Notes Training</td>
<td>Bruce Benson</td>
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<td>Substance Abuse Training</td>
<td>Richard Fisher (DMHAS)</td>
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<td>CASAS Training</td>
<td>Astrid Robitaille</td>
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<td>Resume Training</td>
<td>Deb Walker- Diana Ryan</td>
<td>11/17/2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Speaking / Presentation Skills</td>
<td>Carol Boin</td>
<td>10/16/2019</td>
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**National Health Emergency- Dislocated Worker Opioid Emergency Grant**

In 2016 Connecticut ranked 11th among all states in highest rate of overdoses, with 27.4 deaths per every 100,000 people. This increase was seen in every county in CT across all racial populations and across all economic incomes. [https://ctmirror.org/category/ct-viewpoints/connecticuts-opioid-epidemic-a-glimpse-of-the-last-five-years/](https://ctmirror.org/category/ct-viewpoints/connecticuts-opioid-epidemic-a-glimpse-of-the-last-five-years/). The disaster has
led to significant effects on CT's Labor Force Participation as indicated in the American Action Forum report "State by State: The Labor Force and Economic Effects of the Opioid Crises". The report indicates the growth in prescription opioids from 1999-2015 caused the prime labor force participation rate to decline in CT by 1.6% or a loss of 22,900 jobs. This decline resulted in a cumulative cost of 310 million work hours to Connecticut’s economy at a loss of $18.2 billion dollars in real economic output.

In October 2019, the Connecticut Department of Labor was awarded $1,585,948 with up to $4,757,845.00 for the CT National Health Emergency (NHE) Dislocated Worker Grant (DWG). The “CT Works to Recover” program will provide workforce services to Connecticut’s diverse population by leveraging existing resources with new initiatives. In coordination with the CT Department of Labor, each of the state’s five workforce development boards will work together to provide both state-wide and local initiatives aimed at providing training, career services and support, employer out-reach and disaster related employment to the state. The grant will combine two state-wide initiatives with five regional initiatives which will be coordinated through a Workforce Opioid Advisory Board selected and coordinated by the CT Department of Labor Commissioner or his designee.

**State-Wide Initiatives**

Each comprehensive American Job Center will employ at least one Peer Recovery Navigator, supported by the WIOA NHE/DWG Disaster Employment Grant. Trained at the minimum level of Certified Counselors in Training or Peer Recovery Coaches, navigators will work to identify individuals in the occupations most associated with abuse and provide them with referrals to remove barriers, provide supportive services, obtain counseling and treatment and return participants to their former employment or employment which is more suited to their recovery efforts. These navigators will work at the American Job Centers and their hubs and in the communities they serve to provide the support services needed to obtain and continue in occupations that provide a living wage. In addition, Peer Navigators will work on the Employer Recovery Friendly Initiative. All Peer Recovery Navigators will be enrolled in CT’s Certified Alcohol and Drug Counseling Apprenticeship Program.

CT will join the growing number of states committed to providing employers with training on “Recovery Friendly Workplaces”. Recovery Friendly Workplaces (RFW's) support their communities by recognizing recovery from substance use disorder as strength and by being willing to work intentionally with people in recovery. RFW's encourage a healthy and safe environment where employers, employees, and communities can collaborate to create positive change and eliminate barriers for those impacted by addiction. Through its Business Service Unit and with the assistance of Peer Navigators, American Job Center will reach out to employers in the state of CT who wish to be designated by the Governor as “Recovery Friendly”. Employers wishing to be designated as Recovery Friendly must attend an orientation, complete a short training program, commit to a recovery friendly work environment and be subject to an annual review. Employers designated as Recovery Friendly will receive recognition by the Governor, a distinctive sign to display regarding their
designation, be advertised as a Recovery Friendly Workplace and receive valuable referral options for those affected by substance abuse and mental health issues.

**Local Initiatives**

**Connecticut’s Workforce Development Boards (WDBs)**
Connecticut’s Workforce Development Boards conduct comprehensive planning, and coordinate regional workforce development policy and programs. With a regional focus, the Boards assess regional employment and training needs and priorities, conduct planning for and coordinate programs that address those needs. In addition, the Boards create annual employment and training plans, and review regional grant proposals and plans submitted to state agencies by other organizations to assure that all regional planning is consistent with an overall statewide blueprint for workforce development. The Boards, with the Connecticut Department of Labor, other State agencies and private organizations, form a statewide partnership to achieve comprehensive workforce development in the State.

**Workforce Development Board Initiatives**
The following demonstrates Connecticut’s Workforce Development Boards leadership in attracting funds to support Connecticut’s workforce development efforts across the education and training continuum and the willingness of the WDBs to play a critical intermediary role in the efforts led by higher education and workforce system partners. Together they have developed and implemented several new industry sector partnerships with career pathway components.

**Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board (EWIB)**

- **EWIB’s Health Professions Opportunity Grant**
The Health Professions Opportunity Grant (HPOG) is a five-year $7.5 million-dollar grant awarded to the Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board and its partners, the Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board, and Workforce Alliance. The grant is focused on training participants receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and other low-income individuals in entry level healthcare occupations and advancing them along a healthcare career pathway.

- **Health Careers Advancement Project (HCAP)**
Health Careers Advancement Project (HCAP) funding provides opportunities for TANF recipients and other low income individuals to enter and advance along four health career pathways through a) work-readiness and contextualized basic skills boot camp; b) occupational skills training resulting in a community college certificate; c) intensive, person-centered case management and other supportive services; d) work-based learning opportunities; and e) job placement assistance. Funding was awarded competitively to the Eastern Workforce Investment Board, in collaboration with Workforce Alliance and the Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board. This
contract period is renewed annually, with a start date each period of October 1.

- **The Eastern Connecticut Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative**
  The Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative (MPI) was established by the Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board (EWIB), in partnership with manufacturing employers, community colleges, technical high schools, and workforce development partners, to respond to large-scale employer demand for skilled manufacturing workers. It is funded by a Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) grant from the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) awarded to the Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL). Two overarching goals undergird the MPI:
  1. Enhance strategic collaboration and alignment of workforce development and partner programs by ensuring that workforce development activities target the identified needs of regional employers through customized training, aligning training and employment services with available jobs, and expanding employer commitments to hire program completers.
  2. Strengthen the quality of American Job Center (AJC) services by increasing the use of high-quality skills assessment tools and case management methods, and by working directly with employers to identify training needs in growing industry sectors.

The program completed on September 30, 2018 with the following results:
- 6,681 portal registrants (exceeding the goal of 1,350)
- 1,400 of these portal registrants earned high scores on the skills assessment (exceeding the goal of 564) which was developed by Electric Boat, other manufacturers, and the regional community colleges
- 74 Information sessions were delivered to 1140 individuals
- 823 individuals enrolled in the program (exceeding the goal of 450) which included completing the one-on-one appointment with the case manager who developed a personal service plan as well as identifying the support service needs and informing of stipend policy
- Customized trainings included Welding; Design; Introduction to Manufacturing; Sheetmetal/Shipfitter; Electrical; Inside Machinist; Outside Machinist
- 44 training cohorts were held during this time
- All participants that completed the program earned Pre-apprenticeship certifications from CTDOL Office of Apprenticeship Training
- 745 individuals employed
- Although the USDOL funds have been exhausted, MPI services continued to be offered and has been sustained by using a variety of resources, from CT DOL funds to Foundation and Philanthropic and continues to be strong. Foundation funding provided an opportunity to replicate the program at several area high schools with a Youth MPI program.
**Mortgage Crisis Job Training Program**

The Mortgage Crisis Job Training Program helps home owners who are two or more months behind in their mortgage gain the skills they need to be able to earn more money to become financially stable by providing employment assistance. Services include:

- Job Training Scholarships
- Financial Literacy
- Credit Counseling
- Referrals to other needed services

The Mortgage Crisis Job Training Program staff work in partnership with credit counselors and other support agencies to help improve your financial standing with lenders.

**Platform to Employment**

The Platform to Employment (P2E) program was launched by The WorkPlace to assist the long-term unemployed return to work while addressing employers’ needs to recruit skilled workers. P2E provides businesses a risk-free opportunity to evaluate and consider hiring qualified participants in a work experience program. P2E supports individuals who have exhausted their unemployment benefits and remain unemployed.

Participants engage in a structured preparatory program including skills assessment, career readiness workshops, employee assistance services, coaching and other supports. Upon completion, participants are helped to find open positions at local companies. Placements occur on a trial basis and are subsidized over an eight-week period. The expectation is that a company satisfied with a candidate’s performance will offer a full-time job.

The Connecticut General Assembly continues to fund P2E on a statewide basis with classes held in Bridgeport, Waterbury, New Haven, Hartford and the Norwich/New London areas. P2E’s success is unparalleled. Nearly 80% of Connecticut participants who complete the preparatory program take the next step into a paid work experience with local companies. Of this population, nearly 90 percent have successfully moved to employer payrolls with average annual earning at placement in excess of $50,000.

**Southwestern Connecticut Health CareeRx Academy (HCA)**

The Southwestern Connecticut Health CareeRx Academy (HCA) provides tuition assistance and support to help participants obtain a career in the growing healthcare field. The WorkPlace’s Health CareeRx Academy is a broad partnership of healthcare providers, educators, trainers, and community-based organizations in Southwestern Connecticut. Designed with input from employers, HCA’s mission is to meet the current
and evolving workforce needs of healthcare employers. The HCA provides occupational training, work readiness, and other supports to individuals who desire to begin or advance a career in healthcare. All training by HCA leads to a certificate or degree and prepares individuals to pass a state or national licensing exam.

The HCA provides tuition assistance and other supports to help people build a career. Participants have access to career readiness and personal growth classes and seminars. Upon completion, participants can move into occupational skills training in a variety of healthcare related fields. Program participants residing in Southwestern Connecticut receiving TANF, meeting program requirements, impacted by a layoff or position elimination may also be eligible for comprehensive support services and access to internship opportunities and job placement assistance.

**Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)**
A Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) funded by the U.S. Department of Labor under Title V of the Older Americans Act enables the provision of job skills training to low-income Individuals, age 55 and older. Ready to Work participants are placed in temporary training assignments where they receive valuable on-the-job work experience and training needed to gain meaningful employment. Participants will work 20 hours a week at the training sites for which they will be paid minimum wage.

Program goals include:
- assisting participants in acquiring marketable jobs skills;
- helping participants secure meaningful unsubsidized employment program objectives;
- participating in community service assignments to learn new skills in on the job training;
- assisting participants with résumé development;
- assisting in developing job search skills;
- increasing opportunities to obtain jobs in the private sector;
- referring participants to supportive services as needed; and
- changing stereotypes about older workers through public education and demonstrated success.

The WorkPlace has branded the SCSEP program as *MaturityWorks*. During the most recent program year *MaturityWorks* provided services to over 350 participants experiencing severely limited employment prospects and having on average nearly 3 significant barriers to employment. Significant barriers to employment may include but are not limited to, lacking a substantial employment history, basic skills, and/or English-language proficiency, lacking a high school diploma or the equivalent or experiencing mental and physical impairments, homelessness or persistent unemployment. The median earnings for participants placed in employment through *MaturityWorks* was $3,339.
**Workforce Alliance, Inc. - South Central Connecticut’s Workforce Development Board**

- **Hospitality Pipeline Training**
  The Hospitality Pipeline training program seeks to begin to build an industry pipeline for the hospitality industry. This project offers an important opportunity to enhance employment-focused services and system capacity for the public workforce system in meeting the fast-growing needs of this sector. Participants will explore careers and career pathways in the hospitality industry as well as receive industry recognized credentials. Career pathways include Food Service operations, convention and event management, and lodging operations.

- **Skill Up for Manufacturing**
  The Skill Up for Manufacturing program is a five-week training program run in conjunction with area Community Colleges. Advanced training will initially be offered in areas of Welding, Mechatronics and Plastics. Additionally, grant funds will be used to provide guidance and technical assistance to select school districts in the region as they develop pre-apprenticeship training in manufacturing. This program seeks to begin to build an industry pipeline for the manufacturing industry. This project offers an important opportunity to enhance employment-focused training and system capacity for the public workforce system and its education and industry partners in meeting the fast-growing needs of this sector. Funding, provided by the State of Connecticut Bond Commission, and supplemented with Workforce Alliance WIOA formula funds, will be used to provide entry level and advanced manufacturing skills training, technical assistance to area schools and project support. Additional school districts in the region will offer expanded pre-apprenticeship training through the Apprenticeship Connecticut Initiative.

- **Ticket to Work**
  Ticket to Work is an initiative where individuals with disabilities who are on Social Security Disability Benefits and who are able to work, are encouraged and provided incentives to do so. The savings differential based on earnings and savings from SSA are passed on as a reimbursement to Workforce Alliance in unrestricted funds.

- **Listen for Good**
  Listen for Good is a research project, developed with financial support from the Fund for Shared Insight, a private foundation seeking to improve customer outcomes. Workforce Alliance was awarded $30,000 to design, develop and conduct customer service and customer feedback instruments and use the findings to improve the jobseeker experience in their American Job Centers in the region.

- **Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority (CHEFA)**
  The Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority (CHEFA) awarded Workforce Alliance $100,000 to assist participants in addressing unique barriers to employment.
The grant provides funds to remove barriers to employment, which typically are unpaid training costs, transportation, childcare, and work-related necessities (uniforms, tools, etc.).

- **Health Careers Advancement Project**
  The Health Careers Advancement Project provides opportunities for TANF recipients and other low income individuals to enter and advance along four health career pathways through a) work-readiness and contextualized basic skills boot camp; b) occupational skills training resulting in a community college certificate; c) intensive, person-centered case management and other supportive services; d) work-based learning opportunities; and e) job placement assistance. Funding was awarded competitively to the Eastern Workforce Investment Board, in collaboration with Workforce Alliance and the Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board. This contract period is renewed annually with a start date each period of October 1.

- **Department of Children and Families (DCF) Summer Youth Employment**
  Department of Children and Families (DCF) Summer Youth Employment Program provides summer employability skills to youth age 14-21 that are determined to be in the care and custody of the Connecticut Department of Children and Families. The youth are referred from DCF to Workforce Alliance for services. The program offers work experience or work-based learning at both private and public sector worksites. The youth are supported during participation by individuals who provide case management, mentoring, guidance and counseling. Academic enrichment and financial literacy may also be offered, and an effort will be made to connect these youth to other year-round activities and services provided by Workforce Alliance and the American Job Centers.

- **Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)**
  Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) funding assists veteran families at risk of homelessness to maintain their housing and to rapidly re-house veteran families who have recently become homeless. This Veterans' Administration funded program provides case management to support housing stability, education, and job placement. Those in need of more comprehensive workforce development services are linked with a Career Advisor in the American Job Centers. Also included are coordination and linkages to VA benefits, transportation assistance, rental assistance, and legal services. This grant was awarded on a competitive basis.

- **TechHire - ITXpress**
  TechHire, known locally as ITXpress, was launched in the fall of 2016. It is a USDOL national discretionary grant, which is focused on serving young adults aged 17-29, and incumbent workers, to prepare them for careers and career advancement in the Information Technology sector. A variety of training modalities will be utilized, including classroom training, online learning, on-the-job training, and apprenticeships and internships. This grant will operate for four years and feature a high level of sector
involvement from area employers. This program will end in June, 2020 with a potential of a one year no-cost extension.

- **Pre-Employment and Training Services (PETS)/Level Up**
The Pre-Employment and Training Services (PETS)/Level Up initiative is a grant from the State of Connecticut, Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS), designed to provide workshops for in-school youth with disabilities. The workshops will provide instruction in work readiness, labor market information, career pathways and other relevant topics. This program is reimbursed on a fee-for-service basis and also leverages the assets of other funding sources through the American Job Center and its partners.

**Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board (NRWIB)**

- **Northwest Construction Careers Initiative (NCCI)**
The Northwest Construction Careers Initiative (NCCI) continues to offer residents of the Northwest region a coordinated system of outreach, recruitment, assessment, case management, and placement for career opportunities in the construction building trades. NCCI, now in its 15th year, works in partnership with the local trade unions and private sector companies to encourage apprenticeship in the construction trades. The system brings together community-based organizations, direct-service providers such as the American Job Center in Waterbury, the local school system, the building trades and other community groups to achieve specific goals. The NCCI also coordinates Asbestos, Lead and HAZWOPER refresher classes for program participants.

NCCI, which operates as a program within the NRWIB, also administers the City of Waterbury's Good Job Ordinance, a local hire ordinance that requires publicly-funded construction contractors and construction-related projects to employ a certain percentage of Waterbury residents on project crews. The NRWIB provides a fee for service function to the City of Waterbury serving as the administrator for its Section 3 HUD programs.

- **YouthBuild**
The Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board (NRWIB) received its first $1.1m dollar YouthBuild Grant from the U.S. Department of Labor. YouthBuild Waterbury provides education and training with a strong pre-apprenticeship component that helps at-risk youth complete high school or state equivalency degree programs, earn industry-recognized credentials, and undergo training to build housing for low-income or homeless individuals and families. The objective of this program is to provide low-income young people the opportunity to learn construction skills through building affordable housing for homeless and low-income people in their neighborhoods. For unemployed young people who left high school without a diploma, YouthBuild Waterbury is an opportunity to reclaim their education, gain the skills they need for
employment, and become leaders in their communities. As a competency-based dropout recovery program, we seek to provide a high school education that leads to a diploma for a distinct group of students. YouthBuild Waterbury program participants, between the ages of 16 to 24, come from the under-served community of Waterbury and have previously left or been pushed out of the traditional school system without a diploma. At the time of enrollment, most program participants would be over-aged, under-credited, or both, in order to receive vocational training, counseling, leadership development and an education. The mission of YouthBuild Waterbury is to cultivate collaborative learning communities in which every student has the right to an authentic education, plays a meaningful role in creating positive social change.

All young people, regardless of circumstances, should have access to an education that will prepare them to counter social inequities and realize their full potential. The goal of YB Waterbury is to empower young people to transform themselves and become leaders in their communities. YB Waterbury begins with ‘Mental Toughness’ an eight-day boot-camp style training designed to assess potential YB Waterbury participants and to provide the candidates with an understanding of the YB Waterbury program. Upon successful completion of Mental Toughness, participants are invited to move on to the classroom and on-the-job training components of the program.

- **WIOA Demonstration Grant – Retail Industry**
  The Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board assembled a partnership with the National Retail Federation Foundation, Connecticut Retail Merchants Association and area Adult Education providers to address the region’s most pressing workforce needs in the retail industry. This regional collaboration strives to address the employment needs of each town in the Northwest CT region and focuses on those areas with the most concentrated employment needs. This program provides out-of-school youth ages 16-24, with a groundbreaking training and credentialing initiative, designed by the retail industry, to help youth acquire the skills they need to land jobs in the retail industry and advance into promising careers. The following nationally recognized credentialing programs, stackable and transferable across the nation, are available to eligible participants:

  - **Customer Service and Sales**: a classroom-based, instructor-led program that typically takes 40 hours to complete. The Customer Service and Sales curriculum is designed to help entry-level sales and service associates learn skills related to frontline work in retail or any industry that values customer service and sales skills.

  - **Advanced Customer Service and Sales**: designed for sales and service associates looking to expand their skills in retail and other sales and service-focused industries. This is a classroom-based, instructor-led program that typically takes 40 hours to
complete. Candidates must earn the basic Customer Service and Sales credential to be eligible for this course.

