



## **Annual National Apprenticeship Week Highlights New Programs for Employers and Apprentices**

WETHERSFIELD, October 30, 2015 – Connecticut Department of Labor employees are shining a light on one of America’s most successful programs – one that actually originated in this state – during the First National Apprenticeship Week that is being observed November 2-6, 2015.

“For more than 78 years, apprenticeship has been an integral part of the national employment and training scene and locally it has helped to build Connecticut’s economy,” notes State Labor Commissioner Sharon M. Palmer. “Workers, employees and teachers rely on this program to help people train and prepare for high-skilled careers that benefit our workforce and economy. Connecticut played a large role in making apprenticeship a reality in this country, and our agency remains committed to helping workers who choose it as a well-paying career.”

The National Apprenticeship Act, also known as the Fitzgerald Act and enacted as part of President Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal legislation, was originally sponsored by Norwich, CT native and U.S. Representative William Fitzgerald. Representing Connecticut’s 2<sup>nd</sup> District, Fitzgerald served two terms in Congress – from 1937 to 1939, and again from 1941 to 1943. In his youth he was a foundry molder apprentice, worked his way up to foundry superintendent, and later served as a deputy commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Labor from 1931 to 1936.

To promote National Apprenticeship Week, the Connecticut Department of Labor’s Office of Apprenticeship Training is highlighting two of its newest programs to employers and prospective apprentices – *CT’s American Apprenticeship Initiative* and the *Manufacturing Innovation Fund Apprenticeship Program*.

In September, the agency received a \$5 million federal grant to increase the number of apprenticeships in manufacturing, healthcare and business services. The five-year grant, part of the national *American Apprenticeship Initiative*, provides assistance with tuition and training costs for registered apprentices and pre-apprentices pursuing careers in high-demand industries.

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The grant complements a \$7.8 million state grant received in July under the state's Connecticut *Manufacturing Innovation Fund* program. Manufacturing employers participating in this program can receive funds for wage subsidies, tuition reimbursement, and credential costs for their new apprentices.

"These newest programs are designed to help the agency expand the apprenticeship model and ensure the effectiveness of this valuable workforce program for employers, apprentices, and our economy," Palmer noted. "Employers or prospective apprentices wanting more information about these programs can email [ct.apprenticeship@ct.gov](mailto:ct.apprenticeship@ct.gov) or call 860-263-6085."

Currently 5,384 registered apprentices work in 82 trades in Connecticut, with occupations that include plumbing, masonry, electrical and tool and die making. Of that number, 95 percent work in the construction trades and five percent are employed in manufacturing or other non-traditional trades.

Often referred to as "The Other Four Year Degree," apprenticeship provides participants with opportunities to "earn while they learn" – the average wage upon completion is over \$52,000. Apprentices learn their trade under the supervision of a journeyman already skilled in the trade. At the same time, they go to school, to complete the required 144 hours each year of related classroom instruction. A typical apprenticeship program is four years or 8,000 hours, and leads to journeyman status.

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