



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

GOVERNOR NED LAMONT

GOVERNOR LAMONT ANNOUNCES CONNECTICUT RECEIVES \$4.7M GRANT TO ENHANCE EMPLOYMENT SERVICES FOR THOSE IMPACTED BY THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC

(HARTFORD, CT) – Governor Ned Lamont today announced that the Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL) is receiving a \$4.7 million federal grant that will be used by the state to fund initiatives that provide employment and workforce-investment services to people who have been impacted by the nationwide opioid epidemic.

“The opioid epidemic has uprooted the lives of people from all socio-economic backgrounds, races, and ages,” **Governor Lamont said**. “Part of the process of ending this epidemic is removing the stigma that all too often follows people through their lives. Addiction is an illness and not a moral failing, and we need to treat it as we would any other public health emergency. I want to thank the members of Connecticut’s Congressional delegation for their ongoing efforts to ensure that our state has resources available to fight this nationwide epidemic.”

“This funding will create career opportunities and vital workforce development programs that present concrete solutions for those affected by opioid addiction,” **CTDOL Commissioner Kurt Westby said**. “The peer counselors who will work at the American Job Centers and in the community will provide support services needed for those individuals to secure and maintain occupations that provide both a living wage and a solid direction forward.”

“Each of us have witnessed the impact opioid addiction has upon our communities,” **the members of Connecticut’s Congressional delegation said in a joint statement**. “Critical to addressing this epidemic is providing job training and counseling to those impacted by this disease. This grant will provide those vital support services that victims and their families need as they recover and transition into new jobs and careers.”

Granted by the U.S. Department of Labor through its Dislocated Worker Grant program, CTDOL will use the funding to focus on providing two statewide initiatives and several regional initiatives.

First, CTDOL plans to hire peer navigators in each of the state’s American Job Centers hubs, who will be trained to help individuals affected by the opioid crisis as they prepare for new careers and help them obtain employment that is particularly suited to their recovery efforts. Project funds will also assist with the provision of career and training services to eligible individuals transitioning to jobs addressing the opioid crisis, such as credentialed counselors and recovery coaches.

Second, CTDOL will work with employers to provide training on “recovery friendly workplaces” with the goal of recognizing that recovery from substance use disorder is a strength and encouraging them to work with employees who are in recovery. “Recovery friendly workplaces” 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.

The Dislocated Worker Grants temporarily expand the service capacity of dislocated worker programs in response to large, unexpected economic events causing heavy job losses. They became available to use in response to the opioid crisis after the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services declared it a national public health emergency in October 2017.

CTDOL is in the process of establishing an advisory board on these services that will include the following partners:

- Governor’s Task Force for Substance Abuse disorders
- Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (Advocacy Unlimited Inc.)
- Judicial Branch – Court Support Services
- Connecticut Department of Corrections
- Alternative to Incarceration Centers
- Connecticut Department of Public Health – Statistics and Research
- Connecticut Employment and Training Commission
- Representatives from Connecticut’s five Workforce Development Boards
- Construction, Health Care/Allied Health/United Food and Commercial Workers Union
- Connecticut Community Colleges – DARC (Drug and Alcohol Recovery Counselor) (AS) Program
- Connecticut Certification Board (CCB)
- Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR)

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