• **Business Services**
The NRWIB is an aggressive partner in the region’s business services team (BST). The BST has relationships with area retailers including CVS and other locally owned retail entities. The Connecticut Retail Merchants Association (CRMA) currently has partnerships developed with several area retailers such as Macy’s Department Store, Home Depot, BJ’S Wholesale Club, Target and AT&T Telecommunications Company. Representatives from partner companies have engaged in an Employer Advisory Board which informed CRMA on their curriculum, ensuring the training would prepare graduates for a successful career in the retail industry. These partnerships are leveraged to secure internship slots for participants. Partner employers have committed to give special hiring consideration to those candidates who have achieved these credentials.

• **WIOA Transitional Jobs**
In an effort to sustain the success of our Disability Employment Initiative Program, the NRWIB has earmarked WIOA Transitional Jobs funds to continue improving outcomes for in-school and out-of-school persons with disabilities. This program aims to serve those who are looking to transition into high-quality post-secondary education, career-pathway training programs, career exploration, and the workforce system. Built on the notion that youth with disabilities need added supports and opportunities to develop and learn an internship component is also incorporated. American Job Center (AJC) resources such as Résumé Writing, CTHires and various work-readiness workshops are also available for participants to access. Outreach efforts in the region have led to a significant increase in persons with disabilities using AJC career services, working to land an internship, seeking training, or entering employment. The partnership in this effort includes six local school districts: Waterbury, Watertown, Naugatuck, Torrington, Ridgefield and Region 6. The NRWIB provides funds for an internship program for persons with disabilities for which participants are paid $14 per hour to participate.

• **Tech Hire - ITXpress**
The NRWIB, in partnership with the South Central workforce board, offers Information Technology (IT) training and career support through the ITXpress program. Funded by a $4 million TechHire Partnership Grant from USDOL, the program offers training to unemployed and out-of-school young adults (ages 17-29) with barriers. Young adult training focuses on attaining a number of Information Technology credentials including a CompTIA A+ credential. Support services, which often make the difference in being able to remain and participate in training, are also provided under the grant and are awarded on the basis of need and commitment. ITXpress has served 285 young adults, 57 incumbent workers. 195 participants have obtained industry-recognized credentials, 140 participants have obtained employment at companies such as Insurity, QScend, TekSystems, Millennium, and Community Health Network with salaries as high as
$65,000. In support services such as childcare assistance, transportation assistance, short-term internet connection, on-the-job training opportunities and internships/paid work experiences are available to support the program participants.

- **Health Profession Opportunity Grant**
  
  The *Connecticut Health* NRWIB, in partnership with Eastern Workforce Investment Board and Workforce Alliance, offers healthcare job training support funded by a Health Profession Opportunity Grant through the United States Department of Health and Human Services. All potential participants are subjected to a rigorous screening process including a background check, drug testing, and CASAS testing. Upon fulfillment of those requirements, the participant moves on to what is known as the randomization process where they go on to be selected by computer-generated lottery for acceptance into the program. The majority of our participants have completed Patient Care Technician training. Participants have also received credentials as Certified Nurse’s Aides, Medical Administrative Assistants, Emergency Medical Technicians and Pharmacy Technicians.

  A pool of emergency funds is available to address needs of participants that deviate from standard support services (e.g. childcare, transportation, uniform assistance). In some instances, these funds have been used to assist in rental payment while the participant is actively participating in the program. This practice has proven to greatly impact the success of the program and has been adopted in program development.

- **Ticket to Work**
  
  The NRWIB is a Social Security-approved Ticket to Work "Employment Network". Ticket to Work is a free and voluntary program offered by Social Security that assists people age 18 through 64 who receive Social Security disability benefits and who are interested in returning to work or working for the first time. By participating, a person who is interested in working receives support throughout their journey to financial independence.

  Ticket to Work helps persons who receive SSI or SSDI benefits to obtain vocational counseling, training, job readiness, job referrals and other employment support services, free of charge. Services that NRWIB and the American Job Center can provide to Ticket holders include:
  - career counseling
  - résumé development and interview preparation
  - a wide variety of employment workshops
  - referrals to additional services and supports
  - job matching and job development
  - SSA disability benefits advisement referral
  - job accommodations instruction and assistance
  - possibility of training through WIOA funds, based on eligibility
  - follow-up supports and retention services after employment
• **Home Works**
The Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board (NRWIB) has developed a program, “Home Works” which helps to address the issue of economic insecurity, lack of employment opportunities, and homelessness in Waterbury. The program provides employment services that assist homeless individuals attain housing and economic self-sufficiency. This program employs an innovative approach that affords individuals and their families the platform they need to pursue economic independence. Funded by the United Way Collaborative, this program provides rent subsidies to get homeless families into housing, coupled with an aggressive employment and training component to keep them there.

As the NRWIB worked with the United Way, Waterbury’s Early Childhood Office, New Opportunities, St. Vincent de Paul Place, Salvation Army, the Center for Human Development and others it became clear that an Employment Focused Program with Housing, similar to Honolulu’s Rent to Work Program could be replicated here and have a profound impact on the homeless community. In an effort to expand and enhance the program, NRWIB will work closely with the City of Waterbury to establish further resources. Home Works is designed to address needs and mitigate the barriers to securing and maintaining housing. Our Tenant Based Rental Assistance program coordinates with homeless service providers, emergency/transitional shelters, churches and other community agencies through the media, email, phone, site visits, newsletters, brochures, fliers, etc. to continue to promote the program and inform potential participants. Participants are assigned a dedicated Career Navigator who helps them follow a Housing Employment and Learning Plan (HELP) geared toward gaining and maintaining employment; increasing savings; sustaining a fair market rental unit; and transitioning to affordable housing.

• **Apprenticeship Connecticut Initiative**
This program focuses on addressing the shortage of skilled workers in the manufacturing sector. A regional partnership comprises the following entities: Manufacturing Alliance Service Corporation, Northwestern CT Community College, Naugatuck Valley Community College, CT Technical High Schools, Torrington High School, Danbury High School, New Milford High School, and Waterbury high schools along with sixteen employers throughout the northwest workforce region and several business associations and Chambers of Commerce. The project provides separate training programs by creating pipelines for 11th or 12th grade students and individuals 18 years of age or older who are not currently enrolled in 11th or 12th grade.

Training programs available include (but are not limited to):
- Introduction to Manufacturing (7 weeks)
- Introduction to Machinist (30 weeks)
- Fundamentals of Manufacturing Technology
- Engineering Drawing Specifications (8 weeks)
- Manufacturing Process/Precision Machining (8 weeks)

**Digital Literacy**
The Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board offers basic computer classes which are open to the public. Classes are on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. and run for six weeks at the Waterbury American Job Center. Students are given the option of attending all six weeks’ worth of classes or selecting the classes they need from the following list: Digital Literacy Orientation, Windows (File) Explorer, Computer Basics, Internet Explorer, Word I, Word II, Word III, Excel I, Excel II, Excel III, PowerPoint I and PowerPoint II.

**Connecticut Works to Recover - Employer Friendly Workforce Initiative**
The Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board has created a multi-entry point career pathway designed to increase the number of credentialed counselors and address the needs of its member communities in addressing Connecticut’s opioid crisis. Identification of eligible participants at each entry point is geared to address necessary prerequisites to move forward to the next level. This comprehensive training program contains three components: classroom training, clinical apprenticeship opportunities, and documentation of the required number of clinical supervision hours which varies in accordance with education attained by participant. Upon completion of the three components, the successful participant attains pre-requisites for credentials and, where applicable, is prepared for the certification or licensure exam. In harmony with the goals of this program, Connecticut has joined the Employer Friendly Workforce Initiative which aims to prevent substance misuse and recovery support. Recovery Friendly Workplace demonstrates a commitment to creating a Recovery-friendly environment promotes a culture that challenges the stereotypes associated with substance use disorders and, enhances workplace safety while improving productivity and profitability by addressing behavioral health issues “head-on”. Connecticut engages its local and state partners including the State of Connecticut Department of Mental Health Services and Addiction Services, the CT Community for Addiction Recovery and the CT Counselor Certification Board, to deliver training and support to Connecticut’s employers regarding substance use disorders.

**Work Readiness Boot Camp**
The NRWIB worked closely with the State of CT Bureau of Rehabilitation Services to develop a work readiness boot camp. This workshop is designed to enhance opportunities by providing participants with the proper skills needed to gain employment. This is a dynamic and interactive workshop which encourages the participant to break out of their shell and connect with their classmates and instructor. The topics discussed during training include: first impressions, work expectations and ethics, the value of prioritizing and managing time, appropriate attire, interpersonal skills and many more. This workshop is offered on a monthly basis and all participants
must be referred by their career navigator and/or case manager.

- **Industrial Sewing Program**
  The Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board (NRWIB) received an award from the Northwest Building Healthier Communities Fund, a fund of the Northwest Connecticut Community Foundation, Inc., and developed a program which focuses on addressing the shortage of skilled workers in the Industrial Sewing sector. This regional partnership comprises the following entities: NRWIB, Northwest Connecticut Community Foundation, Commercial Sewing, Franklin Products, Northwest CT Chamber of Commerce and New Opportunities, Inc. This unique partnership serves the employment needs of individuals residing in the Greater Torrington and Winsted area. The program provides practice-based training to hone technical and behavioral skills that allows graduates to operate at peak performance on the job as a Sewing Operator. Grant funds are utilized to pay for training and to address participants’ barriers to employment such as childcare assistance, transportation and/or other concerns within the parameters of available resources.

- **Future Bankers Program**
  This program is designed to motivate and tap into the talent of high-achieving students, providing them a clear and promising career path in the financial services industry. It is a collaborative effort of the Center for Financial Training, area public schools, and local financial services institutions. NRWIB’s Future Bankers has also been recognized by the CT State Office of Apprenticeship as a registered pre-apprenticeship program. The Future Bankers Program consists of three online courses designed and offered by the Center for Financial Training. Program curriculum consists of the following: Principles of Banking and Practell: Online Teller Training and Center for Financial Training On-Course Learning Banking Catalog.

- **Principles of Banking**
  This course explores the fundamental principles and practices of banking and credit in the United States. The course gives an excellent overview of financial services, including information on human resources, marketing, and ethics. Topics to be covered include: money and interest, negotiable instruments, mortgages, commercial lending, security and ethics, and the role of banking in today’s economy.

- **Practell: Online Teller Training**
  - gives real-life examples for real-life experiences
  - increases customer satisfaction
  - reduces training time—gets tellers out to the line faster
  - offers over 200 topics on the basics of being a teller, and much more
  - provides continuous self-testing of knowledge, topic by topic, and unit by unit
  - covers every critical teller responsibility
• **Center for Financial Training (CFT) Learning Catalog**
  The CFT/On-Course Learning Banking Catalog offers an annual subscription featuring hundreds of self-paced online courses on pertinent banking topics including regulatory compliance; lending, management, sales and service, insurance and retirement account/planning courses. All courses feature instantly graded exams and students can track course enrollments and completions for this and external programs in their account.

• **Waterbury Working Cities Challenge**
  The NRWIB is a partner in a local initiative known as the Waterbury Working Cities Challenge. This project addresses the economic and racial/ethnic inequities that have devalued the once vibrant South End Neighborhood by creating a strong, resident-driven, civic infrastructure, realigning and relocating job training services and revising child care decision-making policies to be more equitable, insuring adequate access for neighborhood residents, children and families. Focusing on one neighborhood provides an opportunity to advance changes in systems and policies and pilot a resident engagement model that can be replicated in other city neighborhoods. Job training efforts focus on the healthcare sector, namely Certified Nurses’ Aide training and employment services. This class is available in Spanish in collaboration with the Academy of Medical Training.

• **Danbury Working Cities Challenge**
  This is a city-wide collaborative designed to improve the lives of the 50 percent of Danbury residents who live in poverty or who struggle to make ends meet. It links services across the community to make it easier for households to access the tools they need to improve their economic situations and become a stronger economic force in the city. The goal of the program is to reduce the number of immigrants and people of color who are in poverty by 30 percent within 10 years. The effort evolves through two phases. Phase one focuses on building trust among the diverse cultures in Danbury through a system of language acquisition programs and increasing access to affordable, quality childcare. Reducing these barriers paves the way for phase two, which moves residents who have acquired appropriate childcare and language proficiency into job and educational training programs to improve economic self-sufficiency.

• **Reentry Council and Collaborative**
  The NRWIB actively participates on the Northwest CT Reentry Council and Greater Danbury Reentry Collaborative. As Connecticut’s prison population continues to decline, reentry supports become an integral part of one’s successful reintegration back into the lives of their children, families and communities. Reentry is complex as it touches on every aspect of a person’s life. Once an individual is released from prison, challenges can arise with finding assistance around basic needs, housing, employment, mental health and substance abuse supports, and other necessary resources. Identifying resources in a timely fashion is critical to one’s overall success. The Reentry Strategy creates a
recommended framework to guide comprehensive and coordinated policy development and service delivery systems for people transitioning from jail or prison to communities throughout the state, with the goals of reducing recidivism, improving public safety, saving and more efficiently using taxpayer dollars, and assisting people to return to and stay home.

Capital Workforce Partners - North Central Connecticut’s Workforce Development Board

- Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Second Chance Pilot – BEST Chance
  In 2016 the State of Connecticut chose Capital Workforce Partners as the lead organization to implement the Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) Second Chance Pilot as a contextualized learning pilot program in Hartford County to reduce unemployment and recidivism rates among soon to be released offenders and ex-offenders in Connecticut. The goal was to help ex-offenders compete in today’s labor market by providing relevant training and support to gain good jobs. Specifically, program goals included:
  - Completion of basic, occupational and advanced training
  - Increased earnings and employment
  - Reduction of recidivism
  - Placement and Retention of employment

  The BEST Chance Program is based on the I-BEST, an evidence-based model, designed to provide vocational education combined with contextualized adult basic education, through a partnership of a dozen organizations supporting this comprehensive program.

- National Dislocated Worker Grant
  The National Dislocated Worker grant is a $5.8 million Federal Trade and Economic Transition grant which enables Capital Workforce Partners (CWP) and the North-Central Connecticut region’s American Job Center (AJC) network to address ongoing and emerging workforce and economic challenges by providing training and career services to dislocated workers seeking reentry into the workforce and increasing their skill levels to become competitive for growing or high demand employment opportunities. The grant focuses on two sectors, Manufacturing and Health Care for the period of October 2018 to September 2020.

- Connecticut Recovers Opioid Grant
  Capital Workforce Partners, in partnership with the Connecticut Department of Labor, was awarded a Connecticut Recovers Opioid grant. A Peer Recovery Navigator will be stationed at the Hartford American Job Center and the Best Chance program will provide pre-manufacturing training at Manchester Community College.

- Free to Succeed
  Free to Succeed provides retention services, career advancement planning, and support
to former offenders. The program, staffed by two full-time Retention Specialists, is housed at the Hartford American Job Center. Capital Workforce Partners (CWP) is able to leverage the resources of the AJC system to provide job training and placement services. Individuals may be referred to Free to Succeed after being placed into employment by AJC job developers, Best Chance and Jobs Funnel staff, and community partners, or they may enter the program directly.

- **Metro Hartford Alliance for Careers in Healthcare (MACH)**
  Capital Workforce Partners (CWP) co-convenes the *Metro Hartford Alliance for Careers in Healthcare (MACH)* with Workforce Solutions Collaborative of Metro Hartford, an employer-led partnership whose purpose is to build a sustainable pipeline of skilled workers to meet the talent needs of North Central Connecticut’s healthcare sector to fill entry-level and middle-skill jobs, and retain and advance productive employees leading to financial security and economic growth.

- **Advanced Manufacturing Employer Partnership (AMEP)**
  Capital Workforce Partners (CWP) co-convenes the *Advanced Manufacturing Employer Partnership (AMEP)* with the Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology, an employer-led partnership whose purpose is to build a sustainable pipeline of skilled workers to meet the talent needs of North Central Connecticut’s manufacturing sector to fill entry-level and middle-skill jobs, and retain and advance productive employees leading to financial security and economic growth.

- **Jobs Funnel Advisory Committee**
  Capital Workforce Partners (CWP) convenes the Jobs Funnel Advisory Committee. The Jobs Funnel Advisory Committee oversees the development and implementation of partnership opportunities with key stakeholders to lead efforts in all regional Jobs Funnel activities. This includes strategies for job seekers’ training and placement in the construction industry sector. The committee’s guidance will ensure that the North Central Region’s Jobs Funnel initiatives enhance and develop a workforce which is equipped with the necessary skills to enter and advance in the state’s construction and related green industry sector.

- **Hartford Student Internship Program (HSIP)**
  HSIP is a ‘cornerstone’ career and college development strategy for Hartford youth ages 16-21 to prepare at-risk youths for career pathways. CWP, Hartford Public Schools, and the City of Hartford collaborate with community-based organizations and other public/private partners to ensure vulnerable students attending HPS in grades 11-12 will have access to work-based learning opportunities to develop college and career competencies. These skills directly correlate to greater future postsecondary achievement by reducing chronic absenteeism and supporting pathways toward self-sufficiency.
(B) State Board

Provide a description of the State Board including membership roster and Board activities.

i. Membership Roster and Affiliations

The voting members of the Governor’s Workforce Council, the State Workforce Board under WIOA, and their professional affiliations, include:

Moran Garrett former president of Year Up (Chairperson)
Vallieres Kelli-Marie Sound Manufacturing (Vice-Chair)
Asness Cliff AQR
Bevacqua Peter NBC Sports
Bigelow Cindi Bigelow Tea
Borgstrom Marna Yale New Haven Hospital
Chukwu Oni Aventri
Ferguson Monette ABCD Inc.
Graney Kevin General Dynamics/Electric Boat
Hernandez Juan 32BJ SEIU
Hwang Tony Connecticut Senate District 28
Keane Margaret Synchrony
Kumar Ravi Infosys
Levy Ruth Region 4 Schools
Loree Jim Stanley Black + Decker
Luciano Sal Connecticut AFL-CIO
Olian Judy Quinnipiac University
O’Neill Dave Indeed
Salovey Peter Yale University
Smith Erika ReNetx
Swift Chris The Hartford
Torres-Rodriguez Leslie Hartford Public Schools
Walker Toni Connecticut Senate District 28
Williams Jay Hartford Foundation for Public Giving

(i) Board Activities

Workforce development is a key piece of Governor Lamont’s agenda. The newly established Governor’s Workforce Council is making great strides in bringing together the best minds to advance the state’s approach to education and training. The Council includes top executives from companies of all sizes as well as leaders of nonprofits, unions, the legislature, and educational systems. Its makeup is emblematic of the Governor’s approach of bringing the public and private sectors together to drive the state’s economic growth.
The Governor’s Workforce Council will also coordinate among the important stakeholders in the workforce system, including businesses, state agencies, quasi-public and independent entities, boards, councils, and commissions, public and private education and training institutions, workforce development boards, nonprofit institutions, labor unions, and the state’s Chief Manufacturing Officer.

(4) Assessment and Evaluation of Programs and One-Stop Program Partners

(A) Assessment of Core Programs

Describe how the core programs will be assessed each year based on State performance accountability measures described in section 16(b) of WIOA. This State assessment must include the quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs broken down by local area or provider, and take into account local and regional planning goals.

Executive Order #4 requires the Governor’s Workforce Council to review the state’s workforce development system and submit a report to the governor and the legislature by January 1, 2021 that makes strategic recommendations to improve the state’s workforce system in a variety of areas, including better coordination, reducing barriers to training, strengthening the bridge from high school into post-secondary training and education, and emphasizing data-driven outcomes.

This year, the GWC Data and Performance Committee will be establishing new metrics for assessing performance across programs at the ground level.

