



**SOUTHWEST  
CONNECTICUT  
LOCAL WORKFORCE  
DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

**2016-2020**





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## Executive Summary

The WorkPlace helps people prepare for careers and strengthens the workforce for employers. We are a progressive, socially enterprising operation that is driven by innovation and entrepreneurial spirit. As Southwestern Connecticut's Regional Workforce Development Board, we administer workforce development funds and coordinate providers of job training and education programs that meet the needs of residents and employers in Southwestern Connecticut.

We believe in the power of ideas to affect great change. We act as convener, catalyst, collaborator and advocate for workforce development throughout the region, we work with a wide scope of partner in the American Job Center system, business leaders, local officials and other stakeholders to design innovative workforce development plans that identify and address the area's employment needs and interests.

We operate four American Job Centers (AJC) located in Ansonia, Bridgeport, Derby and Stamford Connecticut. Additionally, we operate the Southwest AJC Career Coach which is a mobile computer lab that brings a training classroom to each of the towns in the region. These centers provide programs and services to job seekers including career counseling, workshops, job search assistance, skills assessment and occupational training. Customers using the centers have access to computers, internet, telephones, copy machines as well as printed materials to help them search for a job.

The WorkPlace works with business partners to address their future needs by creating opportunities to improve training and job readiness. Business customers can benefit from customized recruitment services, easy access to a large pool of pre-screened job applicants and other resources. We collaborate with employers in a number of ways:

- Build strategic, industry-specific partnerships with education providers
- Mobilize Rapid Response Teams to help dislocated workers deal with company closings
- Train workers for Connecticut's essential industry clusters
- Upgrade the skills of existing workers to maintain a globally competitive workforce

The WorkPlace regularly shares ideas, best practices and lessons learned with lawmakers, foundations, think tanks and other workforce development organizations around the country. We pride ourselves on bringing new thinking to the workforce table. In all we do, our people "think it forward" – always looking for new ways to enhance the quality of life and standard of living of people in our region.

## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

### **A. Chief Elected Official(s) (CEOs)**

1. **Identify the chief elected official(s) by name, title, mailing address, phone number and email address.**

See Attachment A: SWCT Workforce Development Area, Chief Elected Officials.

2. **If the local area includes more than one unit of general local government in accordance with WIOA sec. 107(c) (1) (B), attach the agreement that has been executed to define how the parties will carry out the roles and responsibilities of the CEO.**

See Attachment B: Local Chief Elected Officials Agreement

3. **If applicable, attach a copy of the agreement executed between the CEO (s) and the LWDB.**

See response to question 2 above.

**4. Describe the following:**

**i. The nomination process used by the CEO to elect the local board chair and members;**

The CEOs will solicit nominations for Business and Non-Business representatives from appropriate organizations and agencies as described in the process. The WorkPlace will assist the CEOs to allocate the categories for Non-Business appointments and to satisfy the requirements of WIOA.

**Business Representatives**

- Business representatives must be owners, chief executive officers, chief operating officers, small business or other individuals with optimum policymaking or hiring authority and represent businesses with employment, opportunities that reflect the employment opportunities of the LWDA;
- The Business Council of Fairfield County, the Greater Norwalk Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Bridgeport Regional Business Council and the Valley Chamber of Commerce shall be the lead local business organizations for coordinating and submitting business nominations to the CEOs for final appointment;
- The CEOs may contact other local chambers of commerce and trade associations to advise them that they may submit nominations to the lead local business organizations;

**Non-Business Representatives**

- Representatives of educational entities, including Community Colleges, will be selected from among individuals nominated by state, regional or local educational agencies, institutions, or organizations representing such local educational entities;
- Nominations for representatives of labor organizations shall be solicited from local labor federations;
- CEOs may solicit nominations for representatives of community-based organizations, giving special consideration to organizations representing youth (including out of school youth), individuals with disabilities, and veterans;
- CEOs may solicit nominations for representatives of economic development agencies, giving special consideration to private sector economic development entities;
- Unsolicited nominations may also be considered.

**ii. The term limitations and how the term appointments will be staggered to ensure only a portion of membership expire in a given year;**

At the annual meeting of the predecessor organization in 1993, Directors were elected to serve for one, two and three-year initial terms. At each subsequent annual meeting the then present Board of Directors shall elect Directors in accordance with Bylaws of The WorkPlace to serve for three-year terms to succeed the Directors whose terms are expiring. All Directors shall serve until their respective successors shall have been elected or qualified. The term of a Director may be extended by service as an officer of the Board of Directors.

**iii. The process to notify the CEO of a board member vacancy to ensure a prompt nominee;**

The WorkPlace maintains continuous, open communication with each of the CEO's. Notifications of vacancies occur through email correspondence, telephone and in person conversations.

**iv. The proxy and alternative designee process that will be used when a board member is unable to attend a meeting and assigns a designee as per the requirements at §679.110(d)(4) of the proposed WIOA regulations;**

In the event that a Director is unable to attend or participate in a meeting of the Board of Directors, he/she may designate another person who holds a leadership and/or decision making position in the entity which the Director represents by filing a written authorization, including fax, e-mail, or other written electronic medium, delivered at or prior to a meeting with the Board of Directors. Such designee shall not be counted for the purpose of determining the presence of a quorum at the meeting and shall not be entitled to vote but may otherwise participate in the meeting.

- v. **The use of technology, such as phone and Web-based meetings, that will be used to promote board member participation;**

Meetings of the Executive Committee and other subcommittees of The WorkPlace Board of Directors are supported by technology to encourage and promote participation. Members are able to join meetings by using technology such as conference calls and web-based solutions such as Live Meeting.

- vi. **The process to ensure board members actively participate in convening the workforce development system's stakeholders, brokering relationships with a diverse range of employers, and leveraging support for workforce development activities;**

The Board of Directors has the power necessary to carry out the functions and duties of the LWDB as well as formulate the policies and direct the affairs of the LWDB. Board members are approached to actively participate in standing sub-committees of the Board to assist in convening the workforce development system. These committees include; Executive Committee, By-Laws Committee, and Finance/Audit Committee. Additionally board members participate in the execution and planning of community forums which solicit feedback on workforce trends. Further board members are engaged in specific workforce program committees including; Diversity Works, People to Jobs, Valor Programs, Dress for Success and the SW CT Health Career Academy.

- vii. **Any other conditions governing appointments or membership on the local board.**

There are no other conditions governing appointment or membership on the local board.

- 5. **Provide a description of how the CEO was involved in the development, review and approval of the plan.**

The CEO is regularly notified of meetings to review workforce trends, the responsiveness of the LWDB and program performance. This included seven community forums over the past 2 years with business and community leaders. This spring his staff participated in meetings seeking input and involvement in the planning process from a diverse range of community stakeholders.

