



## **Apprenticeship Connecticut Initiative Will Support Pipeline Expansion to Train Workers**

WETHERSFIELD, April 9, 2019 – The Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL) has awarded \$4.7 million to the Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board Manufacturing Industry Partnership and the Workforce Alliance Manufacturing Careers Partnership to expand workforce pipeline programs that will train qualified entry-level workers for job placement with manufacturers and employers in industries experiencing a shortage of workers.

The Workforce Alliance Manufacturing Careers Partnership will receive \$3.45 million and the Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board Manufacturing Industry Partnership will receive \$1.25 million. The pipeline programs will involve recruiting, screening, assessment, and training of youth and adults for job placement with committed employers that will pay good wages and provide skilled jobs with room for growth. The primary goal is to fill in-demand jobs in manufacturing that will support the state’s employers and grow Connecticut’s economy.

The awards are part of the state-funded \$5 million *Apprenticeship Connecticut* initiative administered by the CTDOL. The funds, approved by the Legislature last year, are part of a potentially \$50 million program that will be used by the agency, and workforce development and educational organizations, to identify and train up to 10,000 unemployed and underemployed residents to fill job shortages in manufacturing and other industry sectors.

With advanced manufacturing showing such strong growth in Connecticut and an increasing number of workers in these careers nearing retirement age, employers are looking for workers that can fill jobs in our aerospace, medical, and defense industries,” said State Labor Commissioner Kurt Westby. “Apprenticeship pipelines have proven to be an excellent way to develop skills for good-paying careers in manufacturing, as well as jobs that require more than a high school diploma, but in many cases not a college degree.”

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“We are very pleased to have the opportunity to continue to develop the pipeline of skilled workers to address the needs of our manufacturers in the Northwest region,” said Catherine Awwad, Executive Director, Northwest Regional WIB. “We look forward to the opportunity to provide entry-level career pathways for youth as well as our adult workforce. The days of dirty, dark and dangerous have passed and the opportunity to experience a very clean, profitable work environment lays ahead for those that are interested.”

“I am very proud of the work that the workforce board has done convening the partners to address skill gaps in the field of manufacturing,” added Giuseppe Pisani, Chairman of the Northwest Regional WIB.

Workforce Alliance’s award will allow for the expansion of Skill Up for Manufacturing, which has already launched two five-week cycles in 2019 and has another class beginning May 6 at Gateway Community College. All graduates of the first group received at least one job offer. Expansion will mean more classes at Gateway and also Middlesex Community College, plus partnerships with regional high schools and additional manufacturing employers who will continue training on-the-job.

“With all the advancements on the manufacturing floor comes a corresponding need to improve our approach to developing the workforce necessary to ensure success,” said Workforce Alliance President and CEO William Villano. “This new workforce training model is attuned to today’s ‘just in time’ manufacturing needs.”

“We are excited to team up with our workforce partners to offer programs that provide specialized training for workers and opportunities for employers trying to hire qualified employees,” Westby added. “These pipelines offer a fast and efficient way to train people and get them working in jobs that will grow our economy.”

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