CTDOL’s Employment Services Operations Unit conducts annual case file reviews and onsite monitoring of the Wagner-Peyser and Unemployment Insurance (UI) Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) programs in each of the five workforce development regions. These reviews ensure the American Job Centers (AJCs) are providing effective and appropriate services to program participants and are adhering to federal and state program requirements. A formal written monitoring report identifying best practices, areas of concern and findings resulting from the review is generated within thirty days of each on-site review. The Employment Services Operations Unit provides in person technical assistance to AJC Directors, Programs & Services Coordinators and staff to quickly address any deficiencies and ensure the delivery of high quality services that meet the specific reemployment needs and Unemployment Insurance eligibility requirements of program participants.

The Connecticut Departments of Labor (CTDOL), Education (CSDE), and Aging and Disability Services (ADS), will use the primary indicators of performance specified in section 116(b) of WIOA and contained in State Performance Reports to assess the performance of the six core programs. Each program’s actual performance will be assessed in relation to the State adjusted levels of performance and revised State adjusted levels of performance.
Connecticut does not have any additional indicators of performance referenced in section 116(b)(2)(B) as part of this Unified State Plan.

This State assessment will utilize quarterly wage records to determine program quality and effectiveness with respect to outcomes including employment rates and median earnings for participants with a social security number that exited from one or more of the six core programs. Also, the average cost of those participants who received career and training services, respectively, during the most recent program year and the three preceding program years will be assessed, while considering relevant economic conditions e.g., unemployment rates and characteristics of participants.

Additionally, CTDOL will use the Local Area Performance Report broken down by local area for the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs to determine each local area’s performance on the primary indicators with respect to local performance targets. This local area data will be used to identify best practices and opportunities for improvement.

(B) Assessment of One-Stop Program Partner Programs

Describe how other one-stop delivery system partner program services and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan will be assessed each year. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.

Connecticut’s Unified State Plan outlines a four-year strategy for the six core programs:
- Adult Program (Title 1 of WIOA)
- Dislocated Worker Program (Title 1)
- Youth Program (Title 1)
- Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program (Title II),
- Vocational Rehabilitation Program – BESB (Title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV,) and
- Vocational Rehabilitation Program – BRS (Title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV.)

Assessment of these core programs will be done by the respective administrative State agency. Other One-Stop delivery system partner program services included in the Workforce Performance Accountability, Information, and Reporting System that are reportable to USDOL will be assessed annually using outcome measures on the Program Performance Scorecard e.g., employment rate, and median earnings. CTDOL will explore assessment for performance accountability with CTDSS to determine application and feasibility between WIOA, TANF and SNAP E&T.

(C) Previous Assessment Results (Prior 2 years)

(D) Describe how the State will conduct Evaluations and Research Projects
Describe how the state will conduct evaluations and research projects on activities under WIOA core programs; how such projects will be coordinated with, and designed in conjunction with, State and local boards and with State agencies responsible for the administration of all respective core programs; and, further, how the projects will be coordinated with the evaluations provided for by the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education under WIOA.

The State intends to examine potential subject areas to conduct evaluations or research. Any projects will be conducted in collaboration with WIOA partners, including the local workforce development boards. Consideration will be given to past evaluations to ensure that future ones are valuable use of State and local resources. The nature and type of these projects will unfold throughout WIOA implementation and will at a minimum focus on factors effecting program outcomes. Evaluations provided by Federal agencies will also guide the direction of State efforts.

The Connecticut Department of Labor’s Office of Research plans to develop an annual report card on employment and training programs considering an array of programs that are related to one or more of the following four results:

- CT adults who are financially self-sufficient
- CT students ready for work and post-secondary education following high school graduation
- A competitive 21st century CT economy
- A highly skilled, competitive 21st century CT workforce

The production of this report card informs the workforce system so that workforce-related policies, investments, strategies and programs contribute measurably to one or more of the above results.

(5) Distribution of Funds for Core Programs

Describe the methods and factors the State will use in distributing funds under the core programs in accordance with the provisions authorizing such distributions.

(A) Title I

Provide a description of the written policies that establish the State's methods and factors used to distribute funds to local areas for:

(i) Youth activities in accordance with WIOA section 128(b)(2) or (b)(3),
(ii) Adult and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) or (b)(3),
(iii) Dislocated worker employment and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) and based on data and weights assigned.

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CTDOL has created a policy concerning methods/factors to distribute funds to local areas for Youth activities, Adult and training activities, Dislocated Worker employment and training activities. The policy can be found in the CTDOL WIOA Policy Manual. Proposed methods and factors will be reviewed with and approved by for the Governor’s Workforce Council.

(B) Title II – Adult Education and Family Literacy

(i) Describe how the eligible agency will award multi-year grants or contracts on a competitive basis to eligible providers in the State, including how eligible agencies will establish that eligible providers are organizations of demonstrated effectiveness.

Through CSDE, the State of Connecticut will award multi-year grants to eligible providers through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process to enable providers to develop, implement and improve adult education and literacy activities. Grantees will have the opportunity to continue for a second year depending upon satisfactory performance and funding from Congress. The following agencies are eligible for funding through the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE):

a. a local educational agency;
b. a community-based organization or faith-based organization;
c. a volunteer literacy organization;
d. an institution of higher education;
e. a public or private nonprofit agency;
f. a library;
g. a public housing authority;
h. other nonprofit institutions that have the ability to provide adult education and literacy activities to eligible individuals;
i. a consortium or coalition of the agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described above;
j. a partnership between an employer and an entity described above.

CSDE will make funding available in each of Connecticut’s five designated local workforce areas. In conjunction with each WDB, CSDE will help to assess local area needs and WIB goals. In each local area, funds will be divided among defined priorities on a percentage basis. Eligible providers will select the appropriate priority area when drafting and submitting the proposal to CSDE.

CSDE will use the 13 WIOA considerations for funding to award grants, including the following consideration: “past effectiveness of the eligible provider in improving the literacy of eligible individuals, to meet State-adjusted levels of performance for the primary indicators of performance”, described in WIOA section 116, especially with respect to eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy. Past effectiveness will be evidenced by meeting or exceeding performance measures based on documentation from the Connecticut Adult Reporting System database and annual reviews of previously funded
providers, and evidenced by comparable objective performance measures demonstrating successful student outcomes for new eligible providers.

(ii) Describe how the eligible agency will ensure direct and equitable access to all eligible providers to apply and compete for funds and how the eligible agency will ensure that it is using the same grant or contract announcement and application procedure for all eligible providers.

To ensure direct and equitable access for all eligible providers, the Connecticut State Department of Education will publish a Notice of Availability in all major newspapers throughout Connecticut and post the notice on the CSDE’s web page. The RFP will be mailed to all local education agencies and higher education institutions; to a master list of current and past providers including community-based organizations, regional education service centers, housing authorities, volunteer organizations, Department of Correction, other correctional facilities and institutions; and to all current providers and WDBs. A Bidder’s Conference will be publicly advertised with the Notice of Availability and held at a central location to provide answers to questions regarding appropriateness of proposed projects and application procedures.

(C) Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation

In the case of a State that, under section 101(a)(2)(A)(i) of the Rehabilitation Act designates a State agency to administer the part of the Vocational Rehabilitation VR) services portion of the Unified State Plan under which VR services are provided for individuals who are blind, describe the process and the factors used by the State to determine the distribution of funds among the two VR agencies in the State.

Under the Rehabilitation Act, the Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS) provides vocational services to eligible individuals with disabilities who are seeking to prepare for, secure, retain, advance in, or regain employment through the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) and the Bureau of Education and Services to the Blind (BESB). Federal Title IV funds are distributed at a rate of 85 percent of the appropriation applied to the VR General Program and 15 percent allocated to the VR Blind Program. For the state match appropriation, funding is applied at a rate of 88 percent to VR General Program and 12 percent to the VR Blind Program. Factors that contribute to the application of these funding allocations includes consideration of the number of consumers served within each program, maintenance of effort requirements, programmatic and purchase of service costs, and staffing requirements to maintain each program. Flexibility is built into the state appropriation to allow for adjustment in the allocation percentages to each program in response to variations in these variables.

6. Program Data
(A) **Data Alignment and Integration**

Describe the plans of the lead State agencies with responsibility for the administration of the core programs, along with the State Board, to align and integrate available workforce and education data systems for the core programs, unemployment insurance programs, and education through postsecondary education, and to the extent possible, the Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan. The description of the State’s plan for integrating data systems should include the State’s goals for achieving integration and any progress to date.

(i) **Interoperable MIS:**

Describe the State’s plans to make the management information systems for the core programs interoperable to maximize the efficient exchange of common data elements to support assessment and evaluation.

Connecticut has a plan under consideration to ultimately make the management information systems for the core programs interoperable. CTDOL’s new web-based CTHires system has four of the six core programs resident within it, including: WIOA Adult, WIOA Dislocated Worker, WIOA Youth, Wagner-Peyser.

This system also currently has resident within it the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program, the Jobs First Employment Services and Foreign Labor Certification programs. This central database is contracted to expand in 2020 to include the Work Opportunity Tax Credit program. CTHires also has the capability to add programs through a generic programs module.

(ii) **Data Systems Integration**

Describe the State’s plans to integrate data systems to facilitate streamlined intake and service delivery to track participation across all programs included in this plan.

Connecticut currently has an integrated web-based data system for four of the six core programs and includes the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program. Connecticut is looking for integrated system options as they become available in the near future.

(iii) **Technology and Data Systems Alignment**

Explain how the State board will assist the governor in aligning technology and data systems across required one-stop partner programs (including design and implementation of common intake, data collection, etc.) and how such alignment will improve service delivery to individuals, including unemployed individuals.
Connecticut is hopeful of aligning technology and data systems across mandatory One-Stop partner programs under the direction of our new Governor and his Administration. This future system would provide for a common intake and data collection across multiple agencies and programs. This alignment would improve service delivery to individuals by enabling data to be collected once and shared by service providers within the system, resulting in efficiencies. This common system would also foster communication and collaboration among service providers to ensure optimum service delivery using a variety of funding and resources while minimizing duplication of services. The Governors Workforce Council (GWC) will assist the Governor and Agency Commissioners in finding ways to align technology and data systems to improve service delivery by participating on interagency work groups to identify financial and other resources necessary to accomplish this work. By working with the State’s Data Officer and the GWC Data and Performance Committee, experts will identify financial and programmatic actions necessary to accomplish this work.

(iv) Performance Reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Describe the State’s plans to develop and produce the reports required under section 116, performance accountability system (WIOA section 116(d)(2)).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Connecticut had formed a WIOA transition interagency work group on Technology, Data and Outcomes. The work group and its technology subcommittee met several times to develop various options to enable reporting for the six (6) core programs across three state agencies – the Connecticut Departments of Labor (CTDOL), Education (CSDE), and Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS). Data collection for the six core programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser, Adult Education and Literacy Activities, and Title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973) occur within separate case management systems located at each of three State agencies. CTDOL will explore assessment for performance reporting with CTDSS to determine application and feasibility between WIOA, TANF and SNAP E&T.

Reporting processes for the WIOA Annual State Performance Report will involve CTDOL obtaining electronic files for each report period from the three State agencies for each of the six core programs. Individual records in each of these electronic program files will be matched against the CTDOL database that stores the WIOA unique identifiers to determine if such identifier already exists. If it does exist, the unique identifier will be appended to the record. If it does not exist, CTDOL will assign a unique identifier for each participant and will append it to the participant record. This process will ensure a common unique identifier across the six core programs, and that this identifier will be the same for every period of participation.

These same electronic files will be matched to each of the electronic files for each of the six core programs to determine if an individual was co-enrolled in one or more of the six core programs. If the participant was co-enrolled in another core program, the specific
code value identified in the WIOA Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) that applies to those services will be appended to the participant record.

Also, these same electronic files will be used to obtain employment information for each program participant who has a social security number and an exit date from one or more of the six core programs. CTDOL currently is responsible for reporting wages, entered employment rates, and employment retention rates for individuals who exit in the Wagner-Peyser, Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, and Trade Adjustment Assistance programs. Each program’s electronic file containing the assigned WIOA unique identifier, co-enrollment data, wages, and employment information will be returned to each of the three State agencies to use in their federal report submissions.

Eligible Training Provider (ETP) Performance Report
CTDOL will use the new CTHires case management system to collect data and generate the Eligible Training Provider Performance Report on all students in programs, and on WIOA participants as required under WIOA.

Effectiveness in Serving Employers Report
CT DOL will assume the role as lead agency in the Effective in Serving Employers Report.

(B) Assessment of Participants’ Post-Program Success

Describe how lead State agencies will use the workforce development system to assess the progress of participants who are exiting from core programs in entering, persisting in, and completing postsecondary education, or entering or remaining in employment. States may choose to set additional indicators of performance.

CT Department of Labor (CTDOL) will use the program performance scorecard and the WIOA Annual Statewide Performance Report Template to assess the progress of participants who are exiting from the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, and Wagner-Peyser programs in entering or remaining in employment. The state assessment will use quarterly wage records to determine entered employment rates in the second and fourth quarters after exit for program individuals who exit with social security numbers to determine their success in entering or remaining in employment. Median earnings will also be considered to determine progress towards self-sufficiency. Local Workforce Development Boards will be responsible for following up with participants exiting from the WIOA Youth program to assess enrollment in, persistence in, and completion of postsecondary education. Connecticut has not set any additional indicators of performance.

(C) Use of Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage Record Data

Explain how the State will meet the requirements to utilize quarterly UI wage records for performance accountability, evaluations, and as a source for workforce and labor market information, consistent with Federal and State law. (This Operational Planning element applies to core programs.)
The electronic files containing records for the six core programs will be used to obtain employment information using Unemployment Insurance Wage Record data for each program participant that has a social security number and an exit date from one or more of the six core programs. CTDOL is currently responsible for reporting wages, entered employment rates, and employment retention rates for individuals who exit in the Wagner-Peyser, Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, and Trade Adjustment Assistance programs. CTDOL will continue this work and expand its responsibilities to include individuals who exit from all six core programs. Therefore, CTDOL will append wages and employment information to each exiter’s record. MOU’s have been established with the other agencies to limit the use of wage records to the proscribed purposes and ensure that proper security will be in place to protect confidentiality.

Each program’s electronic file containing the assigned WIOA unique identifier, co-enrollment data, and wages, will be returned to each of the three State agencies for use in their federal report submissions. Also, CTDOL uses the CTHires case management system to collect data and generate the Eligible Training Provider Performance Report on all students in program and on WIOA participants, as required under WIOA. CTDOL will use Unemployment Insurance Wage data for employment rates, median earnings, and credential rates for all students in a program on the Eligible Training Provider Performance Report.

Unemployment Insurance Wage Record data will also be used to comply with federal evaluation requirements, and to inform workforce and labor market information available to customers.

Privacy Standards

Describe the privacy safeguards incorporated in the State’s workforce development system, including safeguards required by section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) and other applicable Federal laws.

Connecticut Department of Labor

- Information on individuals referenced for purposes of the WIOA Core Programs in the Connecticut Department of Labor’s automated One-Stop Career-Center system (CTHIRES) is considered confidential Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and may not be released or used for any purpose other than one directly connected with the administration of the programs. Information may also be released when the participant authorizes disclosure.

- Access to the system is provided upon an entity’s entrance into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Connecticut Department of Labor, which acknowledges the confidentiality and security requirements associated with the system. Moreover, every
individual accessing the system must first sign an Acknowledgment of Confidential Information form, to ensure each individual is aware of such requirements.

- Finally, access to network components comprising the System is limited to authorized administrators, to ensure no unauthorized disclosure of PII. The system itself is configured to comply with Federal and State of Connecticut laws and regulations regarding the protection of confidential and PII, including but not limited to all sections of NIST SP 800-53 and IRS Publication 1075.

**Connecticut State Department of Education**

CSDE will ensure that program providers are compliant with all applicable laws and RFP guidelines including ADA 504 and Section 427 GEPA.

### 7. Priority of Service for Veterans

Describe how the State will implement and monitor the priority of service provisions for veterans in accordance with the requirements of the Jobs for Veterans Act, codified at section 4215 of 38 U.S.C., which applies to all employment and training programs funded in whole or in part by the Department of Labor. States should also describe the referral process for veterans determined to have a significant barrier to employment to receive services from the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program’s Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist.

American Job Center staff is regularly trained on the protocols for implementing priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses, and visible signage alerts AJC customers about priority of service provisions. Individuals who fully register in CTHires are identified as veterans or eligible spouses based on their responses to required system intake prompts, and they receive a priority-of-service advisory upon completing the registration process. AJC staff members also utilize a triage form to identify customers who may not have fully registered, which helps assess whether an individual has significant barriers to employment (SBs) or other characteristics that would qualify for one-on-one job search assistance from a CTDOL Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialist. In such cases, the individual is either promptly referred or scheduled for an appointment.

Ongoing monitoring in the AJCs by JVSG- and Wagner-Peyser-funded staff will ensure that signage remains visibly posted and regular staff training is provided on priority of service, SBE identification, and the DVOP referral process. Program operators will be monitored for evidence that first consideration for participation was given to those veterans and eligible spouses who met the eligibility criteria for that program and, in cases where resources were limited, that no such covered persons were turned away in favor of a non-covered person. Such monitoring will include a demographic analysis of program participants.

Veteran customers receive reemployment services from trained staff at AJCs throughout the
state, which include the five comprehensive centers and several smaller, affiliate locations. Every comprehensive AJC conducts monthly Veterans’ Employment Connection orientations that brief veterans about priority of service, SBE categories, employer connections, and how to best work with DVOPs or other American Job Center staff in their regions.

8. Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals with Disabilities

Connecticut’s One-Stop system currently provides and will continue to ensure physical and programmatic access to facilities, programs, services technology and materials for individuals with disabilities in a variety of ways. With respect to physical accessibility, all five of Connecticut’s comprehensive One-Stop American Job Centers, along with the Danielson American Job Center, are designated ADA-compliant. Assistive technology is available to assist jobseekers with disabilities in each of the comprehensive American Job Centers. These technologies include electric adjustable workstations, large screen visual magnifiers, TTY lines for deaf or hard of hearing customers, and large-font computer keyboards in the Career Center. All five comprehensive American Job Centers provide adequate public parking for individuals seeking to use the facilities and have been determined to provide adequate accessible parking options for jobseekers with disabilities. Each of the comprehensive American Job Centers is located on a public bus route.

Individuals seeking unemployment-related information or services will be assisted by a full-time CTDOL Unemployment Insurance staff expert located at and providing service from the front desk in each of the five comprehensive American Job Centers. These staff unemployment experts will be able to process paper unemployment claims directly, in-person, for jobseekers with disabilities who may have difficulty filing applications over the phone or via the Internet.

9. Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for English Language Learners

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners) will ensure that each one-stop center is able to meet the needs of English language learners, such as through established procedures, staff training, resources, and other materials.
As one component of the process of establishing certification criteria for One-Stop centers statewide, the Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) were required to document that each One-Stop center in their respective regions meets the service needs of English language learners. The principle of ensuring accessibility is a priority focus in the Workforce Council’s oversight of the statewide workforce system.

The State of Connecticut contracts with several separate entities to provide interpretative/translation services for English Language Learners. Services range from oral to written translation and in person or telephonic interpretation. CTDOL service providers are encouraged to follow the CT DOL LAP Policy. Procedures for obtaining interpretive services are listed on CT DOL’s Intranet and are accessible to all staff.

III. COORDINATION WITH STATE PLAN PROGRAMS

Describe the methods used for joint planning and coordination among the core programs, and with the required one-stop partner programs and other programs and activities included in the Unified State Plan.