The CEO confirmed the vision and provided guidance on proper steps to create the plan. Progress on the plan was presented to the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors and subsequently to the full Board of Directors after receiving approval from the CEO.

## **B. Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB)**

### **2018 Plan Update**

#### **Changes to the Local WDB structure**

There have been no changes to the structure of the local Workforce Development Board.

- 1. **Provide a matrix identifying LWDB members including the category each member represents.**

See Attachment C: WorkPlace Board of Directors.

## 2018 Plan Update

### Provide a current matrix of WDB members

See Attachment C: UPDATED WorkPlace Board of Directors.

2. **Provide a description of how the LWDB was involved in the development, review, and approval of the plan.**

Member of the Executive Committee of The WorkPlace Board of Directors received monthly updates on the development and progress of the planning process. During these updates they provided guidance and feedback on the development of the plan. With the support of the Executive Committee three work groups were established to assist in the planning process and allow for a wide variety of stakeholder input into the regional plan. The Work Groups included;

- Service Coordination and Core Programing
- Customer Access
- Employer Engagement

Members of the Board of Directors participated in each of these work groups. The full Board of Directors received the plan prior to a regularly scheduled meeting where the plan was considered and approved by the LWDB.

3. **Provide an organizational chart for the LWDB and administrative support.**

See Attachment D: Organizational Chart of The WorkPlace.

### **C. Local Administrative Entity and Grant Sub Recipient**

1. **Identify the administrative entity.**

The WorkPlace is the administrative entity as the LWDB.

2. **Identify the entity selected to receive and disburse grant funds (local fiscal agent).**

The WorkPlace is the LWDB and fiscal agent responsible for the disbursal of funds.

### **D. One-Stop System**

1. **Provide a description of the local one-stop system, including the number, type and location of full-service and other service delivery points. Identify the process to select the one-stop operator.**

There is one (1) full-service and three satellite American Job Centers (AJC's) in the Southwest Local Workforce Delivery Area:

<b>BRIDGEPORT (Full-Service)</b> 2 Lafayette Square Bridgeport, CT 06604 Phone: (203) 333-5129 Open Mon - Fri, 8:30am - 4:30pm	<b>STAMFORD (Satellite)</b> 141 Franklin Street, 2nd Fl. Stamford CT 06901 Phone: (203) 353-1702 Open Mon - Fri, 8:30am - 4:30pm
<b>DERBY (Satellite)</b> 101 Elizabeth St. Derby, CT 06418 Phone: (203) 734-3443 Open Mon - Fri, 8:30am - 4:30pm	<b>ANSONIA (Satellite)</b> 4 Fourth Street Ansonia, CT 06401 Phone: (203) 397-6647 Open Mon - Fri, 8:30am - 4:30pm

The Bridgeport AJC location is a full-service, comprehensive AJC, housing WIOA, Wagner-Peyser and JFES staffing. Its central downtown location is near the urban public transportation hub and offers convenient access to individuals with transportation needs. This center also houses the Community Resource Center and the Assistive Services Center. The WorkPlace has Veteran, ex-offender, Youth and healthcare programs all within walking distance of this center.

The Stamford, Derby and Ansonia locations are satellite AJC offices. These satellites offer WIOA and JFES services. Wagner-Peyser services are made available by DOL on a scheduled basis. All four locations are on bus lines and have adaptive technology to assist customer with disabilities.

The one-stop operator is selected through a competitive bidding process, as described *in question 4 in the section on the "Local One Stop System"*.

**2. Identify the entity or entities selected to operate the local one-stop center(s).**

The WorkPlace procures and contracts with only one entity that serves as our operator/provider. The selected entity is Career Resources, Inc.

**3. Identify the entity or entities selected to provide career services within the local one-stop system.**

Career Resources, Inc., and the Connecticut Department of Labor are the only entities providing career services in the SW AJCs.

**4. Identify and describe what career services will be provided by the selected one-stop operator and what career services, if any, will be contracted out to service providers.**

Career Resources, Inc. delivers all career services provided at the SW AJCs. No career services are contracted out to providers, nor does The WorkPlace intend to contract out career services to providers.

Customers entering any of the Southwest American Job Centers are greeted and referred to the receptionists to determine the reason for the visit. All centers utilize the CTHires system to sign-in and track customers. All of our centers provide customer access to create user accounts in CTHires if they are not already in the system. Customers are then triaged to determine what program or service they are seeking.

Once registered into CTHires, customers may access career services. Available career services in the AJC's include:

- Eligibility for Title 1 Participants
- Outreach, intake and orientation
- Skills and supportive services needs assessment
- Program coordination & referral
- Labor market information
- Training provider performance & cost information
- Information about the availability of supportive services and referral to these services
- Assistance establishing eligibility for financial aid
- Employment Retention Services
- Follow-up services for Title 1 participants

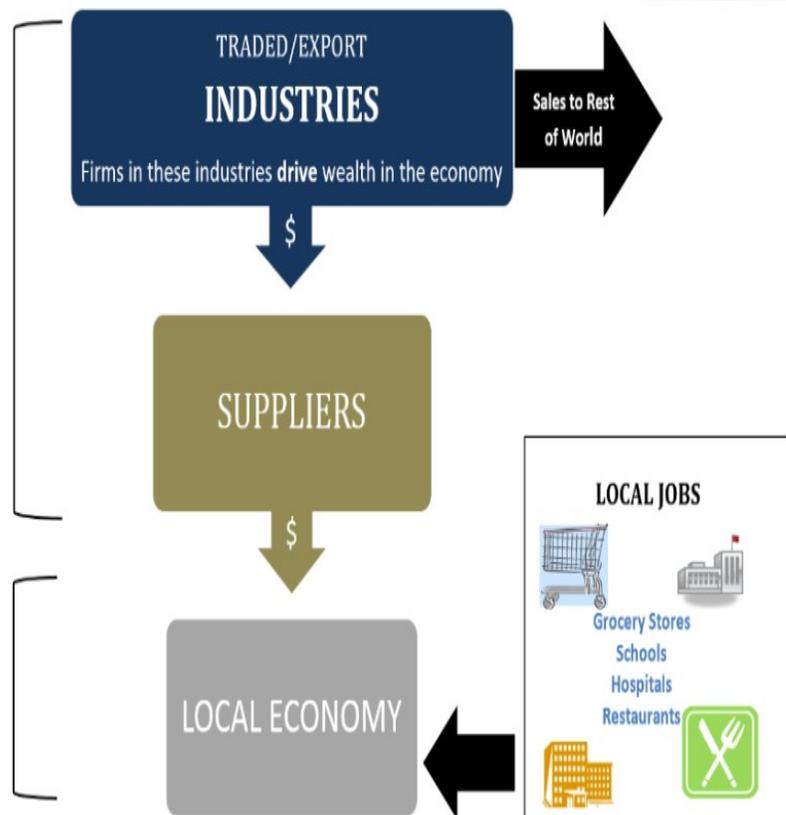
## ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

### 1. Provide an analysis of the local area's economic conditions, including information on existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

The 20-town region of Southwest Connecticut has just about climbed back to its pre-recession peak of total employment. In 2014, the Southwest Connecticut economy generated 398,474 jobs, a few thousand jobs short of its 2007 peak of 400,952 jobs. While the region's more recent job growth from 2010 to 2014 has lagged the nation, job growth in Southwest Connecticut has outpaced the state as a whole. Between 2010, the lowest point during the recession, and 2014 jobs in Southwest Connecticut grew by 4.7 percent. During that same time period, job growth was 6.1 percent in the U.S. and 3.4 percent in Connecticut.

