

# GOV. MALLOY ANNOUNCES NEW INITIATIVES DESIGNED TO HELP UNEMPLOYED WORKERS FIND A JOB



(NEW BRITAIN, CT) – Governor Dannel P. Malloy today unveiled a three-pronged legislative package aimed at further reducing the number of unemployed workers, while also removing certain barriers to employment that often prevents long-term unemployed residents from even being considered for available job openings.

“We are making steady progress at growing our economy in a way that will create good paying jobs with good benefits for middle class families. While a decrease in the unemployment rate and the addition of thousands of private sector jobs over the last three years is clearly a step in the right direction, we still have more work to do,” Governor Malloy said. “Often, the longer someone is unemployed, the harder it gets to find employment, even when that person may have qualified skills to fill a certain position. Connecticut has some of the most talented and skilled workers in the nation. These initiatives help match our talented workforce with employers, grows jobs, and removes barriers to employment.”

“The initiatives proposed by Governor Malloy will be of tremendous benefit to the unemployed individuals we assist every day and will also strengthen our state’s economy,” State Labor Commissioner Sharon M. Palmer said. “People want to work and earn a paycheck, and by continuing the Step Up program and creating new opportunities for the long-term unemployed, Connecticut is on the right track toward a strong economic recovery.”

The three pieces of legislation the Governor will introduce includes:

## **Expansion of the state’s successful Step Up program**

- Governor Malloy is proposing to continue the state’s Subsidized Training & Employment Program (“Step Up”) by investing \$10 million in bonding to continue its successful job creation abilities.
- The program, which launched in early 2012, provides two types of hiring incentives – a scaled, six month wage subsidy, and a small manufacturer training grant.
- To date, 578 small businesses in Connecticut have participated in the program, helping 2,067 unemployed job seekers gain employment.
- Qualified participants are typically residents who may have some of the necessary job qualifications but who still require on-the-job training to meet the needs of the company.
- To be eligible for either program, the company must employ fewer than 100 people and training must be provided at the business site. The new employee must be an unemployed jobseeker, and those hired under the wage subsidy program must meet certain income requirements and reside in specific municipalities, based on population or unemployment rates.
- Since its launch, \$16.06 million has been obligated under the program.

## **Removing barriers based on employment status**

- Governor Malloy is proposing legislation that will prohibit an employer or an employment agency from:
  - Advertising a job opening stating that an individual must be currently employed for consideration for a position.
  - Directing or requesting an employment agency to screen applicants based on employment status.
- Some employers and staffing agencies use software programs to screen applicants based solely on whether an individual is currently employed. As a result, an individual who is currently unemployed

has less of a change to find work than someone who is employed at the moment, even though they may be more qualified.

- Use of employment status to screen job applicants could have a disproportionate impact on people with disabilities, older workers, women, and racial minorities.
- This proposal does not make individuals who are unemployed a protected class, nor does it prevent an employer from choosing the best candidate for the position.
- The legislation will ensure that an individual will not be placed at an unfair disadvantage simply because he or she is not currently employed.

#### **Develop a statewide program to assist long-term unemployed**

- Governor Malloy is proposing the creation of a statewide program with the elements of the successful “Platform to Employment” (P2E) program that will provide a cost-effective solution for the long-term unemployed.
- These individuals will get access to a five-week intensive job readiness program, behavioral health services, financial coaching, and an eight-week subsidized work experience.
- During its initial year of operation, the program will serve up to 500 individuals who have exhausted their unemployment benefits in Connecticut. The cost of the program would be up to \$3.6 million.
- The P2E model has a proven track record of success around the nation, with a placement rate of over 80%.

The proposals will be included in the Governor’s legislative package for the upcoming 2014 regular session of the General Assembly, which begins February 5.

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