WIOA joint planning and coordination across programs in CT began in 2014 following passage of this Act and continues today. Many informational meetings, presentations, etc. were held across CT by state and local partners. Several workgroups were formed and some continue today as described in previous sections. The Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL) Office of Workforce Competitiveness (OWC) has lead responsibility for coordinating production of Connecticut’s WIOA Unified State Plan. OWC has relationships with key senior staff from WIOA required partners and those individuals have shared their knowledge and expertise to the planning and production of the Unified State Plan. In addition, OWC conducted outreach to other “optional” partners and many responded with new ideas and plans for further coordination of services for our customers.

Department of Aging and Disability Services
The Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS) Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) and Bureau of Education and Services to the Blind (BESB) have lead responsibility for developing the Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation Program content for Connecticut’s Unified State Plan. OWC staff met and conferred with BRS and BESB staff on several occasions to review the status of Unified State Plan drafting and Title IV planning, to ensure alignment of focus and content during the drafting and production process.

ADS posted a draft of its Title IV plans for public comment. The State Rehabilitation Councils and Advisory Board for Persons who are Blind or Visually Impaired approved those sections of the plan, which was then received and reviewed by OWC. A joint effort between OWC and ADS staff integrated the Title IV content into the Unified State Plan draft, including
intended coordination of implementation efforts going forward. As with the Title II program, the Unified State Plan specifically addresses coordination of Vocational Rehabilitation Program services for individuals and employers, and coordinated engagement with the education system and economic development efforts.

**State Board of Education – Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education**

On July 31, 2018, President Trump signed the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act into law. This bill amends the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV) and this amended act is now referred to as Perkins V. The passage of Perkins V provides new opportunities to improve Career and Technical Education (CTE) and enables more flexibility for Connecticut to meet the unique needs of our learners, educators, and employers. In August 2018, Connecticut elected to submit a one-year CTE Transition Plan for the 2019–20 school year, with full implementation of the CTE State Plan under Perkins V in the 2020–21 school year covering fiscal years 2020–23.

Connecticut’s vision for CTE is that all Connecticut’s students have access today to high-quality, culturally responsive guidance, teaching, and learning that will position them to graduate tomorrow as innovators equipped with adaptable, transferable skills that will contribute to the growth of Connecticut’s high-knowledge economy.

The CSDE’s vision demands that all Connecticut’s students have access today to flexible CTE pathways that will position them to graduate tomorrow as innovators equipped with adaptable, transferable skills that will contribute to the growth of Connecticut’s high-knowledge economy. Connecticut’s vision for education and workforce development demands schools, districts, and community colleges design rigorous pathways and programs of study from a perspective of bold innovation that fosters deep and long-lasting changes.

This new understanding of CTE, based upon collaborative partnerships, will result in students graduating with the essential knowledge, skills, and employability expertise to successfully meet the demands of Connecticut’s expanding economy.

The CSDE collaborates with outside agencies in order to braid funding, ensure cohesiveness among programs, and educate the whole child from preK–12. Interaction between programs and staff generate improved services to students, schools, and LEAs. This comprehensive thinking locates the intersections and weaves together the strategies, timelines, and funding sources from the multiple programs in order to achieve a cohesive vision.

Furthermore, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Perkins V goals align to Title IV, Part B in which 21st Century School programs can partner with in-demand fields of the local workforce or build career competencies and career readiness. This funding may provide workforce development boards with additional opportunities to collaborate and
leverage resources for in-school youth services. Continued coordination with these programs will help to unify CSDE guidance.

### IV. COMMON ASSURANCES (for all WIOA core programs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Assurances</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The State of Connecticut has established a policy identifying circumstances that may present a conflict of interest for a Governor’s Workforce Council or local board member, or the entity or class of officials that the member represents, and procedures to resolve such conflicts;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>State has established a policy to provide to the public (including individuals with disabilities) access to meetings of State Boards and local boards, and information regarding activities of the Governor’s Workforce Council and local boards, such as data on board membership and minutes;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Lead State agencies with responsibility for administration of core programs reviewed and commented on appropriate operational planning elements of Unified State Plan, and approved the elements as serving the needs of populations served by such programs;</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>(a) State obtained input into development of Unified State Plan and provided an opportunity for comment on the plan by representatives of local boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, the entities responsible for planning or administering the core programs and the other Combined Plan programs (if included in the State Plan), other primary stakeholders, and general public, and that Unified State Plan is available and accessible to general public; SRC helps to develop the State Plan and will co-host the public meetings with ADS to review the State Plan. State provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the Governor’s Workforce Council, including State agency official(s) for Unemployment Insurance Agency if such official(s) is a Governor’s Workforce Council member;</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>State has established, in accordance with WIOA section 116(i), fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through allotments made for adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs to carry out workforce investment activities under chapters 2 and 3 of subtitle B;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>State has taken appropriate action to comply with WIOA section 188, as applicable;</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core program;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>State will pay an appropriate share (as defined by the Governor’s Workforce Council) of the costs of carrying out section 116, from funds made available through each of the core programs;</td>
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123
10 State has a One-Stop certification policy that ensures the physical and programmatic accessibility of all One-Stop centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA);

11 Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate;

12 State will conduct evaluations and research projects on activities under WIOA core programs; such projects will be coordinated and designed in conjunction with State and local boards and with State agencies responsible for the administration of all respective core programs; and, further, that the projects will be coordinated with the evaluations provided for by the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education under WIOA.

IV. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

The State must address all program-specific requirements in this section for the WIOA core programs regardless of whether the State submits either a Unified State Plan.

Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities under Title I-B. The State Plan must include the following with respect to activities carried out under subtitle B:

- General Requirements
- Regions and Local Workforce Development Areas

(A) Identify the regions and the local workforce development areas designated in the State.
In May, 2015, the Office of Workforce Competitiveness issued policy and procedures to chief elected officials for the initial designation of local workforce development areas, including the requirements of “performed successfully” and “sustained fiscal integrity” as defined in WIOA. Requests for designation were required to be submitted by the existing local areas’ chief elected official on behalf of the area’s local elected officials. CT DOL staff subsequently reviewed requests and chief elected officials were notified of designation by OWC.

An appeals process will be developed.

The CT appeals process is within the following policy:

**Connecticut Department of Labor WIOA Policy One-Stop Center Infrastructure Cost-Sharing Agreements**

1. Purpose: This Issuance conveys guidance for Local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs), Chief Elected Officials (CEOs), and one-stop center Required Partners to manage creation of a local infrastructure cost-allocation agreement (IFA). The deadline for advising the State of an impasse in completing the agreement is given, as is the deadline for submission of infrastructure budgets. Procedures are discussed whereby a State determined infrastructure-cost allocation mechanism would be triggered if a local agreement is not reached prior to the State deadline. The appeals process for disputing the contribution required of a one-stop partner by such a State mechanism is described.

2. Background: The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires local WDBs to develop and finalize a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among itself and its Required Partners, with the agreement of the Chief Elected Official, for the Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA). The MOU coordinates operation of the local one-stop delivery system, provision of programs and services, and apportionment of costs. The Office of Workforce Competitiveness (OWC) previously issued initial IFA and MOU guidance, GP 17-02.
WIOA requires that the MOU include details on how the Local WDB, CEO, and one-stop center Required Partners will fund one-stop infrastructure costs for all comprehensive one-stop centers in the local area. It is recommended that any infrastructure cost-sharing agreement for affiliated-site costs be negotiated separately from the statutorily required cost-sharing agreement covering comprehensive one-stop centers.

WIOA sec. 121(h) mandates that the State, through the designated authority of the Governor, provide guidance to assist local WDBs, CEOs, and one-stop partners to determine equitable and stable methods to fund one-stop center infrastructure costs. The cost-allocation methodology must be in accord with Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards in 2 CFR Parts 200 and 2900.

WIOA and its implementing regulations also require that the State’s guidance include timelines for Local WDBs to notify the State if local infrastructure cost allocation negotiations reach an impasse. If the Local WDB and the required partners are unable to conclude and sign a local infrastructure cost-sharing agreement for the ensuing Program Year before the State’s deadline, WIOA gives the State no recourse but to impose an alternative State infrastructure cost-allocation mechanism. This is not an alternative to the local funding agreement. It is a statutory consequence triggered by an inability of the concerned parties in the LWDA to self-determine a funding plan.

3. State Guidelines: In compliance with WIOA sec. 121(h)(1)(B)(ii) and the implementing rules at 20 CFR 678.700-678.55, as well as US Department of Labor Guidance letters, e.g. Training and Employment Guidance Letter 17-16, OWC herewith issues Attachment 1 to this issuance containing the “Connecticut WIOA Infrastructure Cost Sharing Guidelines.” Local MOU signatories are not bound to follow these recommendations; they may, in fact, adopt any local cost-allocation mechanism that is in accord with the Uniform Guidelines in 2 CFR Parts 200 and 2900. Nevertheless, we strongly encourage local WDBs, CEOs, and one-stop partners to develop their local infrastructure-cost allocation agreements using these guidelines.

Notice of Impasse
An agreement must be negotiated, signed, and in effect by January 1, 2018, therefore final IFAs are due by December 1, 2017. Local WDBs must provide a Notice of Impasse to OWC no later than November 1, 2017 where local negotiations were unsuccessful. This notification may originate with the Local WDB, the CEO, or any one of the Required Partners.

Budgets
Local budgets upon which the local infrastructure cost-allocation agreements will be based must be submitted to OWC by November 1, 2017. These will be reviewed by OWC and the WIOA Administration Unit. In the event of unsuccessful negotiations for a local
infrastructure cost-allocation agreement, any budget approved by the Local WDB, CEO, and Required Partners will be used by the State as a basis for a State-imposed mechanism, as mandated by the WIOA Final Rules. If, by the State deadline for local cost-allocation agreements, there is also no locally approved infrastructure budget, the WIOA Final Rules require the State to determine that budget for the local area.

**State Infrastructure Cost-Allocation Mechanism**

If, by **December 1, 2017**, the local infrastructure cost-allocation mechanism has not been completed, signed, and submitted to the State, the State will be statutorily compelled to impose a State infrastructure cost-allocation mechanism as prescribed by WIOA sec. 121(h) and the Final Rules in 20 CFR Part 678. The specific allocations in this mechanism will be transmitted to the LWDB, the CEO, and the one-stop Required Parties for the local area prior to the start of January 1, 2018, if feasible.

The State mechanism generally makes fewer funds available than a local agreement. The U.S. Department of Labor notes in its preamble to the WIOA Final Rules, “...while under the local-funding mechanism partner programs may contribute through any funds allowed by their authorizing statutes, under the State funding mechanism, infrastructure funds must come from administrative funds for the majority of partner programs.”

**Appeals Process**

Upon receipt of the specific terms of a State infrastructure cost-allocation mechanism, any local WDB or one-stop required partner may appeal for cause, within 21 calendar days, in writing (electronic or hardcopy) the State’s determination regarding the portion of funds (or non-cash contributions) the Local WDB or required partner is to provide. To be officially received, an appeal must fully contain evidence of the following:

1. An introduction identifying the appellant and designating the letter as a formal appeal;
2. Full citations from WIOA or the WIOA Final Rules in Title 29 or Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations that support the appeal.
3. **Identify the basis for the appeal.** WIOA stipulates that a State mechanism allocation determination may be appealed only if the determination is inconsistent with the requirements of WIOA sec. 121(h)(2)(E). The Final Rule at 20 CFR 678.750 further limits admissible grounds for an appeal to three possibilities. The petitioner must make a case that the State’s determination is inconsistent with:
   - the proportionate-share requirements in 20 CFR 678.737, or
   - the cost-contribution limitations in 20 CFR 678.730(c), or
   - the cost-contribution caps in 20 CFR 678.738
4. The letter must be signed (electronic signature is acceptable) and dated.

Appeals must be submitted to OWC in one of the following manners: [e-mail to Kathleen Marioni, Executive Director of OWC, at Kathleen.marioni@ct.gov; or fax to the CT DOL, Attention Kathleen Marioni, at (860)263-6526; or mail to CT DOL, OWC, Attention Kathleen Marioni, 200 Folly Brook Boulevard, Wethersfield, CT 06109.}
The State will acknowledge the appeal and return a determination from OWC under
the designated authority of the Governor as quickly as feasible. Until the appeals
process is completed, the appellant will remain liable for its contribution as
originally determined in the State funding mechanism. If a one-stop partner’s appeal
to the State using the process described in 20 CFR 678.750 is successful and results
in a change to the one-stop partner’s infrastructure-cost contributions, then the
WDB/partner MOU must be updated to reflect the final one-stop partner infrastructure-
cost contributions.

(A) Provide State policies or guidance for the statewide workforce development system and for
use of State funds for workforce investment activities.

Statewide Activities.

Both the Office of Workforce Competitiveness (OWC) and the WIOA Administration Unit
issue state policies on workforce development and statewide workforce development
through Administrative Policy memos. They can be accessed via the CTDOL WIOA Policy

(B) Describe how the State intends to use Governor’s set aside funding. Describe how
the State will utilize Rapid Response funds to respond to layoffs and plant closings
and coordinate services to quickly aid companies and their affected workers. States
also should describe any layoff aversion strategies they have implemented to address
at risk companies and workers.

Governor’s Set Aside Funding: USDOL Training and Employment Guidance Letters issue
allocations for WIOA funding each year including the percentages and mandatory activities
under the Governor’s Reserve. The current set-aside is 15% of Connecticut’s funding, while
for Rapid Response activities, it is 25% of the total allocation. The CTDOL uses these funds
to support Central Office staff that administer, manage and oversee the program, contracts,
performance management and finances for Connecticut’s WIOA program. On a statewide
basis other uses of these funds have included support of One-Stop Center operations,
technical assistance to Workforce Development Boards and for staff capacity building which
has included providing front line staff with the Certified Employment Interviewer
Professional certification.

Once the PY allocations are determined, the Governor’s Workforce Council approves the
plan. If funding allows, CTDOL also provides flexible grants to the Workforce Development
Boards to conduct experimental pilot programs that meet the regional needs of employers
and the workforce. For example, such funds have been used to provide additional services
to ex-offenders; for transportation subsidies; and Emergency NEG-like services.
Rapid Response: For companies and their workers, the effects of a plant closing or layoff can be devastating. In Connecticut, neither companies nor workers and their unions are alone in facing these changes. Connecticut’s Rapid Response Team, headed by the State Department of Labor (CTDOL), exists to ease the impact of layoffs and to assure that workers are offered a full range of benefits and services. The Team is made up of representatives from the CTDOL and the local Workforce Development Boards. Support is also available from the Department of Economic & Community Development and the Department of Social Services.

The Rapid Response Team is available to conduct, prior to layoffs, “Early Intervention” sessions where employees can learn about unemployment benefits, job search assistance, and training opportunities. Information is also made available on health insurance options, community services, and local agencies that provide help, advocacy, and support to dislocated workers and their families. All services provided by the team are free.

Layoff Aversion: the state of Connecticut has established the Shared Work program to enable employers to keep skilled employees working during slow-downs. In these instances, CTDOL pays partial unemployment benefits for reduced hours. This limits the impact of layoffs on employer unemployment taxes. Employee hours and wages cannot be reduced by less than 10 percent or more than 60 percent. Rapid Response staff market the Shared Work program to employers who are contemplating layoffs or who have laid off. Rapid Response staff reaches out to participating Shared Work employers to check on their status and make appropriate referrals to Economic Development or other resources if the employers indicated that they were continuing to struggle or have difficulty emerging from a downturn in business.

C) In addition, describe the State policies and procedures to provide Rapid Responses in cases of natural disasters including coordination with FEMA and other entities.

In cases involving natural disasters, rapid response activities are coordinated with CT’s Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection and the local Workforce Development Boards and other state and community agencies.

(D) Describe how the State provides early intervention (e.g., Rapid Response) to worker groups on whose behalf a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) petition has been filed. (Section 134(a)(2)(A).) This description must include how the State disseminates benefit information to provide trade affected workers in the groups identified in the TAA petitions with an accurate understanding of the provision of TAA benefits and services in such a way that they are transparent to the trade- affected dislocated worker applying for them (Trade Act Sec. 221(a)(2)(A) and Sec. 225; Governor-Secretary Agreement).
In Connecticut, most TAA petitions generated by State Workforce staff are filed by Rapid Response Unit staff members. In such cases, Rapid Response staffers have contacted the company regarding all reemployment and supportive services, including TAA. In most cases, Rapid Response staff members provide Early Intervention services at the employment site prior to layoff. Early intervention services include an overview of unemployment, job search assistance, health insurance options and possible training and employment services through both WIOA and TAA. If worker orientations are provided prior to a TAA certification, workers are given an overview of the possible benefits that may become available should the company and/or unit of the company become certified. Workers are advised as to how workers would be notified of their eligibility under TAA if the company becomes TAA certified.

In cases where an employer does not allow Rapid Response on-site to provide information on reemployment and possible TAA services prior to layoff, or where a TAA petition has been filed without prior Rapid Response knowledge, Rapid Response staff contact the employer officials listed on the TAA petition to explain Rapid Response services and to request a list of potential TAA-impacted workers’ names and addresses. Provided that the employer supplies such a list, Rapid Response staff members send a TAA-outreach letter to potentially impacted workers. In cases where the employer does not respond to this request for worker information, Rapid Response staff will query the Unemployment system to try and identify potentially impacted workers and subsequently send TAA-outreach letters to those individuals. The outreach letter advises the individual that a TAA petition has been filed, provides the US DOL TAA website where additional information on the program can be found, and describes the re-employment services that are available through our American Job Centers. Additionally, the outreach letter provides workers who would like to hear additional information to participate in a webinar on available resources. Rapid Response staff members conduct weekly webinars on available transition services, and a description of the TAA program is discussed during the presentation. Information about TAA is available on CT DOL’s website, is disseminated by Rapid Response Teams and a detailed fact sheet on TAA benefits and terms for workers is available at: www.ctdol.state.ct.us/TradeAct/.

(c) Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Requirements
Training grants are available to help companies grow and maintain competitiveness by investing in training of their existing workforce. CT DOL Business Services Consultants work directly with companies to design, develop, and provide funding for projects and can help businesses locate appropriate training providers. Incumbent Worker Training grants are structured to be flexible to meet the business’s training objectives. Customized training is also available as administered by the Workforce Development Boards.

The state’s workforce system challenge is to identify effective workforce solutions and collaborative approaches that benefit both job seeker and employer customers. The Department of Labor’s Office of Apprenticeship Training works collaboratively with business and industry, economic development, education, training providers, and other partners on talent development strategies and workforce solutions to provide workers with the skills businesses need. Registered apprenticeship is a workforce solution that contributes to the development of industry-defined competencies needed by employers in the state, and serves as a proven industry-driven workforce education and preparation strategy for workers.

The Office of Apprenticeship Training invested in an aggressive training and outreach initiative to integrate registered apprenticeship into the career guidance and career exploration services offered through the American Job Center system, both virtually and as part of staff-assisted services. The Office of Apprenticeship Training provides apprenticeship awareness workshops to a multitude of staff and customers of the American Job Centers. This is an effort to ensure that apprenticeship is included as part of the full complement of education and training services the workforce system provides to its job seeker and employer customers. Department of Labor Business Services Consultants and American Job Center partners promote the integration of apprenticeship into business engagement strategies by encouraging the development of apprenticeship programs as a solution to meet business customer needs.

While most registered apprenticeship programs are funded by program sponsors, the Office of Apprenticeship Training workforce system is strategically leveraging state and federal funds to offset training costs for employers and to develop and advance worker pipelines.
for both emerging and established employers and regional industry sectors. CTDOL’s comprehensive approach to the management of their Eligible Training Providers List (ETPL), Registered Apprenticeship (RA) sponsors and Related Technical Instructors (RTI) may request to have their programs listed on the ETPL, which is publicly viewable via the CTDOL website. In addition to providing another avenue for RA sponsors and RTIs to connect with potential apprentices, this opportunity under WIOA gives those eligible for apprenticeship access to WIOA funding to support some or all of their related instruction, OJT and supportive services. Apprenticeship listings may remain on the ETPL as long as the sponsor remains registered.