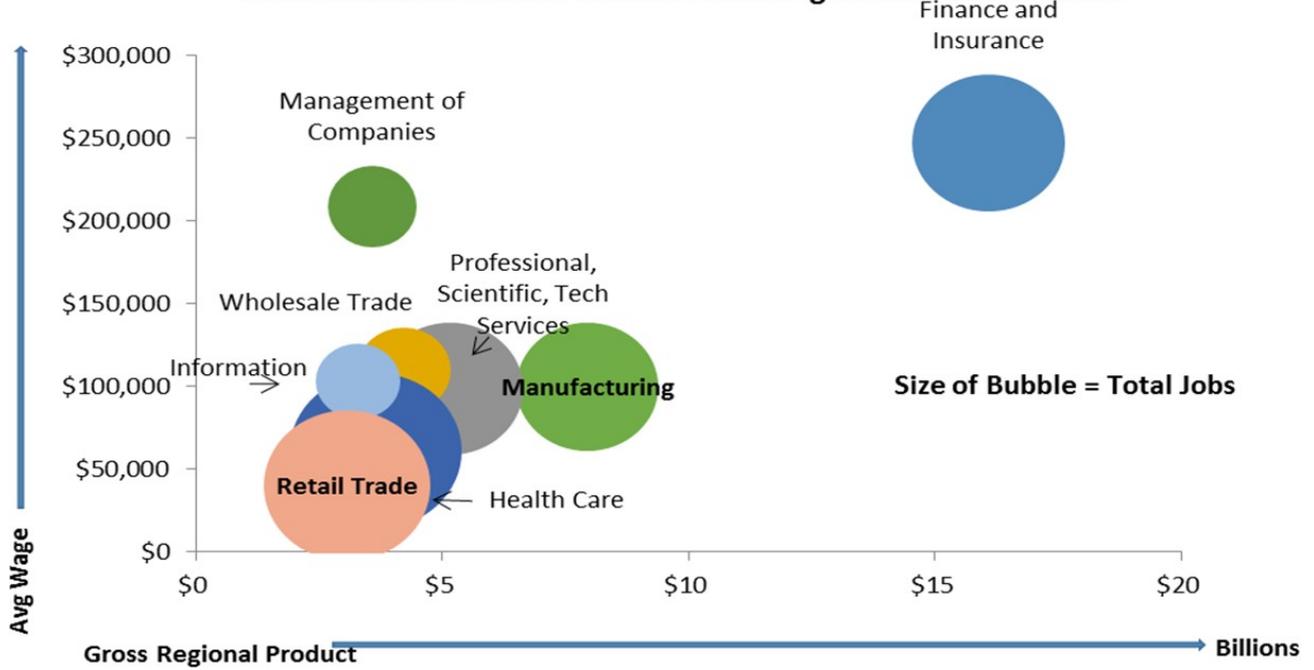
The Southwest Connecticut regional economy is made up of significant industry sectors that serve local consumers (health care and social assistance, accommodation and food services, and retail) and trade services and products outside the region (financial services, professional technical services, and manufacturing). These latter industries are the region's "traded sector" industry clusters. They ring up sales outside of the area and bring back to the region fresh dollars that support residents, local businesses, and government services. (See graphic.) Traded sector companies cluster in a region because they draw a competitive advantage from a proximity to a skilled workforce, specialized suppliers, or shared base of sophisticated knowledge about their industry. Their markets are national and global in that they sell their products and services to customers outside of Southwest Connecticut. In this way, they generate new wealth by bringing outside dollars into the region. In economic development, these are often the industries that are priorities because of their wealth generation potential.

The bubble chart on the next page shows the overall contribution of wealth by industry to the local economy. It is a dynamic view of the industry that shows the relative contributions to the economy by gross product, average employee wages, and total jobs.<sup>1</sup> Those industries that have a combination of relatively high wages, large number of jobs, and large total product are those that tend to be a region's traded sector, or largest wealth producing sectors. In Southwest Connecticut, the significant wealth producing sectors are financial services, manufacturing, professional and technical services, and management of companies. Financial services by far generates the most substantial wealth in the economy. It produces over \$16 billion in regional product, 34,000 jobs, and has average annual wage earnings of more than \$200,000. In addition to financial services, manufacturing and professional and technical services offer a relatively large number of jobs, pay good wages, and produce high output. Management of companies, while smaller in number of total jobs, has high wages and produces relatively high regional product for its size. (See chart.)



<sup>1</sup> Gross product is the measure of a gross operating surplus from sales of product and services, total employee compensation, and total taxes on production and imports for each industry.

