



MEDIA RELEASE

CT Department of Labor *Communications Office*
Commissioner Kurt Westby



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

GOVERNOR NED LAMONT

Governor Lamont Launches State Workforce Development Unit Focused On Building The Nation's Strongest Talent-To-Jobs Pipeline

(HARTFORD, CT) – Governor Ned Lamont today announced the creation of the Connecticut Workforce Development Unit – a state office that will be responsible for developing workforce policy, utilizing data to set a vision for the workforce pipeline, and coordinating the state's workforce ecosystem around a common strategy and set of goals. The unit, housed within the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), will collaborate with the commissioners of DECD and the Department of Labor to directly advise the governor and other state entities on various workforce strategies and initiatives. It will be committed to crafting nation-leading policies and goals that catalyze educators, businesses, nonprofit, and state agencies to develop curricula and programs that are accessible, inclusive, and aligned with the needs of employers.

Since entering office, one of Governor Lamont's top priorities has been developing a nation-leading, accessible, and equitable workforce in Connecticut that is responsive to the needs of the 21st century economy. This vision started with the [creation of the Governor's Workforce Council](#) in October, and has most recently featured the [CT Back to Work Initiative](#).

The Workforce Development Unit will be led by Dr. Kelli Vallieres, who will serve as executive director. Dr. Vallieres brings over 20 years of experience as the CEO of two manufacturing companies in Connecticut, has a PhD in adult experiential learning, serves on the boards of several workforce-focused organizations across the state, and has served as the vice chair of the Governor's Workforce Council since its inception.

"Kelli brings a wealth of institutional knowledge about Connecticut's workforce, leadership experience in both business and academia, and a passion for working alongside industry and education to ensure our students and jobseekers are learning skills that are aligned with the needs of Connecticut's employers," **Governor Lamont said.**

“Our workforce is at an inflection point,” **Garrett Moran, chair of the Governor’s Workforce Council said.** “Our council has been developing long-term goals for shaping Connecticut’s workforce and I have full confidence that Kelli and the Workforce Development Unit are well-positioned to not only execute on these goals but also to serve as the chief workforce leader and advisor to the governor and the State of Connecticut.”

“As someone who has devoted my career to working across the Connecticut ecosystem to help workers acquire the skills they need to thrive in their careers, I am thrilled at the opportunity to lead the Workforce Development Unit,” **Dr. Vallieres said.** “I am very much looking forward to collaborating with our educators, state agencies, nonprofits, regional workforce boards, employers, and everyone else committed to creating a world class workforce in Connecticut.”

“This is a tremendous opportunity,” **Economic and Community Development Commissioner David Lehman said.** “We are very excited to collaborate with the Workforce Development Unit on enhancing the state’s workforce system moving forward. Our mission at the Department of Economic and Community Development is to strengthen Connecticut’s competitive position in an ever-changing economy, and we view workforce development as a critical component of this vision.”

“Coordinating workforce policy and development is critical to strengthening the state’s economy and giving Connecticut businesses every opportunity to compete globally,” **Labor Commissioner Kurt Westby said.** “I commend Governor Lamont on forming this new unit. It will help ensure a strong market for the more than 15,000 residents building new skills through the Skill Up partnership launched in May, and it will provide valuable supports for other workforce pipeline initiatives.”

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