Additional examples include, but are not limited to, the Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative, the Office of Apprenticeship Training and the Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board (EWIB) working together to implement registered apprenticeship as a pipeline for customized training programs in manufacturing at General Dynamics/Electric Boat and members of the Eastern Advanced Manufacturing Alliance (EAMA).

The American Apprenticeship Initiative (AAI) enables the Office of Apprenticeship Training to expand apprenticeship programs in new and growing industries as diverse as healthcare, Information Technology, and advanced manufacturing. While similar in purpose, the Manufacturing Innovation Fund (MIF), which is a partnership with the state’s Department of Economic and Community Development to support manufacturing companies in their efforts to implement real time, demand-driven registered apprenticeships.

The Manufacturing Innovation Fund (MIF) Apprenticeship Program, allocated $7.8 million when it was launched in 2015 has grown to a $10.8 million state bond allocation, administered by CTDOL/OAT. This program continues to provide financial assistance in the form of a wage subsidy to manufacturers and tuition reimbursement (for MIF registered apprentices and pre-apprentices) to approved Apprentice Related Instruction Training Providers. To date over 700 apprentices and over 200 companies have received support through this program. CTDOL/OAT anticipates significant additional apprenticeship growth in this sector over the next ten years.

The strategic partnerships in Connecticut’s workforce system ensure a clearer path for participants to succeed with the job-driven opportunities that registered apprenticeship programs offer. Apprenticeship provides a flexible training delivery option and when used in the context of economic development strategies, creates a seamless pipeline of skilled workers and flexible career pathways to meet current and future workforce demands.

(3) **Training Provider Eligibility Procedure.** Provide the procedure for determining training provider initial and continued eligibility, including Registered Apprenticeship programs (WIOA Section 122).

Entities interested in applying for initial WIOA ETPL eligibility must submit a completed
“Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL) Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Eligible Training Provider (ETP) Application,” available on CTDOL’s website at http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/wia/wioa-trngproviderapps.htm, to the workforce development board (WDB) for the area in which the applying entity’s headquarters (or, as applicable, main campus) is located (this WDB is then the “lead” board for the entity). In addition to applying to the lead board, the entity must submit a full copy of their ETPL initial eligibility application to each WDB in which any of the applying entity’s training sites for program offerings are located. Secondary boards review the application and advise the lead board as to whether the application is approved or not for that area. Once the lead board and all applicable secondary boards have reached a decision to approve the application, the lead board advises CTDOL and requests a state level review (such reviews are on a rolling basis). CTDOL then conduct a review of the entity’s status with OSHA, UI Tax, and Wage and Workplace Standards. If approved, CTDOL will inform the lead board which will then add the provider and program(s) to the ETPL (CTHires). If an OSHA, UI Tax or Wage matter prevents CTDOL from issuing approval, the entity will have the opportunity to resolve the issue(s).

Following one year of initial eligibility, ETPL providers must submit an application to be considered for continued eligibility. Prior to the expiration date of a provider’s initial eligibility, the lead WDB will notify the provider that it may apply for continued eligibility. The lead WDB will also prepare a list of the provider’s expiring programs so the provider may include them in the “CTDOL WIOA ETP Continued Eligibility Application” that the provider must submit to the lead WDB (and any secondary boards). The continued eligibility review process, both locally and by CTDOL, follows the same steps as described above for initial eligibility. Upon approval of continued eligibility by CTDOL, the lead board will update CTHires to indicate continued eligibility has been approved and will enter the new, two-year expiration date in CTHires. Additional ETPL procedures and ETPL policy are detailed in CTDOL’s WIOA Policy Manual at http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/wia/WIOAPolicyManual.pdf.

(4) Describe how the State will implement and monitor the priority for public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient in accordance with the requirements of WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(E), which applies to individualized career services and training services funded by the Adult Formula program.

All WIOA related policy memos including those specific to serving priority populations have been combined into a unified policy manual which is continuously updated for accuracy and content. The updated manual can be found at: http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/wia/WIOAPolicyManual.pdf.

Several methods are used to comprehensively implement and monitor priority of service to priority populations including public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, or
individuals who are basic skills deficient. These methods include program compliance monitoring, case file review and electronic case management systems. CT DOL uses the CT HIRES automated case management system which includes a database with fields to identify individuals who may be designated basic skills deficient, a recipient of public assistance, or to meet the definition of low income.

CTDOL, along with its workforce partners, continues to pursue the most effective and efficient use of its data capturing capabilities in order to determine the characteristics of the individuals being served through the workforce development system. The goal of these efforts is to better identify those individuals from priority populations who are seeking assistance in order to coordinate the most appropriate mix of programs and services through both required and non-required partner program agencies and organizations.

Under WIOA 100% of funds for a fiscal year may be transferred between adult employment and training activities and dislocated worker employment and training activities, if approved by the Governor. Connecticut’s policy and criteria for transferring funds can be found in the current WIOA manual at: [http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/wia/WIOAPolicyManual.pdf](http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/wia/WIOAPolicyManual.pdf).

Youth Program Requirements. With respect to youth workforce investment activities authorized in section 129 of WIOA –

Out of School Youth ages 16 to 24 and In School Youth 14-21 that meet specific eligibility requirements, may qualify for the following Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act services.

- Tutoring, study skills training and instruction leading to secondary school completion, including
- dropout prevention strategies;
- Alternative secondary school offerings;
- Paid and unpaid work experiences that have academic and occupational education as a component of the work experience:
- Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year;
  - Pre-apprenticeship programs;
Internships as defined in § 680.170 of the regulations and job shadowing; and
On-the-job training opportunities;

- Occupational skill training with priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized post-secondary credentials that align with in-demand industry sectors or occupations;
- Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;
- Leadership development opportunities, including community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors;
- Supportive services;
- Adult mentoring for the duration of at least 12 months that may occur both during and after program participation;
- Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation;
- Comprehensive guidance and counseling, including drug and alcohol abuse counseling, as well as referrals to counseling, as appropriate to the needs of the individual youth;
- Financial literacy education; Entrepreneurial skills training;
- Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area *, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services; and
- Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training.

CT DOL has issued a policy which incorporates US DOL’s guidance regarding administrative procurement procedures and the extent to which providers of youth services, such as the program design framework component, the ten program elements, and youth services delivered in a One-Stop setting, must be selected. The State of Connecticut adopted all such guidance and directed each area comply with these policies.

The five workforce development boards understand Job Corps to be a viable option and include it on the roster of service providers to whom they refer young people. In addition, nearby American Job Centers provide workshops for Job Corps student employees, introducing them to a variety of job search resources and other services. In addition, state monitoring, file review and data validation evaluate local area youth policy comprehensively. Following program monitoring, best practices and areas for corrective action are identified. CT DOL will also offer technical assistance to the WDBs to assist them in meeting youth performance measures. Related youth policies can be found in the CTDOL WIOA Policy Manual.

(2) Describe the strategies the State will use to achieve improved outcomes for out-of-school youth as described in 129(a)(1)(B), including how it will leverage and align the core programs, any Combined State Plan partner programs included in this Plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs, and any other resources available.
Connecticut proposes to develop and emphasize career pathways by emphasizing the connection to career ladders as part of an Out of School Youth’s individual service strategy - an educational path along with occupational training for high-demand jobs, as defined by LMI and the LWDB.

For Out of School Youth, the removal of barriers that prevent successful transition to career pathways will be key to successful engagement. CTDOL will encourage the WDB’s to pay special attention to identifying and engaging individuals who experience the following barriers:

- English language learners (working closely with Adult ED/ESL partners and contextualized learning opportunities including IBEST models)
- Youth involved with the justice system (working closely with Court Support Services Division and community partners to support reduced recidivism and improved outcomes for such youth)
- Homeless, pregnant or parenting or youth (linking youth with housing and child care as available in the community, to stabilize pathways to self-sufficiency)
- Youth with disabilities (working closely with Vocational Rehabilitation partners to serve these youth in more seamless ways)

In the fall of 2017 CTDOL conducted a Youth Summit to explore ways of outreaching disconnected youth with barriers. Attendance included a wide range of state agencies, local workforce development boards and their providers, private non-profit agencies, philanthropic organizations and youth.

Presentations regarding each of the WIOA identified barriers were explored and a blueprint for moving forward was developed. CTDOL will continue to support and engage the WDB’s in developing programs which seek to remove the barriers which preclude Youth from successful participation in training programs and impair the ability for youth to reach the goals necessary for job-readiness. In August of 2019 CTDOL sponsored a Youth Mental Health First Aide Training Program geared at providing partner staff and their youth providers with the tools necessary to identify and engage individuals who present with mental health issues.

Performance Indicators for OSY effective July, 2019:
1. Placement in Employment/Education 2nd Qtr. after exit
2. Placement in Employment/Education 4th Qtr. after exit
3. Median Earnings 2nd Qtr. after exit
4. Credential Attainment (up to 1 year after exit)
5. *Measurable Skills Gains*
6. Effectiveness in Serving Employers

Connecticut seeks to define measurable skill gains in terms of gains on standardized tests.
for reading, math and ELL assessments; completing part or all of a GED course; earning GED credential; completion of one or more developmental education courses, passing a credit bearing; completing a designated number of higher education credits; objective demonstration of competencies related to work-based training. Again these indicators will be designed to emphasize career pathways.

A high-quality, comprehensive career pathway system will be developed and implemented that includes multiple entry and exit points that meets learners where they are, provides education, training and support services needed for career advancement, and ensures a skilled workforce that meets Connecticut’s talent needs.

(3) Describe how the state will ensure that all 14 program elements described in WIOA section 129(c)(2) are made available and effectively implemented.

CT DOL ensures that youth services for both out of school and in-school youth are effectively implemented through contract management and oversight, administrative policy, data validation and monitoring and technical assistance, Youth related policies contained in CTDOL’s WIOA policy manual prioritize out of school youth, drop out recovery and post-secondary credentials. Yearly monitoring includes a complete review of local youth services and providers to ensure federal law, policy and regulations are implemented. Monitoring includes interviews with staff and participants to ensure quality youth programming is provided.

(4) Provide the language contained in the State policy for “requiring additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion for out-of-school youth specified in WIOA section 129(a)(1)(B)(iii)(VIII) and for “requiring additional assistance to complete an education program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion for in-school youth specified in WIOA section 129(a)(1)(C)(iv)(VII).

For youth who require additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment, additional assistance may be defined to include youth who are/have:

• Emancipated
• Aged out of foster care
• Previous dropouts or have been suspended five or more times or have been expelled
• Court/agency referrals mandating school attendance
• At risk of dropping out of school by a school official
• Never held a job
• Been fired from a job within the twelve months prior to application (applies to out of school youth); and
• Never held a full-time job for more than thirteen consecutive weeks (applies to out of school youth).
• Migrant Youth
• Incarcerated Parent/Guardian
• Behavior Problems at School
• Serious emotional, medical or psychological problems
• Chronic Health Conditions including addictions
• Family Literacy Problems
• Domestic, Sexual Violence or other Trauma Survivor or reside in abusive environment
• One or more grade levels below appropriate for age
• Repeated at least one secondary grade level
• Core grade point average of less than 1.5
• For each year of secondary education, are at least two semester credits behind the rate required to graduate from high school
• Cultural barriers that may be a hindrance to employment
• American Indian, Alaska Native or Native Hawaiian
• Refugee
• Homeless
• Eligible to receive free or reduced price lunch
• A foster child on behalf of whom State or local government payments are made
• Locally defined “additional assistance”

Under WIOA, local areas may define additional criterion for a youth who “requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment” however under WIOA local areas may no longer define local barriers.

(5) Include the State definition, as defined in law, for not attending school and attending school as specified in WIOA Section 129(a)(1)(B)(i) and Section 129(a)(1)(C)(i). If State law does not define “not attending school” or “attending school,” indicate that is the case.

Connecticut’s policies on youth are complicated by discrepancies between the state education statutes and WIOA. Connecticut General Statutes, Sec. 10-184 says if a student has withdrawn from high school, he/she is considered an “out of school youth.” “Not attending school” language has not been defined by our state Department of Education, which challenges our coordination with our adult education partner. What defines “out of school” is whether the youth/family has officially withdrawn in writing or not. Further, Connecticut youth must be 17 or older to withdraw and it requires parent or guardian’s permission. (At the time of written withdrawal, parents/guardians/students MUST be apprised of adult education and other option for child).

SDE provides transition and supportive services for students with special needs up to age 21. At 18 a student doesn’t need to officially withdraw in writing, but it is the policy of our Education Dept. to require 18 year olds to get a written withdrawal form. (This is because it
forces the system to apprise the family that if they have an IEP and withdraw, they lose all entitlements to IEP services. 17 year olds can return to school, and reinstate IEP within 90 days. Those who withdraw from school in writing are only eligible for services under ADA, not other special education services. There are exceptions to this policy for certain students).

For purposes of Workforce Policy CT DOL has adopted the following definitions: "School" means an established institution of vocational, academic or technical instruction or education, other than a college or university. "Regularly enrolled student" means an individual who has completed all forms and processes required to attend a school, college or university and who will attend prescribed classes at the times they are offered.

(6) If utilizing the portion of the basic skills deficient definition contained in WIOA Section 3 (5)(B), include the specific State definition.

Basic Skills Deficiency per WIOA Policy As used in § 681.210(c)(3), a youth is “basic skills deficient” if he or she:

(1) Has English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level on a generally accepted standardized test; or

(2) Are unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual’s family, or in society.

An adult, who is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual’s family, or in society. In using only National Reporting System approved Connecticut Competency System (CCS) test tools and based on the CASAS NRS Educational Functioning Level, CT has determined that a score of 236 and below on any test is considered to meet the criteria of basic skills deficiency.

(d) **Single-area State requirements.** In States where there is only one local workforce investment area, the governor serves as both the State and local chief elected official. In such cases, the State must submit any information required in the local plan (WIOA section 106(d)(2)). States with a single workforce area must also include:

Any comments from the public comment period that represent disagreement with the Plan. (WIOA section 108(d)(3).)

(1) The entity responsible for the disbursal of grant funds, as determined by the governor, if different from that for the State. (WIOA section 108(b)(15).)

(2) The type and availability of WIOA title I Youth activities, including an identification of successful providers of such activities. (WIOA section 108(b)(9).)

Connecticut is not a single-area state.
Waiver Requests (optional)

Agency: Department of Labor

The State of Connecticut is seeking a waiver from the requirements outlined in the WIOA at Sections 116 and 122, and at 20 CFR 677.230 and 20 CFR 680.400 through 680.530, which require the collection and reporting of performance-related data on all students participating in training programs listed on the state's ETPL.

Background
Subsequent to the passage of WIOA in 2014, the State of Connecticut immediately began working towards the implementation of WIOA’s Eligible Training Provider (ETP) provisions. At that time, the state’s MIS system, CTWBS, was in the midst of being phased out to the CTHires (Geographic Solutions) system now in use. This system went “live” in December 2015. During 2016-2017, Connecticut went through the process of converting all ETPL providers to CTHires. In addition, Geographic Solutions was converting its system from WIA to WIOA. Prior to CTHires, Connecticut had not been collecting performance data on ETPL providers. Connecticut’s first step towards a comprehensive ETPL was the creation of our WIOA Policy Manual, which included both WIOA ETPL policy and its performance requirements. The policy and performance requirements were finalized in July 2018.

Connecticut began meeting with its educational partner, the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU), in 2016 to begin moving towards the technical and FERPA requirements that would allow ETPL performance information to be shared. In 2017, the CSCU system reported initial performance rates within the CTHires system manually. This was a hardship for the university system, requiring time, effort and manpower. While this is a step in the right direction, many private providers do not have the time and manpower necessary to report on all participants. Connecticut has addressed several critical points while working to implement the WIOA ETP requirements, which include:

- ensuring that the local WDB’s have sufficient numbers and diversity in training providers to create a competitive well rounded marketplace for Individual Training Accounts (ITAs.)
- ensuring equal performance evaluation among providers when determining ETPL continued eligibility.
- reducing the burden on training providers to submit performance information on non-WIOA participants to the state which may not be readily available.
- developing an automated system for ETPL providers to report performance information.
- burden on providers providing personal, sensitive information which may leave participants open to identity theft and or fraud.

- ability of providers to capture relevant information on non-WIOA participants who
have left or graduated the program. Many of these providers choose not to be on the ETPL, limiting participants’ consumer choice of programs.

- providing beneficial information to WIOA participants on eligible training programs that allow them to make informed choices on how to use their ITAs most effectively.

**Actions undertaken to remove state or local barriers**

*Describe the actions undertaken to remove state or local barriers.*

As required by 20 CFR 679.620 (d)(2) we have determined that there are no state or local statutory or regulatory barriers to implementing the requested waiver.

**Goals and expected programmatic outcomes of waiver**

*Describe and specify how the waiver will help the state achieve an identified strategic goal or set of goals that it has outlined in its State Plan. If possible and appropriate the type of waiver requested, provide quantifiable projections for programmatic outcomes that will result from the waiver.*

- additional added providers who offer more varied programs enhancing consumer choice.
- increased competition among providers and programs which may lead to lower costs.
- stronger partnerships and relations between training providers and the public workforce system.
- greater flexibility in assisting providers who might not otherwise meet the federal WIOA reporting requirements for inclusion in the ETPL.

**Individuals impacted by the waiver**

*Describe which populations the waiver will benefit, including how the waiver will impact services for disadvantaged populations or individuals with multiple barriers to employment.*

The waiver will benefit all populations, regardless of whether individuals are disadvantaged or have multiple barriers to employment, by providing the ability for the state to include a wider array of continued eligibility providers.

**Process for monitoring progress in implementation**

*Describe the processes used to monitor the progress in implementing the waiver.*

Annual WIOA programmatic monitoring will include an evaluation of the impact the waiver has on programmatic objectives. Additionally, the CTDOL WIOA Administration unit will have the responsibility of ensuring the specific objectives achieved by the waiver are realized. Furthermore, the information gathered from the waiver will result in implementation of improved policies to effectuate overall best practices. CTDOL’s WIOA Administration Unit and Performance Accountability staff will periodically examine the appropriateness and the effectiveness of this waiver towards meeting its objectives.
Notice to affected local boards
Address how local boards affected by the waiver were notified of the request.

Connecticut’s five local boards were provided a draft of the waiver request at CTDOL’s WIOA Administration Unit’s monthly meeting in October and were included in plans to request the waiver in the weeks prior to the meeting. The boards will be advised via email of the actual submission of this waiver.

Public Comment
Provide a description of the proactive solicitation of public comments. At a minimum, post the proposed waiver request to the state’s official website for comment. Ideally, develop a targeted outreach strategy to collect input and comment from all affected stakeholders. Submit any comments or concerns collected in this manner and the outcome of the state’s review of the public comments received.

Connecticut is submitting this waiver request separately from its state plan; and as such, the waiver request will be posted on CTDOL’s website for comment and review by interested parties and the public.

Waiver Impact
Collect and report information about waiver outcomes in the State’s WIOA Annual Report. The Secretary may require that States provide the most recent data available about the outcomes of the existing waiver in cases where the State seeks renewal of a previously approved waiver.

The Connecticut Department of Labor WIOA administration unit will have the responsibility of ensuring the specific objectives achieved by the waiver are realized. Outcomes of the waiver will be reported in the WIOA Annual Report.