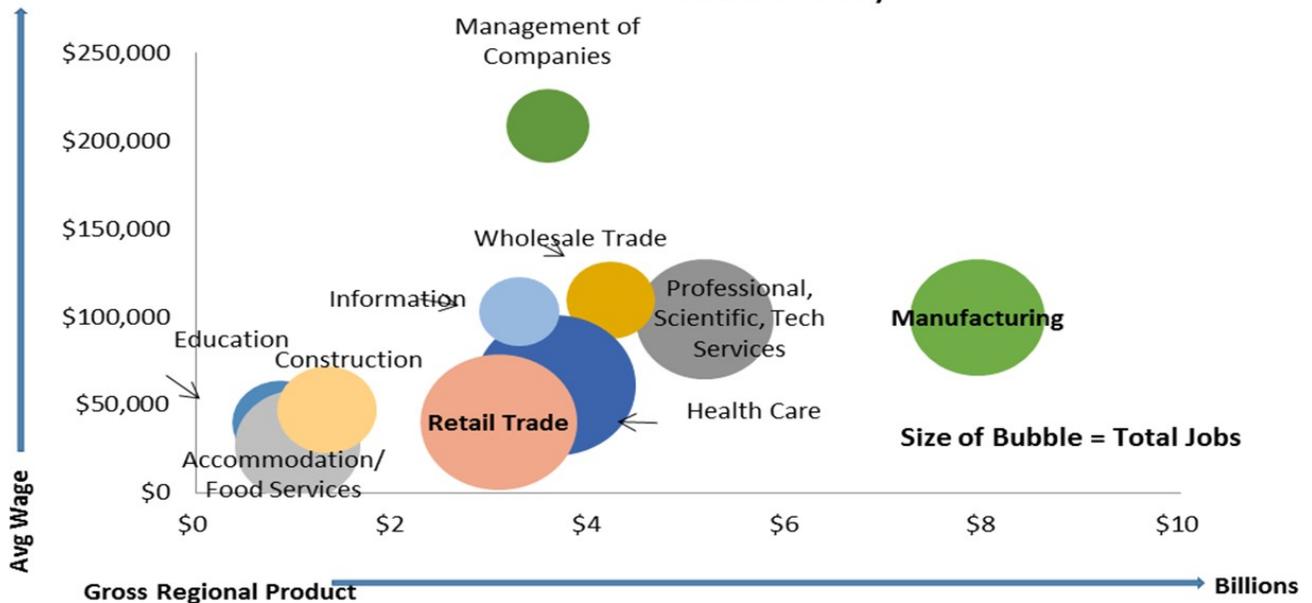
### Southwest Connecticut Wealth Producing Sectors and Clusters



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) Employees, Non-QCEW Employees & Self-Employed - EMSI 2014.4 Class of Worker, and Bureau of Economic Analysis' National Income and Product Accounts, Gross State Product.

A closer, scaled-in look at the lower left-hand quadrant of the bubble chart reveals some smaller wealth producing industries in the region.<sup>2</sup> These industries produce relatively smaller regional product and pay relatively lower wages. Included among these are accommodation and food services, education, retail, and construction. (See chart.)

### Southwest Connecticut Wealth Producing Sectors and Clusters (excluding Financial Services)



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) Employees, Non-QCEW Employees & Self-Employed - EMSI 2014.4 Class of Worker, and Bureau of Economic Analysis' National Income and Product Accounts, Gross State Product.

<sup>2</sup>This re-scaled chart excludes financial services and provides a sharper look at industries that otherwise get hidden.

In addition to total wealth contribution (wealth producing sectors), another way to look at the economy is by total jobs, wages, and growth. This view illustrates a slightly different ordering of industry sectors and the job opportunities they provide for residents.

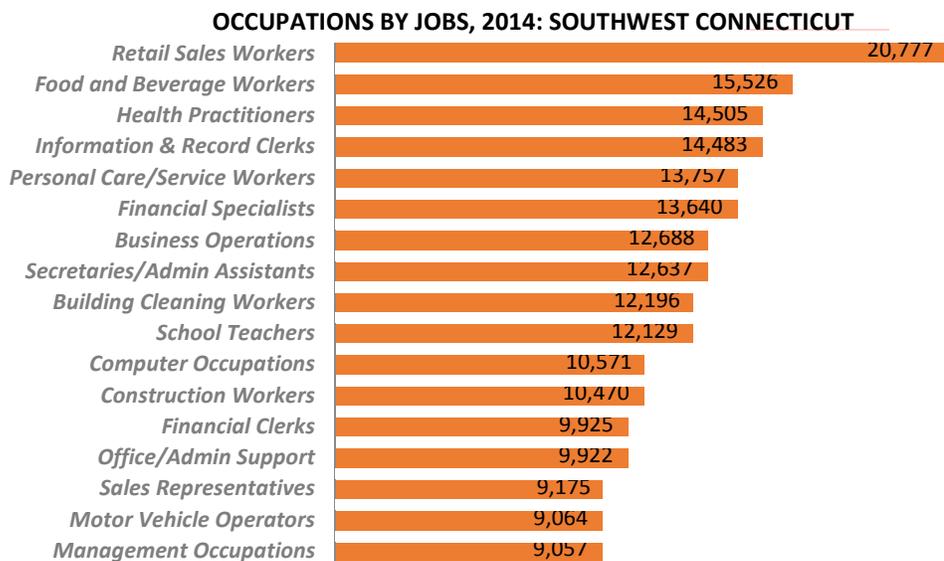
The leading industries by total jobs in Southwest Connecticut are health care and social assistance, government, retail, financial services, and professional and technical services. Each of these sectors contains over 30,000 jobs.<sup>3</sup> (See Attachment E.)

Growth among Southwest Connecticut's high-wage industries has been mixed. Two of the highest wage industries, financial services and manufacturing, both declined over recent years. A few other high-wage industries—management of companies, wholesale trade, and information—grew at a relatively robust pace.

On the other hand, there was relatively strong growth among all lower wage industries in Southwest Connecticut. Arts, entertainment and recreation jobs, and accommodation and food services jobs both grew by double digits. (See Attachment F.)

Another way to look at employment opportunities in the Southwest Connecticut economy is by occupation—the type of positions within which employees in local companies work. Occupations often span many industries, such as computer and IT workers who work in technology companies but who may also work in management, financial services, and health care. The two largest occupations in Southwest Connecticut by total employment are retail workers and food and beverage workers.

Together, these occupations represent almost 10 percent of regional jobs. Following these occupations in total employment are health care practitioners, information clerks, and personal care workers. (See chart below.)

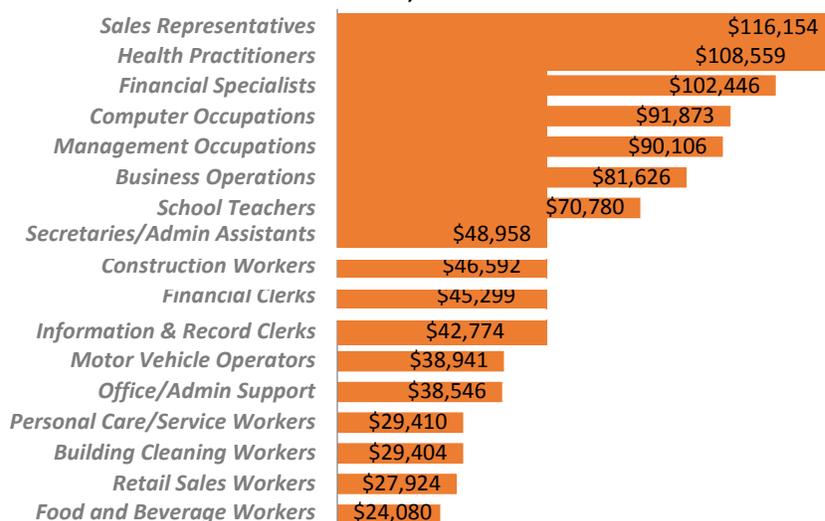


Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) Employees, Non-QCEW Employees & Self-Employed - EMSI 2014.4 Class of Worker.

