



MEDIA RELEASE
CT Department of Labor *Communications Office*
Commissioner Kurt Westby

STATE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR WILL EXPAND WORKFORCE TRAINING PIPELINE PROGRAMS WITH BOND FUNDING APPROVED TUESDAY

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HARTFORD - The Connecticut Department of Labor will address Connecticut's sustained manufacturing worker shortage by expanding the number of manufacturing workforce pipeline job placements with the help of \$10 million of funding unanimously approved with bipartisan support Tuesday by the State Bond Commission.

"This funding is critical to maintaining and expanding our state's very successful workforce pipeline programs that are filling hundreds of well-paying jobs every year," Labor Commissioner Kurt Westby said. "I applaud Governor Lamont and the Bond Commission for their commitment to workforce development that is so crucial in growing our manufacturing sector and Connecticut's overall economy."

Manufacturing, led by companies such as Electric Boat, Sikorsky, Pratt & Whitney and their smaller supply-chain partners, continues to make a strong comeback in Connecticut. The sector posted 160,600 jobs in July - up nearly 3 percent from its low point in June 2014 - but thousands of jobs are going unfilled due to the skilled worker shortage.

The Department of Labor (CTDOL) will use the Apprenticeship CT Initiative funding to train entry-level workers for job placement with manufacturers and other industry sectors, such as healthcare and construction, that are experiencing long-term worker shortages. The pipeline programs will target areas of the state with the most concentrated employment needs.

Each Apprenticeship CT Initiative partnership proposal must be for a four-year workforce pipeline program, and include at least one program for participants in the 11th or 12th grade, and one program for adults. It also must identify the number of workers each company is expected to hire.

Last year, an initial \$5 million allocated by the Bond Commission for the Apprenticeship CT Initiative went to two partnerships - the Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board, Inc. in Waterbury and the Workforce Alliance, based in New Haven. CTDOL had received proposals from seven regional industry partnerships that contained over \$18.4 million of funding requests.

“Pipelines have proven to be the fastest, most cost-efficient and large-scale solution to the skilled worker shortage,” Westby said. “This new funding will be a major step toward making our pipeline initiatives realize their full potential statewide.”

Connecticut currently has 6,000 registered apprentices – the highest per-capita number of registered apprentices in New England - and more than 1,700 active registered apprenticeship employer sponsors. CTDOL’s pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship programs have grown 40% in the last 5 years.

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