TITLE I-B ASSURANCES

State Plan must include assurances that:

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<tr>
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<th>Assurance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The State has implemented a policy to ensure Adult program funds provide a priority in the delivery of career and training services to individuals who are low income, public assistance recipients or basic skills deficient;</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The State has implemented a policy to ensure local areas have a process in place for referring veterans with significant barriers to employment to career services provided by the JVSG program’s Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>State established a written policy and procedure that set forth criteria to be used by chief elected officials for appointment of local workforce investment board members;</td>
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4 The State established written policy and procedures to ensure local workforce investment boards are certified by the governor every two years in accordance with WIOA section 107(c)(2);

5 Where an alternative entity takes the place of a State Board, the State has written policy and procedures to ensure the alternative entity meets the definition under WIOA section 101(e) and the legal requirements for membership;

6 The State established a written policy and procedure for how the individuals and entities represented on the State Workforce Development Board help to determine the methods and factors of distribution, and how the State consults with chief elected officials in local areas throughout the State in determining the distributions;

7 The State will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote, or deter union organizing in accordance with WIOA section 181(b)(7);

8 The State distributes adult and youth funds received under WIOA equitably throughout the State, and no local area suffers significant shifts in funding from year-to-year during the period covered by this plan;

9 If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I;

10 Priority of Service for covered persons is provided for each of the Title I programs; and;

11 The State agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report;

12 The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 2900, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance under section WIOA 184(a)(3).

WAGNER-PEYSER ACT PROGRAM (Employment Services)
(a) Employment Service (ES) Staff.

(1) Describe how the state will staff the provision of labor exchange services under the Wagner-Peyser Act.

The state will continue to utilize state merit staff employees.

(2) Professional Development Activities for Employment Service staff

Describe how the State will utilize professional development activities for Employment Service staff to ensure staff is able to provide high quality services to both jobseekers and employers.

As funding allows, the Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL) will continue to promote
the professional development of its staff, leveraging state, agency, and, as applicable, federal grant funds to enhance the skills of its workforce. CTDOL will continue to pursue professional résumé writer certification for all appropriate American Job Center staff utilizing agency staff for training and test preparation. Associate Community Service Representatives on the career path to Career Development Specialist will be afforded the opportunity to obtain the credentials required for promotion to this classification. Employment Service Staff, including Business Services staff, will continue to have the opportunity to attend annual workforce development events such as the Interagency Business Engagement Training and Conference on Serving Adults with Disabilities. To build capacity, CTDOL will train American Job Center staff to facilitate a variety of standardized employment readiness workshops. In addition, in-service training courses offered each fall and spring by the Department of Administrative Services may be made available to Employment Service staff to enhance computer, communication, writing, public speaking, presentation and supervisory skills.

(3) Strategies to support training and awareness across core programs and the Unemployment Insurance Program

Describe strategies developed to support training and awareness across core programs and the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program and the training provided for Employment Services and WIOA staff on identification of UI eligibility issues and referral to UI staff for adjudication.

The agency will continue to provide training consistent with Connecticut’s coordinated workforce system efforts to ensure all staff is aware of programs and services available throughout the workforce system and AJC customers are properly referred to appropriate programs and services. AJCs will continue the practice of holding regional partner meetings where information is shared regarding the core programs.

The UI Training Coordinator as well as staff in CTDOL’s Legal Unit have provided UI training to AJC staff and will continue to serve as a resource on UI matters. In the event a UI eligibility issue is detected, AJC staff will refer claimants to the UI expert in the AJC or Adjudications Unit for review and potential adjudication.

(b) Providing information and meaningful assistance to individuals requesting assistance in filing claim for unemployment compensation through One-Stop centers

Explain how the State will provide information and meaningful assistance to individuals requesting assistance in filing a claim for unemployment compensation through one-stop centers, as required by WIOA as a career service.

Unemployment Insurance (UI) experts are available at the affiliate and comprehensive
American Job Centers to assist customers with unemployment-related inquiries. This assistance may include processing continued claims; releasing payments when appropriate; processing address changes; assisting claimants with filing appeals; providing identity verifications, printouts or status letters; and supplying information on the Shared Work program and Rapid Response services. The UI experts will also provide handouts or desk aids to customers with questions that can be answered via the web (www.filectui.com) and inform claimants of other services provided by the American Job Centers. These UI experts can also grant requests for a reasonable accommodation by taking claims for claimants with disabilities who cannot file via the internet or by telephone. UI experts in the American Job Centers will also have access to Language Line services to accommodate customers with limited English proficiency.

Describe the State’s strategy for providing reemployment assistance to UI claimants and other unemployed individuals.

Unemployment Insurance Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (UI RESEA): CTDOL meets the reemployment needs of many UI claimants through the Unemployment Insurance Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (UI RESEA) program, which serves claimants who are either profiled as most likely to exhaust benefits or receiving Unemployment Compensation for Ex-service members (UCX). Selected claimants report for services in the Bridgeport, Hamden, Hartford, Montville and Waterbury American Job Centers. CTDOL’s RESEA program design includes an increased UI presence in the AJCs and the extensive involvement of UI staff in the development, implementation and monitoring of the program. Ongoing staff training includes roundtable technical assistance sessions and formal classroom training and focuses on enhancing the skills needed to assist claimants with their reemployment efforts.

RESEA program representatives have been trained to effectively access labor market information specific to a claimant’s job skills and employment prospects, develop a reemployment plan to meet the claimant’s needs and determine appropriate referrals to reemployment services or training. CTDOL expects to complete at least 8,515 initial RESEAs during the 12-month period ending December 31, 2019.

Required RESEA Services. Each RESEA must include the following core components to serve the needs of the claimant.
- UI eligibility assessment, including review of work search activities, and referral to adjudication, as appropriate, if an issue or potential issue(s) is identified;
- The provision of labor market and career information that addresses the claimant’s specific needs;
- Enrollment in Wagner-Peyser Act funded Employment Services;
- Providing support to the claimant to develop and implement an individual reemployment plan; and
- Providing information and access to American Job Center (AJC) services and referrals to

reemployment services and training, as appropriate, to support the claimant's return to work.

(f) State use of W-P funds to support UI claimants, and other communication between W-P and UI, including:
(1) Coordination and provision of labor exchange services for UI claimants as required by the Wagner-Peyser Act;

(2) Registration of UI claimants with the State's employment services;

(3) Administration of the work test for State unemployment compensation system. Including eligibility assessments and job finding and placement services for UI claimants; and

(4) Provision of referrals to and application assistance for training and education programs and resources.

CTDOL emails a Claimant’s Guide to Unemployment Benefits to all initial unemployment claim filers. A hard copy of this guide can be printed upon request. This guide contains all necessary information related to a person’s eligibility for unemployment benefits as well as a listing of the American Job Centers throughout Connecticut and information about the employment services they provide to job seekers. As a result of filing for Unemployment Insurance, UI claimants are registered with the State’s employment service in the form of a registration in CTHires, the state’s web-based workforce development system that provides case management and labor exchange services and the state job bank. Claimants will receive a welcome email from CTHires after filing, which explains the services available and encourages them to utilize CTHires for their job search.

CTDOL administers the work test for UI claimants through the UI RESEA program. All claimants selected to participate will report to an American Job Center for a review of their UI eligibility and efforts to find work. Any claimant determined to have an eligibility issue or insufficient work search efforts will have a stop entered on his or her unemployment claim and the eligibility issue is referred to the UI expert in the AIC for review and potential referral to the Adjudications Unit. All claimants who attend the Initial RESEA appointment will receive a customized reemployment plan, jointly developed with the RESEA representative, and be required to participate in at least one additional mandatory employment service activity. Services include referrals to employment readiness workshops, résumé critiques, career counseling, WIOA orientation sessions, or any other service available in the American Job Center.

State agency merit-based staff will continue to provide Wagner-Peyser Act funded labor exchange activities. These services include job readiness workshops on topics such as Successful Job Search Strategies, Fundamentals of Résumé Writing and Interviewing Strategies and Techniques; one-on-one career counseling, résumé critiques; employer recruitments; job readiness assessments; and Career Center services. In the Career Centers,
located in the American Job Centers, job seekers will be able to work on their résumés and cover letters, complete online job applications, research companies, review job postings and conduct any other business related to their job search. They will have access to copy machines, fax machines, free postage for mailing résumés and applications to employers and most importantly, in-person support from CTDOL and Workforce Development Board contractor staff that provide whatever guidance and support might be needed. Career Center customers with disabilities will have access to accessible technology, such as large screen computer monitors and visual magnifiers, computer keyboards with visually enhanced lettering, sign language interpreters and any other reasonable accommodation the customer might need. All American Job Centers will have a process in place that allows staff to refer customers to education and training programs as well as other resources and supportive services. Some referrals will be made “in house” to other partner agencies under the roof of the American Job Center while others may be to organizations that are located in separate venues. Trade Act clients will be co-enrolled into WIOA as a standard operating procedure. CTDOL will continue to deploy a team of Business Services Specialists across Connecticut whose sole focus is working with employers. Business Services Specialists identify employers interested in scheduling recruitment events in the American Job Centers and coordinate those events around the state. Some offices strategically conduct multi-employer recruitments in the AJC on the same day as Initial RESEA appointments. This allows RESEA participants to connect in-person with hiring employers at the conclusion of their Initial RESEA appointment. Employers with scheduled recruitments are required to post their job listings in CTHires to make their employment opportunities available to all job seekers including UI claimants. Business Services Specialists also provide in-person business consultations to identify a company’s needs, promote Work Opportunity Tax Credits, and provide customized labor market information, unemployment compensation information as well as information and referral to CTDOL’s Apprenticeship program.

(e) **Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP)**

Each State agency must develop an AOP every four years as part of Unified State Plan required under sections 102 or 103 of WIOA. AOP must include:

1. **Assessment of Need.** Provide an assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers in the area based on past and projected agricultural and farmworker activity in the State. Such needs may include but are not limited to: employment, training, and housing.

   (A) An assessment of the agricultural activity in the State means: 1) identifying the top five labor-intensive crops, the months of heavy activity, and the geographic area of prime activity; 2) Summarize the agricultural employers’ needs in the State (i.e. are they predominantly hiring local or foreign workers, are they expressing that there is a scarcity in the agricultural workforce); and 3) Identifying any economic, natural, or other factors that are affecting agriculture in the State or any projected factors that will affect
agriculture in the State.

(B) An assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers means summarizing Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW) characteristics (including if they are predominantly from certain countries, what language(s) they speak, the approximate number of MSFWs in the State during peak season and during low season, and whether they tend to be migrant, seasonal, or year-round farmworkers). This information must take into account data supplied by WIOA Section 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantees, other MSFW organizations, employer organizations, and State and/or Federal agency data sources such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Employment and Training Administration.

The Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL) continues to ensure that the employment and training services provided to the Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW) population are qualitatively equivalent, and quantitatively proportional, to the employment and training services provided to other jobseekers.

According to the US Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) latest Census data (2012), Connecticut agriculture is a $550 million revenue industry.\(^1\) Approximately 6,000 farms are in operation, covering some 440,000 acres.\(^1\) The farms are spread throughout the state, although the Connecticut River Valley, which runs all the way through the center of the state from beyond the Massachusetts border to the Long Island Sound, has long been known to provide fertile soil and a temperate climate. In its heyday, many of the highest quality cigars, regardless of the country of manufacture, sourced the most important component of the cigar, its wrapper, from tobacco farms that thrived in the Connecticut River Valley. Today’s Connecticut tobacco industry has been affected by more than social factors though, as cigar wrappers of lower, but similar quality, are now available to the manufacturers at a much lower cost due to lower production expenses in Central America. Despite this shift in the tobacco industry and a steady decline in the number of farms between 2002 and 2012, there has been a 43 percent increase per USDA data, with one possible cause being an increased consumer appetite for locally sourced food, drawing some younger people to start up small farms.\(^2\)

The aforementioned increase in number of farm operations in Connecticut does not necessarily equate to a proportionate increase in labor though. Connecticut Labor Market Information Occupational Projections for Farming, Fishing, and Forestry only estimates a 1.5% overall increase (from 4,006 jobs to 4,064 jobs) for the entire occupational group between 2014 and 2024, with a 1.7% increase (from 3,735 jobs to 3,800 jobs) when excluding Supervisors of Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Workers and Forest, Conservation, and Logging Workers.\(^3\) CTDOL’s Foreign Labor Certification Unit, which deals with H-2A related temporary agricultural labor job orders, has seen a steady decrease of participating employers and number of workers requested over the last two decades. For PY 2016 only 33 agricultural employers participated in the H-2A program, placing a total of 60 job orders and requesting a total of 398 workers. No employer in the state utilizes the Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) exclusively. In CTDOL’s outreach experience, other employers
that are large enough to hire farm laborers, but are not seeking the department’s services, have utilized labor contractors, or word-of-mouth, to fill their labor needs. Most of the farm operations that CTDOL staff has encountered have expressed the increasing difficulty of finding local employees.

The term “local” can be misleading though, and it is imperative to note that, according to the US Department of Labor’s National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS), “the share of hired crop farmworkers who were not legally authorized to work in the US grew from roughly 15 percent in 1989-91 to almost 55 percent in 1999-2001. Since then it has fluctuated around 50 percent.”4 The same survey indicates that “almost three-quarters of all hired crop farmworkers (nationally) are not migrants, but are considered settled, meaning they work at a single location within 75 miles of their home. This number is up from 42 percent in 1996-1998.”4 Of the roughly 25 percent that are migrant, “the largest group are “shuttlers,” who work at a single farm location more than 75 miles from home, and may cross an international border to get here. They made up about 12 percent of hired crop farmworkers in 2007-2009, down from about 24 percent in 1996-1998.”4 “The once more common migrant farm worker that moved from state to state working on different crops as the seasons advance, is now a relative rarity. These workers make up just five percent of those surveyed by NAWS in 2007-2009.”4

This change in demographics and migration/settling patterns reflected by NAWS at a national level would partly explain the difficulty Connecticut agricultural employers are experiencing in finding employees. The current political climate and immigration policies are also factors that could further impact the present and future labor supply in agriculture. For this reason we may see a future increase of foreign temporary labor through the H-2A program in Connecticut, as well as the rest of the nation.

The majority of Connecticut’s local and migrant agricultural labor force has origins in Mexico, Central America, Jamaica, Haiti, and Puerto Rico. Employers that utilize the H-2A program request workers from Mexico, Central America, Jamaica, and South Africa. The predominant language is Spanish for the majority that originated or travel from Spanish speaking countries. (Although it cannot be assumed that someone from a “Spanish-speaking” country speaks Spanish due to the existence of other native languages in these countries) Agricultural workers contacted through CTDOL’s outreach efforts continue to experience vulnerabilities and barriers due to language, literacy, education, immigration status, and access to healthcare. Those without legal status are even more susceptible to exploitation and retaliation.

(2) Outreach Activities. The local offices outreach activities must be designed to meet the needs of MSFWs in the State and to locate and contact MSFWs who are not being
reached through normal intake activities. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

(A) contacting farmworkers who are not being reached by the normal intake activities conducted by the employment service offices.

(B) providing technical assistance to outreach workers. Technical assistance must include trainings, conferences, additional resources, and increased collaboration with other organizations on topics such as one-stop center services (i.e. availability of referrals to training, supportive services, and career services, as well as specific employment opportunities), the employment service complaint system, information on the other organizations serving MSFWs in the area, and a basic summary of farmworker rights, including their rights with respect to the terms and conditions of employment.

(C) increasing outreach worker training and awareness across core programs including the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program and the training on identification of UI eligibility issues.

(D) providing State merit staff outreach workers professional development activities to ensure they are able to provide high quality services to both jobseekers and employers.

(E) coordinating outreach efforts with NFJP grantees as well as with public and private community service agencies and MSFW groups.

All outreach efforts to MSFWs were performed solely by the SMA up until May 5th 2017, when an outreach representative was hired to comply with the requirements set forth at 20 CFR 653.107. The Outreach Representative will carry out his responsibilities, throughout the state, in a full-time capacity during periods of the highest MSFW activity, between March and November, and in part-time capacity the remainder of the time. The Outreach Representative has a prior background in the MSFW program and has been brought up to speed on recent regulation changes.

Connecticut’s SMA attends all required conferences and/or trainings, and strives to involve the outreach representative in as many activities as possible. Resource material, technical assistance, and best practices attained at these events are passed down to the outreach representative, as well as all AJC staff. Said staff is put through periodic MSFW Program and Job Service Complaint System training to refresh their MSFW and Job Service Complaint System knowledge.

The SMA and Outreach Representative will continue to coordinate outreach visits to farms with CTDOL’s NFJP grantee, the New England Farm Workers’ Council (NEFWC), the Connecticut River Valley Farmworker Health Program (CRVFHP) and UConn’s Migrant Farm Worker Clinics, and the US DOL Wage and Hour Division.

(3) Services provided to farmworkers and agricultural employers through the one-stop delivery system. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:
(A) Providing the full range of employment and training services to the agricultural community, both farmworkers and agricultural employers, through the one-stop delivery system. This includes:
   i. How career and training services required under WIOA Title I will be provided to MSFWs through the one-stop centers;
   ii. How the State serves agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such services.

(B) Marketing the employment service complaint system to farmworkers and other farmworker advocacy groups.

(C) Marketing the Agricultural Recruitment System to agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such publicity.

Agricultural workers, job seekers, and employers have access to the same employment services available in each of Connecticut’s American Job Centers (AJCs) that are available to non-agricultural workers, job seekers, and employers. The network consists of 5 comprehensive centers and an additional 13 partner staffed centers. (With partial SWA staffing) CTDOL outreach staff encourages workers and job seekers to visit the AJCs to take advantage of the below services:

- Computer labs with internet access, including access to CTDOL’s newly implemented self-service operating system/database for job seekers, employers, and partner agencies—CTHires
- Reemployment workshops and services
- Career planning and counseling
- Access to labor market information
- Recruitment assistance
- Veteran employment and training services
- Adult, Dislocated, and Youth Worker activities under WIOA
- Adult Education under Connecticut State Department of Education
- Apprenticeship Training information
- Vocational Rehabilitation Programs under ADS (Department of Aging and Disability Services) and BESB (Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind)
- Unemployment Insurance assistance
- Jobs First Employment Services
- Referrals to supportive services
- Complaint handling

Staff in the American Job Centers is put through periodic MSFW Program and Job Service Complaint System training to refresh their MSFW and Job Service Complaint System knowledge. The SMA will continue on-site monitoring of the AJCs to ensure compliance with the Job Service regulations, offering technical assistance as needed. Although employer services and the utilization of the Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) are typically promoted during outreach visits, CTDOL has begun involving and collaborating
with its Business Services Representatives to better serve the needs of these agricultural employers. Other services available to agricultural employers include:

- Assistance with the placement of job orders
- Assistance with the recruitment of qualified workers
- Mediation and interpretation assistance
- Complaint assistance
- Technical assistance on compliance with employment related Federal and State regulations

Outreach efforts often involve collaboration with partner agencies/advocacy groups, and serve to inform said agencies/groups, as well as the farm workers themselves, on the Job Service Complaint System.

(4) Other Requirements.

(A) *Collaboration.* Describe any collaborative agreements the state workforce agency (SWA) has with other MSFW service providers including NFJP grantees and other service providers.

Describe how the SWA intends to build upon/increase collaboration with existing partners and in establishing new partners over the next four years (including any approximate timelines for establishing agreements or building upon existing agreements).