The two leading occupational groups, retail workers and food and beverage workers, are also the two lowest paying. Annual average wages for each were less than \$28,000 in 2014. Close behind are building and cleaning workers and personal care and service workers, each with an annual average wage of less than \$30,000. In contrast, some of the highest paid occupations are health care practitioners, financial service workers, and computer and IT workers. (See chart on next page.)

<sup>3</sup> Traded sector industries in this chart include finance and insurance, professional and technical services, manufacturing, management of companies, and information. Portions of the region's health care industry are considered traded sector in that they contribute to life sciences and attract patients from outside the region for care.

### OCCUPATIONS BY AVERAGE WAGE, 2013: SOUTHWEST CONNECTICUT



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) Employees, Non-QCEW Employees & Self-Employed - EMSI 2014.4 Class of Worker.

By looking at the economy through all of these lenses (total wealth contribution, jobs, wages, and growth), a picture emerges of a number of key industries that offer good employment and income earning opportunities to residents and also contribute to the overall wealth of the economy. These industries are: Health Care, Manufacturing, Financial Services and Professional and Technical Services. Each of these industries contains a group of occupations that show demand and provide good wages. They are relevant to The WorkPlace because they offer job opportunities that require less than a four-year bachelor's degree.

### 2018 Plan Update

#### Significant changes in local economic conditions

The Southwest workforce region did not experience significant changes in local economic conditions. However, there are a few noteworthy elements to the regional economy.

- The region's labor force experienced modest growth between 2015 and 2016 (+1,182). Two communities, Bridgeport (-326) and Derby (-10) saw declines in their labor force.
- From 2014 to 2016 average annual employment in the Southwest region increased 3,966, with the largest growth in the Information and Accommodations and Food Services industries.
- The three industries with the largest employment in the region include Health Care and Social Assistance, Retail and Government.
- Accommodations and Food Services moved past Manufacturing to become the industry with the 5<sup>th</sup> most employees in the Southwest region.

Industry	2016 Annual Avg. Employ.
Health care and social assistance	52,835
Retail trade	39,771
Total Government	37,570
Finance and insurance	32,446
Accommodation and food services	27,216
Manufacturing	25,887
Professional and technical services	25,232
Administrative and waste management	21,571
Other services, except public administration	16,073
Information	11,856
Wholesale trade	11,824
Management of companies and enterprises	10,871
Construction	10,557
Educational services	10,304
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	9,415

Industry	2014 Annual Avg. Employment	2016 Annual Avg. Employment	Change In Employment
Health care and social assistance	52,146	52,835	689
Retail trade	39,691	39,771	80
Government	37,881	37,570	(311)
Finance and insurance	32,359	32,446	87
Accommodation and food services	26,292	27,216	924
Manufacturing	26,857	25,887	(970)
Professional and technical services	25,294	25,232	(62)
Administrative and waste management	21,220	21,571	351
Other services, except public administration	15,312	16,073	761
Information	10,825	11,856	1031
Wholesale trade	11,907	11,824	(83)
Management of companies and enterprises	10,979	10,871	(108)
Construction	10,243	10,557	314
Educational services	9,904	10,304	400
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	8,961	9,415	454

One item we continue to watch is employment growth within industries which historically have lower wages. In 2016, four of the top five industries, measured by employment, ranked in the bottom half for annual average wage.

Industry	Size of Industry (employed)	2014 Annual Avg. Wage	2016 Annual Avg. Wage	Change In Wage
Finance and insurance	4	\$268,328	\$270,381	\$2,053
Management of companies and enterprises	12	\$234,177	\$249,951	\$15,774
Wholesale trade	11	\$114,421	\$128,315	\$13,894
Professional and technical services	7	\$116,066	\$117,293	\$1,227
Information	10	\$103,205	\$114,212	\$11,007
Manufacturing	6	\$95,726	\$93,334	(\$2,392)
Construction	13	\$61,686	\$66,090	\$4,404
Government	3	\$62,154	\$65,389	\$3,234
Health care and social assistance	1	\$52,564	\$55,022	\$2,458
Educational services	14	\$51,346	\$53,481	\$2,135
Administrative and waste management	8	\$51,566	\$52,271	\$705
Retail trade	2	\$41,250	\$41,594	\$344
Other services, except public administration	9	\$35,013	\$35,497	\$484
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	15	\$33,303	\$35,242	\$1,939
Accommodation and food services	5	\$23,335	\$25,067	\$1,732

2. Provide an analysis of the employment needs of employers in those industry sectors and occupations.

Overall, there is growing demand for jobs that require educational credentials, such as a one-year certificate, a two-year degree, and a four-year degree. The nation's jobs have required increasing levels of educational attainment since at least 1973.<sup>4</sup> A recent study by Connecticut's Planning Commission for Higher Education shows that 70 percent of all jobs in Connecticut will require some type of postsecondary credential by 2025.<sup>5</sup> Further, projections of future job openings by the Connecticut Department of Labor show that most good-paying jobs will require more education. For example, among all statewide job openings that pay an annual wage above \$60,000 in the next 10 years, three-fourths will require a bachelor's degree or more.<sup>6</sup>

Among Southwest Connecticut employers, a recent survey by The WorkPlace of companies shows that demand is most likely to increase for more educated workers (those with a postsecondary certificate, two-year, or four-year degree) in the next 36 months, while there will not be as much new demand for workers with a high school degree or less. (See Attachment G.)

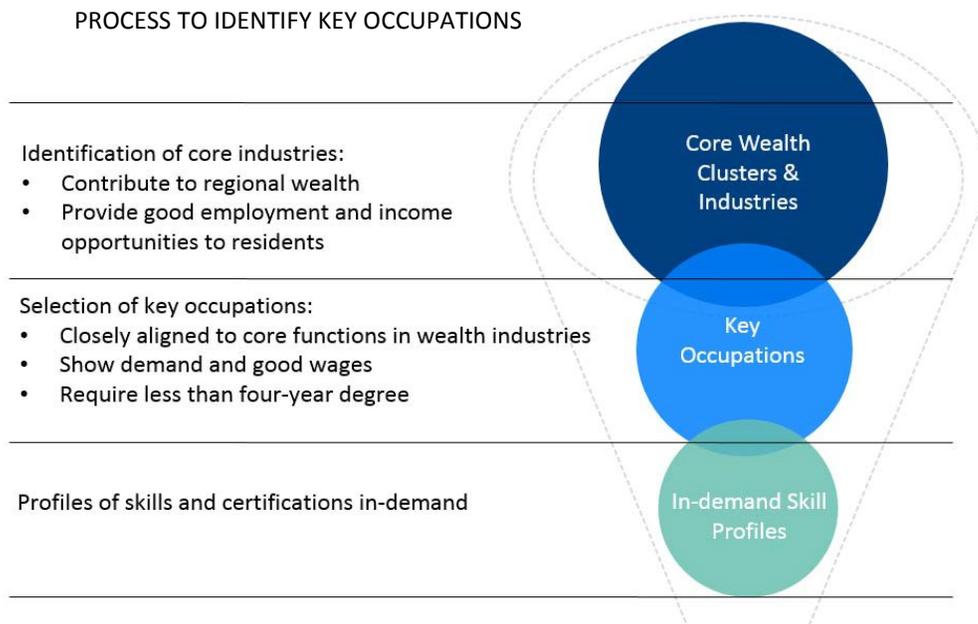
Along with the overall demand for more educated workers in Southwest Connecticut, our analysis shows that there is significant demand for educated workers in key occupations tied to the region's core wealth-driving industries. These occupations pay good wages and require less than a four-year degree. These occupational areas were identified by first compiling a list of core wealth-driving industries, described earlier in this document and then generating a list of occupations that are closely aligned to the core functions of these wealth-driving industries. The list was further refined by examining which occupation areas show substantial demand using projections of annual openings and real-time job postings, which ones offer

<sup>4</sup> Carnevale, Anthony, et. al., *Recovery: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements Through 2020*, June 2013.

<sup>5</sup> *Draft Final Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education in Connecticut*, Planning Commission for Higher Education, February 2015.

<sup>6</sup> *Connecticut Labor Market & Demographic Outlook*, Planning Commission for Higher Education. Connecticut Occupational Projections: 2010 to 2020, Connecticut Department of Labor Office of Research.

good wages (above \$15 per hour), and which ones require less than a four-year degree for entry. The graphic below depicts this process of identification of key occupations. (See graphic).



This analysis identified six general groupings of professional and technical occupations that show demand, pay good wages, and require a credential that is less than a four-year bachelor's degree. These groups are health care practitioners and technicians (health care), health care support workers (health care), computer and IT workers (professional and technical services), secretaries and administrative assistants (professional and technical services and financial services), financial and auditing clerks (financial services), and skilled production and maintenance workers (manufacturing). In each of these general occupational areas, as aggregated, there are available jobs, positions that pay good wages and because of their link to the key industries, they contribute to the overall growth and prosperity of the region. The attached graphic shows these six occupational areas and the key wealth-producing industries with which they are associated. (See Attachment H.)

**3. Provide an analysis of the knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the employers in the region, including employment needs in in-demand industry sectors and occupations.**

The following section spotlights each of these broad occupational areas and the occupations, skills, and certifications that are in-demand in each category. All demand data in the occupational spotlights are from real-time jobs postings for Southwest Connecticut. Job posting analytics (or real-time labor market information) come from job advertisements posted online and are one way to indicate the intensity and characteristics of demand in the economy for the occupational categories.

**Spotlight on Occupational Groups in Demand**

**Overview of Demand for Health Care Practitioners and Technicians**

There were 1,641 unique job postings for health care practitioner and technician-level occupations (requiring less than a bachelor's degree for entry) from employers in the Southwest Connecticut area in February 2015, up from 432 unique job postings in January 2011. That is an overall increase of 1,290 average monthly postings since 2011, or an almost 280 percent increase in job posting intensity during the last four years.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> All data from EMSI Real-time Job Postings for Southwest Connecticut, 2014. See note on page 12 about use of job postings data.

### Key Occupations in Demand (Monthly Postings and Monthly Hires)<sup>8</sup>

Occupation	Avg. Monthly Postings (Jan 2011 - Feb 2015)	Avg. Monthly Hires (Jan 2011 - Feb 2015)
Registered Nurses	614	219
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	37	83
Pharmacy Technicians	37	35
Medical Records and Health Information Technicians	36	10
Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technologists	26	9
Surgical Technologists	15	6
Radiologic Technologists	12	12
Cardiovascular Technologists and Technicians	10	3
Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technicians	10	7
Occupational Health and Safety Specialists	8	4

### Top Skills and Certifications in Demand

Skill	% of Postings with Skill
Health Care Experience	74%
Nursing	49%
Medical Knowledge	48%
Healthcare Knowledge	37%
Patient Care	30%
Information Technology	29%
Schedule	22%
Emergency	16%
Surgery Assistance	14%
Leadership	12%

Certification	% of Postings with Certification
Accredited in Specialty	20%
Basic Life Support (BLS)	18%
Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation	13%
Advanced Life Support	11%
Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)	9%
Registered Nurse (RN) License	9%
Current CPR Certification	5%
License To Practice	4%
Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS)	4%

### Overview of Demand for Health Care Support Workers

There were 446 unique job postings for health care support workers (requiring less than a bachelor's degree for entry) from area employers in February 2015, up from 187 unique job postings in January 2011. That is an overall increase of 259 average monthly postings since 2011, or an almost 140 percent increase in job posting intensity.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The average number of unique (de-duplicated) job postings each month indicate the intensity of demand for the occupation in the selected timeframe. The average monthly hires indicates new hires in an occupation, in part due to churn within the occupation as well as net new hiring. Data on monthly hires are from the U.S. Census Bureau Quarterly Workforce Indicators. A new hire is defined as an individual who is on the payroll of a firm during one quarter, but not on the payroll in the prior quarter.

<sup>9</sup> All data from EMSI Real-time Job Postings for Southwest Connecticut, 2014. See note above about use of job postings data.

### Key Occupations in Demand (Monthly Postings and Monthly Hires) <sup>10</sup>

Occupation	Avg. Monthly Postings (Jan 2011 - Feb 2015)	Avg. Monthly Hires (Jan 2011 - Feb 2015)
Nursing Assistants	52	173
Home Health Aides	43	116
Physical Therapist Assistants	43	5
Medical Assistants	39	60
Occupational Therapy Assistants	29	5
Phlebotomists	12	8
Healthcare Support Workers, All Other	10	6
Dental Assistants	8	51
Massage Therapists	8	25

### Top Skills and Certifications in Demand

Skill	% of Postings with Skill
Health Care Experience	61%
Nursing	40%
Patient Care	31%
Information	30%
Therapy	20%
Treatment	19%
Rehabilitation	17%
Dentistry	16%
Home Health	15%
Vital Signs	10%

Certification	% of Postings with Certification
Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)	27%
Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation	15%
Basic Life Support	6%
CPR Certification	5%
Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA)	5%
Certified Medical Assistant (CMA)	4%
Patient Care Technician (PCT)	3%
Certified Phlebotomy Technician (CPT)	2%
Licensed Physical Therapist	1%

### Overview of Demand for Skilled Production and Maintenance Workers

There were 1,033 unique job postings for skilled production and maintenance-level occupations (requiring less than a bachelor's degree for entry) from area employers in February 2015, up from 296 unique job postings in January 2011. That is an overall increase of 737 average monthly postings since 2011, or a 248 percent increase in job posting intensity during those years.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> The average number of unique (de-duplicated) job postings each month indicate the intensity of demand for the occupation in the selected timeframe. The average monthly hires indicates new hires in an occupation, in part due to churn within the occupation as well as net new hiring. Data on monthly hires are from the U.S. Census Bureau Quarterly Workforce Indicators. A new hire is defined as an individual who is on the payroll of a firm during one quarter, but not on the payroll in the prior quarter.