(B) *Review and Public Comment.* In developing the AOP, the SWA must solicit information and suggestions from NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other interested organizations. In addition, at least 45 calendar days before submitting its final AOP, the SWA must provide a proposed plan to NFJP grantees, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other organizations expressing an interest and allow at least 30 days for review and comment. The SWA must: 1) Consider any comments received in formulating its final proposed AOP; 2) Inform all commenting parties in writing whether their comments have been incorporated and, if not, the reasons therefore; and 3) Transmit the comments and recommendations received and its responses with the submission of the AOP.

i. The AOP must include a statement confirming NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other interested employer organizations have been given an opportunity to comment on the AOP. Include the list of organizations from which information and suggestions were solicited, any comments received, and responses to those comments.

(C) *Data Assessment.* Review the previous four years Wagner-Peyser data reports on performance. Note whether the State has been meeting its goals to provide MSFWs quantitatively proportionate services as compared to non-MSFWs. If it has not met
these goals, explain why the State believes such goals were not met and how the State intends to improve its provision of services in order to meet such goals.

(D) **Assessment of progress.** The plan must include an explanation of what was achieved based on the previous AOP, what was not achieved and an explanation as to why the State believes the goals were not achieved, and how the State intends to remedy the gaps of achievement in the coming year.

(E) **State Monitor Advocate.** The plan must contain a statement confirming the State Monitor Advocate has reviewed and approved the AOP.

Connecticut’s SMA has established relationships with various entities across the state and region, including the NEFWC, CTDOL’s NFJP grantee. A Memorandum of Understanding was updated between the two agencies in March of 2016, hoping to maximize the number of resources available to MSFWs. The SMA has also established collaboration between the NEFWC and the Hartford AJC, affording staff from both agencies to familiarize themselves with each other’s services, and establishing points of contact in each agency to ease coordination of services and referrals between both offices. CTDOL intends to establish similar relationships between NEFWC and its other AJCs going forward. The SMA has also established relationships with the Connecticut River Valley Farmworker Health Program and UConn’s Migrant Farmworker Clinics, area Community Health Centers, Statewide Legal Services of Connecticut, and Massachusetts Migrant Educational Program. The SMA, along with the Outreach Representative, will look to maintain and/or expand these relationships over the foreseeable future.

Analysis of Connecticut’s performance data may show that certain indicators were not met at all times during this past four year period. However, CTDOL does not feel the data is commensurate with its efforts to meet the performance goals. Agricultural workers are continuously encouraged to seek better opportunities through employment and training programs at the AJCs, but certain factors, such as legal status, may be preventing part of the population from taking advantage of these services. This leaves us with a much smaller pool of measurable MSFWs, of which some may actually take advantage of the offered services, but not all, in which case the state ends up failing certain indicators. Some of the failed indicators can also be attributed to the transition period to a new database over the past two years, which affected some of the data. CTDOL will continue to provide the state’s MSFWs with quantitatively proportionate, and qualitatively equivalent, services as compared to non-MSFWs. It will also continue to encourage agricultural workers to seek better opportunities through employment services and training.

The WIOA Section 167 NFJP Grantee, the New England Farm Worker’s Council, has been afforded the opportunity to review and comment on CTDOL’s Agricultural Outreach Plan. No comments or additional recommendations were received.

Connecticut’s SMA has reviewed and approved CTDOL’s Agricultural Outreach Plan.
WAGNER-PEYSER ASSURANCES
State Plan must include assurances that:

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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Wagner-Peyser Employment Service is co-located with one-stop centers or a plan and timeline has been developed to comply with this requirement within a reasonable amount of time. (Sec 121(e)(3));</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The State Agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111 (State agency staffing requirements) if the State has significant MSFW One-Stop centers;</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; and</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>State agency merit-based public employees provide Wagner-Peyser Act-funded labor exchange activities in accordance with Department of Labor regulations.</td>
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1) All workforce regions have a comprehensive One-Stop center that provides access to the physical services of the core programs and other required partners.
2) Connecticut does not have significant MSFW one-stop centers.
3) Wagner-Peyser Employment Service will collaborate with the Department of Aging and Disability Services in providing labor exchange activities to persons with disabilities.
4) State agency merit-based public employees will continue to provide Wagner-Peyser Act-funded labor exchange activities in accordance with Department of Labor regulations at the American Job Centers.
APPENDIX 1: Performance Goals for Core Programs

Include the State's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability indicators based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA.

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<tr>
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ADULT EDUCATION LITERACY PROGRAMS

The State Plan must include a description of the following as it pertains to Adult Education and Literacy programs under Title II, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA).

(a) Aligning of Content Standards

Describe how the eligible agency will, by July 1, 2016, align its content standards for adult education with state-adopted challenging academic content standards, as adopted under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(1)).

With adoption of the Connecticut Core Standards (CCS), the new GED test, and the new Web-based National External Diploma Program (NEDP), the CSDE recognized the need to support a set of standards relevant to adult learners. Connecticut adopted the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) for Adult Education released by the United States Department of Education Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE). These content standards align closely with the CCS. In December 2014, Connecticut applied to the OCTAE and was selected for participation in the CCRS-in-Action project. Trainers participated in two workshops in Washington, DC, to be trained in the statewide implementation of standards. Connecticut has a policy that all adult education providers have their Adult Basic Education (ABE)/General Educational Development (GED) and Credit Diploma subject teachers trained in using the CCRS in their curriculum. Full implementation began July 1, 2017.

Connecticut has committed to use of the CCRS in all adult education classes. Since the submission of the State Plan in 2016, over 600 teachers completed the English Language Arts series and over 100 teachers completed the Math series. We continue to make training available for newly hired teachers and to provide training for lead teachers in alignment of resources and lesson review to the CCRS. Technical assistance is ongoing for this effort. Beginning in 2020, online courses with videos have been developed to ensure all teachers can access training. Additionally, training in the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) has been ongoing for English language teachers.

(b) Local Activities

Describe how the state will, using the considerations specified in Section 231(e) of the Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA), fund each eligible provider to establish or operate programs that provide any of the following adult education and literacy activities identified in Section 203 of the WIOA, including programs that provide such activities concurrently. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include at a minimum the scope, content, and organization of these local activities.

Adult Education and Literacy Activities (Section 203 of the WIOA)

- Adult education;
- Literacy;
- Workplace adult education and literacy activities;
- Family literacy activities;
- English language acquisition activities;
• Integrated English literacy and civics education;
• Workforce preparation activities; or
• Integrated education and training that—
  1. Provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.
  2. Is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

The State of Connecticut will award multi-year grants to eligible providers through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process to enable providers to develop, implement and improve adult education and literacy activities. To ensure direct and equitable access for all eligible providers, the CSDE will publish a Notice of Availability in all major newspapers throughout the state and post the notice on the Web page of the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), as well as the Web page of our core partners, the Connecticut Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS), and the Connecticut Department of Labor (DOL). The RFP will be e-mailed to all local education agencies (LEAs), higher education institutions, and to current and past providers included on a master list, which includes: community-based organizations; regional educational service centers (RESCs); housing authorities; volunteer organizations; the Connecticut Department of Corrections (DOC); other correctional facilities and institutions; and to all providers and Workforce Development Boards (WDBs). A bidders’ conference will be publicly advertised with the Notice of Availability and will be held at a central location to provide answers to questions regarding appropriateness of proposed projects and application procedures.

Agencies that are eligible for funding through the CSDE, provided they have demonstrated effectiveness, may include: LEAs; community-based organizations or faith-based organizations; volunteer literacy organizations; institutions of higher education; public or private nonprofit agencies; libraries; public housing authorities; other nonprofit institutions that have the ability to provide adult education and literacy activities to eligible individuals; a consortium or coalition of the agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries or authorities described above; and a partnership between an employer and an entity described above.

Grants will be awarded to agencies that have demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education and literacy activities to individuals who: have attained 17 years of age, are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in a secondary school under Connecticut state law; and who are basic skills deficient, do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and have not achieved an equivalent level of education; or are an English language learner (ELL).

Local grants will be distributed based on the ability to meet the requirements of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) purposes outlined in the WIOA and have demonstrated effectiveness in: (1) assisting adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and economic self-sufficiency; (2) assisting adults who are parents or family members to becoming a full partner in the educational development of their children; (3) assisting adults in completing high school; (4) promoting transitions from adult education to postsecondary education and training through career pathways; (5) assisting immigrants and ELLs to improve reading, writing, math, speaking, and comprehensive skills in the English language; and acquiring an understanding of American government, individual freedom and responsibilities of
citizenship.

The CSDE will make funding available to eligible providers in each of the five Service Delivery Areas (SDA) in Connecticut. The Department, in conjunction with each WDB, will assess SDA needs and WDB goals. Eligible providers will select the appropriate priority area when drafting and submitting the RFP to the CSDE. The RFP will be published for at least six-weeks to allow sufficient time between RFP distribution and proposal submission to the CSDE. RFps will be evaluated by a review team comprised of interagency staff and experts in each priority area. Interagency participants will include representatives of the CSDE, the WDB, One-Stop partners, and Vocational Rehabilitation partners. The review team will evaluate each proposal using a standardized evaluation form based on required federal, state and regional criteria published in the RFP (including the considerations listed in the WIOA, Title II, Section 231). An internal edit check will be conducted by CSDE staff to ensure compliance with the requirements of Title II of the WIOA, all applicable laws and RFP criteria.

The CSDE will use the following process to distribute funds to approved applicants: not less than 82.5 percent of the grant funds shall be used to award grants and contracts under Section 231 of the WIOA and to carry out Section 225 of the WIOA (Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals); not more than 20 percent of such amount shall be available to carry out Section 225; not more than 12.5 percent of the grant funds shall be used to carry out State Leadership activities under Section 223 of the WIOA; and not more than 5 percent of the grant funds, or $85,000, whichever is greater, shall be used for administrative expenses of the eligible agency. Using the evaluation criteria published in the RFP, proposal reviews will involve a standardized evaluation process which includes the following items: the eligible provider’s response to RFP requirements; the accuracy of the itemized budget in meeting line item limits and definitions; and the considerations listed in the WIOA, Title II, Section 231. The weight of each consideration in the evaluation process will be defined in the RFP. Evidence required to support each consideration listed below has been defined and is printed in Italics with the corresponding consideration.

All allowable costs for the federally funded Adult Basic Education program are defined in the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-87. This document will be used to determine reasonableness, allowability and allocability of costs. All costs must be supported by source documentation.

Using the evaluation criteria published in the RFP, proposal reviews will involve a standardized evaluation process, which includes the following items: the eligible provider’s response to RFP requirements; the accuracy of the itemized budget in meeting line item limits and definitions; the provision of adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities; workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster; and the considerations listed in the WIOA, Title II, Section 231(e) (listed below).

The weight of each consideration in the evaluation process will be defined in the RFP. Evidence required to support each consideration has been defined and is printed within parentheses with the corresponding consideration. The assessment of each grant application will involve an intense
evaluation of the ability of the eligible provider to meet the literacy needs of the area and to comply with the expectations and statutes described within the WIOA. The review process and scoring rubric will consider the following 13 considerations:

1. The degree to which the eligible provider would be responsive to:
   A. regional needs as identified in the local plan under the WIOA, Title II, Section 108 (as evidenced by a description of regional needs and how the applicant will be responsive to those needs); and
   B. serving individuals in the community who were identified as most in need of adult education and literacy activities, including individuals with low literacy skills or who are ELLs (as evidenced by an objective statement of need accompanied by a recruitment and retention plan which targets these individuals).

2. The ability of the eligible provider to serve eligible individuals with disabilities, including eligible individuals with learning disabilities (as evidenced by an objective statement of need accompanied by a recruitment and retention plan which targets these individuals).

3. Past effectiveness of the eligible provider in improving the literacy of eligible individuals to meet state-adjusted levels of performance for the primary indicators of performance described in the WIOA, Title II, Section 116, especially with respect to eligible individuals with low literacy (as evidenced by meeting or exceeding performance measures based on documentation from the Connecticut Adult Reporting System (CARS) and annual reviews for previously funded providers, and as evidenced by comparable objective performance measures which demonstrate successful student outcomes for new eligible providers).

4. The extent to which the eligible provider demonstrates alignment between proposed activities and services and the strategy and goals of the local plan under the WIOA, Title II, Section 108, as well as the activities and services of the One-Stop partners (as evidenced by description of proposed activities and strategies and goals and how the provider plans to align them).

5. Whether the eligible provider’s program is of sufficient intensity and quality; based on the most rigorous research available so that participants achieve substantial learning gains; and uses instructional practices that include the essential components of reading instruction (as evidenced by a program design suitable to achieve applicable performance measures—appropriateness of program design may be demonstrated by past performance of successful outcomes or documentation of a similar program design and associated outcomes).

6. Whether the eligible provider’s activities, including whether reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, and English language acquisition instruction delivered by the eligible provider are based on best practices derived from the most rigorous research available and appropriate, including scientifically valid research and effective educational practice (as evidenced by program design and/or curriculum).
7. Whether the eligible provider’s activities effectively use technology, services and delivery systems, including distance education in a manner sufficient to increase the amount and quality of learning and how such technology, services and systems lead to improved performance (as evidenced by program design and/or curriculum and the accessibility of hardware and software applications as appropriate).

8. Whether the eligible provider’s activities provide learning in context, including through integrated education and training, so that an individual acquires the skills needed to transition to and complete postsecondary education and training programs, obtain and advance in employment leading to economic self-sufficiency, and to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship (as evidenced by program design and/or curriculum which focus on skills needed for postsecondary education and training, the workplace and citizenship).

9. Whether the eligible provider’s activities are delivered by well-trained instructors, counselors, and administrators who meet any minimum qualifications established by the state, where applicable, and who have access to high-quality professional development, including through electronic means (as evidenced by appropriate degrees, certifications and trainings).

10. Whether the eligible provider’s activities coordinate with other available education, training and social service resources in the community, such as by establishing strong links with elementary schools and secondary schools, postsecondary educational institutions, institutions of higher education, local WDBs, One-Stop Centers, job training programs, social service agencies, business, industry, labor organizations, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and intermediaries, for the development of career pathways (as evidenced by formal collaborations and the commitment of the provider to assess and address the literacy and non-literate support services of participants).

11. Whether the eligible provider’s activities offer flexible schedules and coordination with federal, state, and local support services (such as child care, transportation, mental health services and career planning) that are necessary to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs (as evidenced by program schedules and documentation of support services available).

11. Whether the eligible provider maintains a high-quality information management system that has the capacity to report measurable participant outcomes (consistent with the WIOA, Title II, Section 116) and to monitor program performance (as evidenced by prior participation in or a commitment to participate in the eligible agency’s Connecticut Competency System and Connecticut Adult Reporting System and to submit comprehensive, timely and accurate data).

12. Whether the local areas in which the eligible provider is located have a demonstrated need for additional English language acquisition programs and civics education programs (as evidenced by area demographic data) and Section 203 of the WIOA (the Adult Education and Literacy Activities).
The CSDE will require eligible providers receiving grant funding to carry out corrections education or education for other institutionalized individuals and use the grant funds to operate the following adult education programs/activities: ABE instruction is designed for adults seeking a high school diploma who are functioning below the secondary school level and lack the basic reading, writing and numeracy skills necessary to function effectively as workers, parents and citizens. Instruction can be individualized or offered in a classroom or a learning lab. Persons completing ABE are prepared to benefit from secondary level instruction.

ABE educational functioning levels are as follows:

a. Beginning ABE Literacy (Grade Levels 0-1.9);

b. Beginning Basic Education (Grade Levels 2.0-3.9);

(a) Low Intermediate Basic Education (Grade Levels 4.0-5.9); and

(b) High Intermediate Basic Education (Grade Levels 6.0-8.9).

**Adult Secondary Education (ASE)** Connecticut Adult Education offers three distinct pathways for adults to attain a high school diploma:

1. **Adult High School Credit Diploma (AHSCD):** The AHSCD program is a prescribed plan, process and structure for earning a required number of academic and elective credits. The provider must be an LEA or RESC. Credits toward a local diploma must be obtained through a prescribed plan. Each provider/town can enhance the basic AHSCD program but must adhere to the minimum state requirements: 1) use certified teachers and counselors; 2) adhere to CSDE requirements regarding assessment, enrollment, accountability and reporting; 3) meet required credit standards; and 4) ensure that a one credit course offers a minimum of 48 instructional hours. An adult who successfully completes the required credits of the AHSCD program is awarded a high school diploma by the providing LEA or RESC.

2. **General Educational Development (GED):** Adults who have not completed high school must demonstrate, through an examination, the attainment of academic skills and concepts normally acquired through completion of a high school program. Applicants for this examination must be at least 17 years of age and officially withdrawn from school for at least six months. Individuals who pass the GED Tests are awarded a Connecticut State High School Diploma. GED instructional programs, provided throughout the state in local school districts and a variety of other instructional sites, help individuals to prepare for this rigorous examination.

3. **National External Diploma Program (NEDP):** This program provides a secondary school credential designed for adults who have gained skills through life experiences and demonstrated competence in a particular job, talent or academic area. The NEDP is an online portfolio assessment program that offers no classroom instruction. An adult who successfully
completes the portfolio assessment, as required, is awarded a high school diploma by the providing LEA or RESC.

Adult Secondary Education (ASE) programs must integrate functional life and employability skills into the curriculum, incorporate technology into the instructional process, and provide comprehensive counseling, transition and support services in collaboration with other community or human services organizations.

ASE educational functioning levels are as follows:

a. Low Adult Secondary Education (Grade Levels 9.0-10.9); and

b. High Adult Secondary Education (Grade Levels 11.0-12.9).

**Workplace Adult Education and Literacy Activities**

Workforce Education Services Programs will provide workforce preparation skills, including literacy instruction, employability skills, career exploration and development, and links to employment, employment services and other options in order to respond to the evolving needs of the business community and promote individual self-sufficiency. Workforce readiness programs offer instruction to support transition to work, entry-level employment, and reentry into the workforce for unemployed individuals.

**Family Literacy Activities**: Family literacy activities are services that make sustainable improvements in the economic prospects for a family and better enable parents or family members to support their children’s learning needs. Activities include the following: parent or family adult education and literacy activities that lead to readiness for postsecondary education or training, career advancement and economic self-sufficiency; interactive literacy activities between parents or family members and their children; training for parents or family members regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children; parent literacy training that leads to economic self-sufficiency; and age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences. Family Literacy Services are to benefit the child, the parent and the community. Program services will focus on enabling parents to become full partners in the education of their children and provide workforce preparation. Services will be of sufficient intensity and duration to make sustainable changes in the family.

**English Language Acquisition Activities**: English language acquisition activities include programs of instruction that are designed to help eligible individuals who are English language learners achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of the English language; and that lead to (1) the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent and (2) transition to postsecondary education and training or employment.

Americanization/Citizenship programs include instruction designed for foreign-born adults who wish to become United States citizens. Persons completing this program are prepared to pursue citizenship through the prescribed process of the United States Citizenship and Immigration
Integrating professionals and making individuals proficient in English

**English as a Second Language (ESL):** ESL instruction is designed for adults who have limited proficiency in the English language or whose native language is not English. ESL programs assist individuals to improve their English skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing in order to find or maintain employment, attain citizenship, become more involved with their children’s schooling and make greater use of community resources. Instruction is provided in English as a unifying means of serving the broad ethnic diversity of limited English speaking adults.

**Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (EL/Civics):** The term “integrated English literacy and civics education” means education services provided to ELLs who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries that enables such adults to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. Such services shall include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation and may include workforce training.