<sup>11</sup> All data from EMSI Real-time Job Postings for Southwest Connecticut, 2014. See note above about use of job postings data.

## Key Occupations in Demand (Monthly Postings and Monthly Hires) <sup>12</sup>

Occupation	Avg Monthly Postings (Jan 2011 - Feb 2015)	Avg Monthly Hires (Jan 2011 - Feb 2015)
Other Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	92	281
Other Production Occupations	52	205
Supervisors of Production Workers	45	42
Metal Workers and Plastic Workers	31	107
Electrical and Electronic Equipment Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	26	56
Assemblers and Fabricators	26	178
Textile, Apparel, and Furnishings Workers	11	63
Plant and System Operators	7	13
Food Processing Workers	6	47

### Top Skills and Certifications in Demand

Skill	% of Postings with Skill
Maintenance	32%
Repair	28%
Maintenance, Repairs, and Operations	23%
Electricity	23%
Machines	18%
Mechanical	15%
Tools	13%
Technology	12%
Installation	11%
Innovation	8%
Welding	8%
HVAC	8%

Certification	% of Postings with Certification
Cisco Career Certifications	<5%
Operator Certification	<5%
Certified Welding Inspector (CWI)	<5%
Certified Biomedical Equipment Technician (CBET)	<5%
Certified Apartment Maintenance Technician (CAMT)	<5%
Certified Plant Supervisor (CPS)	<5%
Medical Certification	<5%
Certified Electronics Technician - Associate-Level (CET)	<5%
Certified Welder	<5%

### Overview of Demand for Computer and IT Workers

There were 1,369 unique job postings for computer and IT workers (requiring less than a bachelor's degree for entry) from area employers in February 2015, up from 526 unique job postings in January 2011. That is an overall increase of 843 average monthly postings since 2011, or a 160 percent increase in job posting intensity during these years.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> The average number of unique (de-duplicated) job postings each month indicate the intensity of demand for the occupation in the selected timeframe. The average monthly hires indicates new hires in an occupation, in part due to churn within the occupation as well as net new hiring. Data on monthly hires are from the U.S. Census Bureau Quarterly Workforce Indicators. A new hire is defined as an individual who is on the payroll of a firm during one quarter, but not on the payroll in the prior quarter.

<sup>13</sup> All data from EMSI Real-time Job Postings for Southwest Connecticut, 2014. See note above about use of job postings data.

### Key Occupations in Demand (Monthly Postings and Monthly Hires) <sup>14</sup>

Occupation	Avg Monthly Postings (Jan 2011 - Feb 2015)	Avg Monthly Hires (Jan 2011 - Feb 2015)
Computer Occupations, All Other	291	14
Network and Computer Systems Administrators	191	35
Computer User Support Specialists	175	81
Database Administrators	73	13
Computer Network Architects	18	10
Multimedia Artists and Animators	6	44
Computer Operators	3	7

### Top Skills and Certifications in Demand

Skill	% of Postings with Skill
Information Technology (IT)	45%
Systems	43%
Maintenance and Repairs	31%
Hardware	24%
Microsoft Windows	20%
Operating Systems	17%
Networking	15%
Networks	11%
Linux	11%
Storage	10%

Certification	% of Postings with Certification
Security Clearance	7%
Secret Clearance	4%
Project Management Professional (PMP)	4%
CCNA	3%
CCIE Certification	1%
Microsoft Certified Professional	1%
Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP)	1%
Microsoft Certified Solutions Associate (MCSA)	1%
Network+	1%

### Overview of Demand for Financial and Auditing Clerks

There were 424 unique job postings for financial and auditing clerks (requiring less than a bachelor's degree for entry) from area employers in February 2015, up from 129 unique job postings in January 2011. That is an overall increase of 295 average monthly postings since 2011, or almost a 230 percent increase in job posting intensity during these years.<sup>15</sup>

### Key Occupations in Demand (Monthly Postings and Monthly Hires) <sup>14</sup>

Occupation	Avg Monthly Postings (Jan 2011 - Feb 2015)	Avg Monthly Hires (Jan 2011 - Feb 2015)
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	85	258
Tellers	67	37
Billing and Posting Clerks	16	58
Bill and Account Collectors	15	44
Payroll and Timekeeping Clerks	12	25
Loan Interviewers and Clerks	8	17
Insurance Claims and Policy Processing Clerks	2	11
Brokerage Clerks	2	30

<sup>14</sup> The average number of unique (de-duplicated) job postings each month indicate the intensity of demand for the occupation in the selected timeframe. The average monthly hires indicates new hires in an occupation, in part due to churn within the occupation as well as net new hiring. Data on monthly hires are from the U.S. Census Bureau Quarterly Workforce Indicators. A new hire is defined as an individual who is on the payroll of a firm during one quarter, but not on the payroll in the prior quarter.

<sup>15</sup> All data from EMSI Real-time Job Postings for Southwest Connecticut, 2014. See note above about use of job postings data.

### Top Skills and Certifications in Demand

Skill	% of Postings with Skill	Certification (rank order)	% of Postings with Certification
Accounts Management	43%	Certified Payroll Professional (CPP)	<5%
Data Analysis	22%	Fundamental Payroll Certification (FPC)	<5%
Accounts Payable	18%	Certified Coding Specialist (CCS)	<5%
Billing	18%	Certified Professional Coder	<5%
Invoices	17%	Certified Patient Account Technician (CPAT)	<5%
Accounts Receivable	15%	Certified Medical Coder (CMC)	<5%
Filing	14%	Certified Public Accountant	<5%
Cash Handling	13%	Certified Professional Secretary (CPS)	<5%
Payroll	12%	Associate in Claims (AIC)	<5%
Bookkeeping	11%		

### Overview of Demand for Secretaries and Administrative Assistants

There were 1,617 unique job postings for secretaries and administrative assistants (requiring less than a bachelor's degree for entry) from area employers in February 2015, up from 572 unique job postings in January 2011. That is an overall increase of 1,045 average monthly postings since 2011, or a 183 percent increase in job posting intensity during these years.<sup>16</sup>

### Key Occupations in Demand (Monthly Postings and Monthly Hires)<sup>17</sup>

Occupation	Avg Monthly Postings (Jan 2011 - Feb 2015)	Avg Monthly Hires (Jan 2011 - Feb 2015)
Customer Service Representatives	274	273
First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	193	242
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal and Medical Executive	119	439
Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants	107	114
Medical Secretaries	57	35
Receptionists and Information Clerks	49	166
Office Clerks, General	25	376
Hotel, Motel, and Resort Desk Clerks	21	22
Human Resources Assistants, Except Payroll and Timekeeping	17	15
Data Entry Keyers	12	27
Legal Secretaries	10	15
Office and Administrative Support Workers, All Other	8	62

### Top Skills and Certifications in Demand

Skill	% of Postings with Skill
Business Knowledge	31%
Scheduling	27%
Data	22%

<sup>16</sup> All data from EMSI Real-time Job Postings for Southwest Connecticut, 2014. See note below about use of job postings data.