EL/Civics programs must contain the following: contextualized instruction in literacy and English language acquisition, the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, naturalization procedures, civic participation and U.S. history and government; program design and goals that focus on preparing adults for employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency; curriculum focus on skills that will provide information and support in the skills necessary for the workplace; coordination with the local workforce system and activities provided in combination with integrated education/training (IET) activities; improvement of literacy skills including speaking, reading, writing and numeracy in order to provide learners with the skills to apply English and mathematics accurately and appropriately in a variety of home, community, workplace and academic settings; opportunities for experiential learning in which participants are actively engaged in community pursuits are included in the program design; utilization of research-based instructional models that have proven effective in teaching individuals to read, write and speak English effectively; collaboration with community agencies that offer services to limited English proficient populations; and embedding technology literacy into the core curriculum.

Additional program activities directly related to the use of these funds include: participation in career pathways exploration and distance-learning activities that impact competence in the workplace; integration of various hand-held technologies into classroom work, including tablets and smart phones; creation of video oral histories; exposure to basic math vocabulary and interpretation of charts, tables and graphs; knowledge of the American education system with special focus on addressing the needs of families new to the U.S. school system; and cross-cultural perspectives, civic responsibility, democracy topics and independent projects.

Integrated EL/Civics Education also provides adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

**Workforce Preparation Activities or Integrated Education and Training -** The CSDE will continue to assist the DOL with expanding the development and implementation of the I-BEST delivery model offering industry-recognized credentials. Adult Education programs will work with WDB areas to provide I-BEST training to Jobs First Employment Service (JFES) clients who receive Temporary
Family Assistance (TFA). Programs must demonstrate a commitment to provide appropriate support services to students enrolled in the integrated pathway program. These services may include, but are not limited to, tutoring or other academic supports, college navigation support, career planning, transportation assistance, and/or childcare.

Once grants are awarded, mid-year and year-end evaluative reports will require that program providers submit a current program profile, which will ensure that all projects have met the standards established by the eligible entity (CSDE) and that all goals have been achieved. Projects not meeting the established standards will be identified for the CSDE’s intervention, which may include onsite technical assistance, a decrease in funding or the elimination of funding.

**Special Rule**

Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 (17 in Connecticut) and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law, except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

(c) **Correctional Education and other Education of Institutionalized Individuals**

Describe how the state will establish and operate programs under Section 225 of the WIOA for correctional education and education of other institutionalized individuals, including how it will fund, in accordance with the requirements of title II, subtitle C, any of the following academic programs for:

- Adult education and literacy activities;
- Special education, as determined by the eligible agency;
- Secondary school credit;
- Integrated education and training;
- Career pathways;
- Concurrent enrollment;
- Peer tutoring; and
- Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

Each eligible agency using funds provided under programs for correctional education and other institutionalized individuals to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution must give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program.

The CSDE will reserve no more than 20 percent of its federal grant received under the WIOA to
provide programs for correctional education and education for other institutionalized individuals as described in Section 225 of the Act. Funding under Section 225 will include the following correctional institutionalized settings: prisons, jail reformatories, detention centers, halfway houses, community-based rehabilitation centers or other similar institutions designed for the confinement or rehabilitation of criminal offenders. The CSDE shall also require that each eligible provider using grant funds under Section 225 to carry out a program for criminal offenders in a correctional institution shall give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program.

The CSDE shall require that each eligible provider use the grant funds to operate education programs as follows: Adult Basic Education (ABE); English Literacy Acquisition; and secondary school completion (Adult High School Diploma).

**Corrections Education and other Institutionalized Individuals or Special Populations**

In addition to the institutionalized population, grantees may include programs for individuals with mental illness and referrals from the BRS, nontraditional populations impacted by incarceration, disabilities and homelessness. Projects not meeting the established standards will be identified for the CSDE’s intervention, which may include onsite technical assistance, a decrease in funding or the elimination of funding.

**(d) Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Program**

1. Describe how the state will establish and operate Integrated EL/Civics Education programs under Section 243 of WIOA, for ELLs who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries.

   The CSDE will establish and operate EL/Civics Education programs as a part of its adult education program. The term "Integrated English literacy and civics education" means education services provided to ELLs who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries that enables such adults to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. Such services shall include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation, and may include workforce training.

   Since the WIOA requires an intentional connection to the workplace, to careers and to the workforce system (employers, WDB, Chambers of Commerce, etc.) for Integrated EL/Civics Education programs, the CSDE will work with the DOL to expand its Integrated education and training delivery model (I-BEST) offering industry-recognized credentials to Integrated EL/Civics Education programs. Adult Education programs will work with WDBs in local workforce areas to provide assistance to local programs. The CSDE will hold meetings with grantees regarding the requirements of the program and provide mandatory professional development sessions for EL/Civics instructors and staff on integrating career awareness, workforce skills and career pathways. Eligible providers will design programs that deliver the activities under the WIOA including the integration of literacy and English language instruction with occupational skill training, including promoting linkages with employers. Eligible providers must demonstrate
their ability to prepare ELLs for unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency, and how they will integrate the program with the local workforce development system to carry out the activities of the program.

2. Describe how the state will fund, in accordance with the requirements of title II, subtitle C, an Integrated EL/Civics Education program and how the funds will be used for the program.

CSDE will issue a RFP for Integrated EL/Civics Education. The RFP requires the following for funded programs: education services provided to ELLs who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries that enables such adults to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers and citizens in the United States. Such services shall include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation, and may include workforce training. For the purpose of educational and career advancement, IEL/Civics also provides adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce readiness activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

IEL/Civics programs must offer contextualized instruction in literacy and English language acquisition; the rights and responsibilities of citizenship; naturalization procedures; civic participation and U.S. history and government as essential components of the program and in addition, must address the following: program design and goals that focus on preparing adults for employment in in-demand industries and occupations that leads to economic self-sufficiency; curriculum focus that will provide information and support in the skills necessary for the workplace; coordination with the local workforce system and activities provided in combination with IET activities; improvement of literacy skills including speaking, reading, writing and numeracy in order to provide learners with the skills to apply English and mathematics accurately and appropriately in a variety of home, community, workplace and academic settings; and opportunities for experiential learning in which participants are actively engaged in community

To ensure direct and equitable access for all eligible providers, the CSDE will publish a Notice of Availability in all major Connecticut newspapers and post the notice on the CSDE’s Web page as well as our partners’ web pages. The RFP will be mailed to all current grant-funded providers and WDBs. A bidders’ conference will be publicly advertised with the Notice of Availability and will be held at a central location to provide answers to questions regarding appropriateness of proposed projects and application procedures.

Local grants will be distributed based on the ability to meet the requirements of AEFLA Purposes outlined in the WIOA Section 243. The CSDE will make funding available to each of Connecticut’s five designated local workforce areas. In conjunction with each WDB, the CSDE will help to assess local area needs and WDB goals.
The RFP will establish a minimum six-week turnaround time between RFP distribution and proposal submission to the CSDE. A review team comprised of interagency staff and experts in each priority area will evaluate proposals responding to the RFP. Interagency participants will include representatives of the CSDE, the WDB and One-Stop partners. The review team will evaluate each proposal using a standardized evaluation form based on required federal, state and regional criteria published in the RFP (including the considerations listed in Section 231 (e). Eligible providers must demonstrate in their application for funds the manner in which the program will be delivered in combination with integrated education and training activities. These activities can be provided directly or through collaboration with the WIOA or other community partners.

Once grants are awarded, mid-year and year-end evaluative reports will require that program providers submit a current program profile, which will ensure that all projects have met the standards established by the eligible entity (CSDE) and that all goals have been achieved. Projects not meeting the established standards will be identified for the CSDE’s intervention, which may include on-site technical assistance, a decrease in funding or the elimination of funding.

(e) State Leadership

Describe how the state will use the funds to carry out the required State Leadership activities under Section 223 of the WIOA.

Description of Required Activities:

1. The CSDE will work with other core programs and One-Stop partners to ensure that adult education and literacy activities are in alignment and to develop career pathways which provide access to employment and training services for individuals in adult education and literacy activities. The CSDE will collaborate with the DOL to assist local providers in partnering with One-Stop Centers to develop career pathways and provide access to employment and training services. Professional development will be provided to local programs, including orientation to adult education programs and services for One-Stop partners and other agencies.

The CSDE will ensure that training and technical assistance will address meeting regional needs and demonstrating alignment between proposed activities and services with core partners. It will also assist local programs in becoming familiar with the regional/state plan to determine how it affects their programs. The CSDE will also work with local programs to establish stronger linkages with partners such as local schools, WDBs, One Stop centers, and job training programs.

2. Connecticut has instituted high quality professional development programs to improve instruction. Training will be provided related to the specific needs of adult learners and information about models and promising practices will be disseminated.

To enhance program quality and ensure continued progress in meeting the Core and Additional Indicators of Performance, the CSDE shall award one or more grants to eligible providers to deliver State Leadership activities, primarily professional development activities, with funds
made available under this subtitle. In order to meet the various needs of our state, the CSDE may enter into partnerships with other states and/or the federal government in order to collaboratively fund projects that will meet individual needs and accomplish common goals. The CSDE shall not use more than 12.5 percent of the funds awarded under this subtitle for State Leadership activities. The CSDE will deliver a majority of its State Leadership and professional development services through the Adult Training and Development Network (ATDN). The CSDE’s professional development model supports the implementation of the goals of Connecticut’s Adult Education State Plan and consists of professional development basics and activities related to the implementation of career pathways.

3 The CSDE will provide technical assistance to local grantees in: the development and dissemination of instructional and programmatic practices based on scientifically valid research, available and appropriate, in reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, English language acquisition, distance education, staff training and content standards; the role of eligible providers as a one-stop partner to provide access to employment, education, and training services; and assistance in the use of technology, including staff training, to eligible providers, especially the use of technology to improve system efficiencies. Although providers find serving students with low literacy skills, who are ELL, or individuals with disabilities, including learning disabilities, as their strength, providers need assistance with curriculum materials and teaching strategies/best practices for students who are non-literate in their native language and with developing a scope and sequence curriculum for low level literacy skills and individuals with disabilities.

In addition to providing more resources for math instruction, the CSDE will also provide technical assistance in serving adults with special learning needs and disabilities, including disability awareness sessions, resource and instructional materials, accommodation and instruction planning workshops, train-the-trainer sessions, referral information, and telephone consultation concerning program issues.

4. The CSDE will conduct program monitoring and evaluation to ensure compliance with federal and state funding requirements and to determine the effectiveness of programs in meeting the needs of the adult population and will disseminate information about models and proven or promising practices within the state. The CSDE has in place a data reporting system for each local provider, the CARS. The CARS system can measure performance outcomes. The CSDE has developed a formalized follow-up and reporting process to report on the core indicators of obtaining or retaining employment and entering postsecondary education according to the National Reporting System requirements. The follow-up and reporting process includes data sharing with other state agencies, including the DOL wage information system. The CSDE will participate in the statewide data system, which will assist the CSDE in working seamlessly with other partners while protecting the privacy rights of individuals. To provide the core service of performance and cost information for the WIOA, Title II, Section 231 providers to the One-Stop system, the eligible agency will develop a report which includes each program’s success in meeting the state-adjusted levels of performance. This data will assist potential clients in identifying an appropriate adult education or literacy program in the local area.
5. Describe how the state will use the funds to carry out permissible State Leadership Activities under Section 223 of the WIOA, if applicable.

Description of Permissible Activities:

1. The CSDE will provide training and technical assistance to local programs in technology applications, translation technology and distance education, including professional development to support the use of instructional technology. Training and technology assistance to local programs in technology applications, especially in the area of Web-based communication (social media, phone apps, etc.) will be provided, as well as assistance in finding access to computers.

2. The CSDE will develop and disseminate curricula, including literacy curricula combined with the College and Career Readiness Standards where reading comprehension is tied to prior knowledge and is a critical component in the classroom and workplace. The dimensions prioritize cultivating students’ knowledge base through reading and writing about content-rich material.

3. The CSDE will develop content and models for integrated education and training and career pathways. Connecticut Competency System (CCS) training sessions will be offered to both adult education and the workforce development community. The CCS is an integral part of the CSDE’s career pathways, standards-based framework utilizing the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) to connect curriculum, assessment, and instruction that is able to capture progress made by adult education learners.

4. The CSDE will provide assistance to eligible providers in developing and implementing programs that achieve the objectives of this title, including meeting the state-adjusted levels of performance. The CSDE will provide technical assistance in implementing the CCS for appraisal, instruction and assessment in a life-skills and an employability context, including new teacher training, CCS Facilitator training, and One-Stop partner staff training, as well as the ordering and dissemination of CASAS curricula materials used in conjunction with the Connecticut Competency System. The CARS system will collect student demographic, attendance, assessment and outcome information for each student in the adult education program. The CARS system generates statewide and local demographic and performance assessment reports used for program planning, management and accountability. Data from the system allows the State to assess the effectiveness of local programs by measuring performance outcomes.

5. The CSDE will continue to partner with community colleges and other institutions of higher learning to assist adults to transition to postsecondary education and training. Training and technical assistance will be provided on effective methods of transitioning students. The CSDE will ensure that training and technical assistance will be provided, especially in areas such as employer engagement, the institution of career counselor position, and/or enhanced job responsibilities for current staff emphasizing transitions. The CSDE will also provide assistance in the implementation of training programs that assist adults in obtaining economic self-sufficiency.
6. The CSDE will work with the DOL to expand its I-BEST delivery model offering industry-recognized credentials to Integrated EL/Civics programs. Training and technical assistance will be provided to local grantees for the integration of literacy and English language instruction. CSDE will provide activities for the integration of literacy and English language instruction with occupational skill training, including promoting linkages with employers. The CSDE will assist local programs by sharing effective models, assisting local programs in engaging employers, and how to partner successfully with other agencies to place students in employment.

7. The CSDE will provide technical assistance and training to promote workplace adult education and literacy activities by identifying curriculum frameworks and aligning rigorous content standards that specify what adult learners should know and be able to do in the areas of reading and language arts, mathematics, and English language acquisition; and taking into consideration the following: 1. State-adopted academic standards. 2. The current adult skills and literacy assessments used in the state or outlying area. 3. The primary indicators of performance described in the WIOA, Title II, Section 116. 4. Standards and academic requirements for enrollment in non-remedial, for-credit courses in postsecondary educational institutions or institutions of higher education supported by the state.

CCR S have been incorporated into all workshops in math, reading and writing. Working with ELA students in the area of workplace training is still needed. The CSDE will work with local programs to identify a variety of curricula for workplace training.

8. The CSDE will develop and pilot strategies for improving teacher quality and retention. Training staff will provide sessions on learning styles and needs, facilitating adult learning, planning for instruction, and monitoring student progress.

9. The CSDE will assist in the development and implementation of programs and services to meet the needs of adult learners with learning disabilities or ELLs. Connecticut will continue to be a member of the New England Literacy Resource Center, part of World Education. The membership provides professional development for teachers and administrators on evidence-based practices; on college and career readiness, ESOL instruction, learner persistence, using curriculum standards, integrating technology in instruction, program design and management.

(f) Assessing Quality

Describe how the eligible agency will assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities under title II and take actions to improve such quality, including providing the activities described in section 223(a)(1)(B) of the WIOA.

Performance Accountability

Performance Accountability assesses the effectiveness of grantees in achieving continuous improvement of adult education and literacy activities. The performance outcome measures shall consist of the following core indicators:

1. The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the
second quarter after exit from the program;

2. The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program;

3. The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;

4. The percentage of program participants who obtain either a recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within one year of exit from program;

5. The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains towards such a credential or employment; and

6. The indicators of effectiveness in serving employers established pursuant to clause (iv) Setting Targets: Each fiscal year, the CSDE negotiates proposed target percentages for each of the core indicators of performance with the U.S. Department of Education Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE). Each local eligible program is responsible for meeting or exceeding the negotiated performance targets. Each program shall analyze progress towards meeting the targets on an ongoing basis. Each program must utilize the approved standardized assessments that provide the framework needed to measure program effectiveness.

Central to the evaluation process is an assessment of performance measures established by CSDE to focus on continual progress, successful completion of the program area, and successful transition to a next step of employment, postsecondary education, or occupational training. For example, CSDE’s performance measures for secondary completion programs focus on interim student progress by requiring providers to report on the number of students who pass one or more subsections of the GED practice test, earn one or more credits toward an adult high school diploma, or complete four or more competency areas of the NEDP and requiring them to report on the number of students who earn a diploma or its recognized equivalent. Incorporating this performance measure into the evaluation process will ensure that the eligible agency and local provider assess each student’s progress toward program completion and analyze significant changes indicated by this interim progress indicator.

The CSDE has also developed four Additional Indicators of Program Performance that require providers to address all aspects of program operation: recruitment, curriculum and instruction, support services and professional development. These additional indicators ensure that programs will focus on long-term planning for program development and community responsiveness rather than focusing solely on current year issues and achievements. These indicators also ensure that adult education providers develop learner and community-responsive programs and curricula so they can become an integral part of the local education system as it works toward lifelong learning and self-sufficiency for all community members,
especially those most in need of literacy services. Core and additional Indicators of Performance will become a focal point for annual and onsite monitoring reviews and the basis for formative evaluation.

Monitoring and Evaluation

To improve the quality and effectiveness of adult education programs, the CSDE will conduct two evaluation processes: an annual desk audit for all providers, and an onsite monitoring evaluation for selected providers.

Onsite Monitoring

Each year, an onsite monitoring evaluation will be conducted for a minimum of 25 percent of federally funded adult education programs to determine the effectiveness of adult education and literacy programs and activities. All newly funded programs will be monitored, as will all programs that had noncompliance or RFP requirement issues during the previous year’s monitoring. These evaluations shall, at a minimum, consist of assessing the following areas: a) Compliance with all applicable laws and RFP guidelines, including ADA 504 and Section 427 GEPA; b) Program management and operations, including scheduling and locations, as well as staff credentials; c) Outreach, recruitment and retention practices, including individuals with multiple barriers to education; d) Curriculum and instruction and use of technology; e) Support services including counseling and transition services; f) Professional development opportunities; g) Student intake, assessment and documentation procedures; h) Documentation of the program’s ability to assist adults in gaining employment, achieving self-sufficiency, and/or developing family literacy practices; i) Documentation of the program’s progress in meeting the performance measures set for each applicable Core Indicator of Performance; j) Documentation of the program’s ability to meet the Additional Indicators of Program Quality.

Written reports of the onsite monitoring will be given to programs monitored. During the visit, local programs will have to submit a corrective action plan for any deficiencies noted. The CSDE will observe classes and talk with teachers and program staff to determine if ideas from professional development are being implemented.

Desk Monitoring

For the annual desk audit review, each provider will submit an assessment of Performance Measures and individual program goals, as well as an annual expenditure report including all relevant fiscal records to facilitate an effective audit. Each program will also be required to submit data containing all program and student information stored in CARS, including demographic, assessment and outcome data for each student enrolled. If a local program does not meet its outcome measures, it must complete a corrective action plan outlining how to make necessary improvements.

Professional Development

The CSDE will provide professional development to local programs to improve program quality. Instruction will be designed to (1) improve instruction in the essential components of reading
instruction; (2) instruction related to the specific needs of adult learners; (3) instruction provided by volunteers or paid personnel; and (4) dissemination of information about models and promising practices. Participants will be asked to evaluate the training sessions to determine if the sessions fit their needs. Changes are made to future workshops based on those evaluations. Onsite monitoring and evaluation of local instructional practices will be completed to determine if professional development is being implemented.

The CSDE will provide performance outcome targets and meet the expected levels of performance demonstrated by Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) for adult education and literacy activities authorized under Title II for the period of July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2024. The CSDE will meet the U.S. Department of Education proposed target percentages for each given year to reflect programs' progress toward continuous improvement in performance.