<sup>17</sup> The average number of unique (de-duplicated) job postings each month indicate the intensity of demand for the occupation in the selected timeframe. The average monthly hires indicates new hires in an occupation, in part due to churn within the occupation as well as net new hiring. Data on monthly hires are from the U.S. Census Bureau Quarterly Workforce Indicators. A new hire is defined as an individual who is on the payroll of a firm during one quarter, but not on the payroll in the prior quarter.

Accuracy and Precision	19%
Finance	17%
Meeting	16%
Filing	15%
Clerical	11%
Telephone Calls	11%

Certification (rank order)	% of Postings with Certification
Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)	<5%
Certified Payroll Professional (CPP)	<5%
Certified Professional Secretary (CPS)	<5%
Medical Certifications	<5%
Certified Insurance Counselor (CIC)	<5%
Certified Provider Credentialing Specialist (CPCS)	<5%
Certified Coding Specialist (CCS)	<5%
Certified Medical Coder (CMC)	<5%
Associate in Claims (AIC)	<5%

### Structure of Work

Economists and others who watch the economy have noted a trend of irregular work schedules, split shifts and part-time work, on-call positions, self-employment, and “contingent” employment that appears to be either picking up speed or taking root in the American economy. According to the Federal Reserve Board, almost 7 million U.S. workers are employed part-time, not by choice, but because full-time jobs are not available. In 2014, the number of contingent workers, or those employed through temporary and staffing agencies, climbed to 3.5 million, which is just about the same as the pre-recession peak of 3.6 million contingent workers in the U.S. in 2006. Today, these contingent workers represent a significant share of the nation’s workforce, 2.3 percent and, the largest segment of workers who make up this non-traditional work structure are those who are self-employed. In 2014, the numbers reached record levels—there were 153 million U.S. workers who consider self-employment to be a significant part of their income or time spent working.

While a complete set of data is not readily available at the sub-state regional level to describe these shifts conclusively in Southwest Connecticut, there are some data that suggest this type of work also may be taking hold in the region. Data from the U.S. Census American Community Survey show that just about one in every four working-age residents with a job in Southwest Connecticut worked part-time. That is 98,000 people in the region working part-time in 2013, or 25 percent of jobholders between the ages of 16 and 64 years old.<sup>18</sup> Not surprisingly, 80 percent of businesses responding to The WorkPlace Business Workforce Survey in 2015 indicated that they employ part-time workers.<sup>19</sup> Of those businesses, almost all indicated that they expect their part-time workforce to either stay the same or increase over the next three years. (See Attachment I.)

In addition, self-employed workers make up a relatively large share (8.5 percent) of the Southwest Connecticut regional economy. In 2014, there were 33,772 people reporting to the Census that they made their primary income from self-employment. The total number of the region’s self-employed workers, if they were to be grouped as one industry, would be the fifth largest industry in the region, bigger than manufacturing, accommodation and food services, and construction. Over the long term, the number of people reporting self-employment is slightly up.<sup>20</sup>

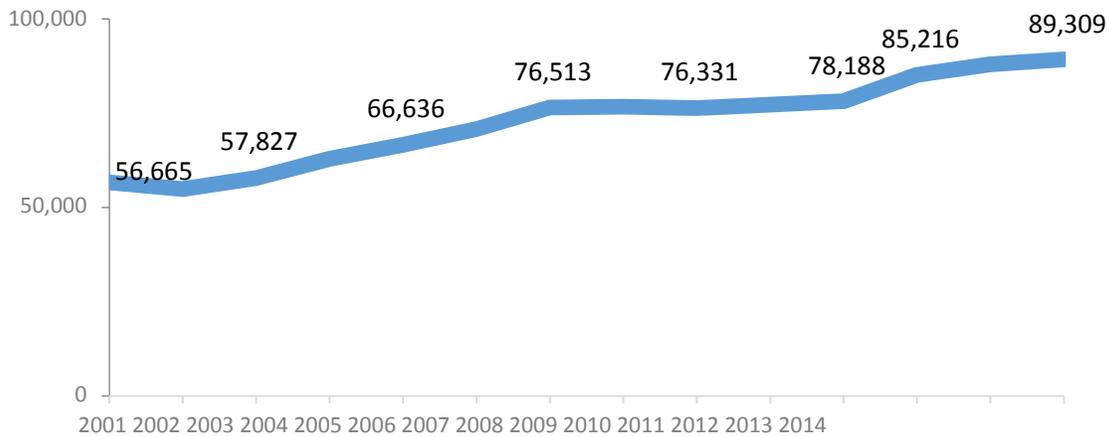
A final indicator of this non-traditional work structure taking hold in Southwest Connecticut is the increase in workers who gain labor income from outside their primary jobs. These are workers who hold a main job, but supplement it with additional income reported through contract work, a side business, a contingent job, or some other miscellaneous labor activity. Since 2001, the number of workers who fit this category increased by almost 60 percent in Southwest Connecticut. Today, there are more than 89,000 such workers, up from 56,665 workers in the region 15 years ago. (See chart.)

<sup>18</sup> U.S. Census, American Community Survey, S2303: Work Status in the Past 12 Months, 5 Year Estimates 2009-2013.

<sup>19</sup> The WorkPlace Southwest Connecticut Business Workforce Survey, 2015. There were 172 total respondents to the survey. Of these, 137 said they employ part-time workers.

<sup>20</sup> The number of self-employed workers in 2014 is up from the region’s 2001 total of 31,917 self-employed workers and close to the 2006 peak of 34,891 self-employed workers. Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey, combined with other sources and modified using EMSI’s proprietary methods. Covers people who, when responding to Census surveys, consider self-employment to be a significant part of their income or time spent working. Most people normally considered “self-employed” would fall into this dataset.

**PEOPLE EARNING OTHER INCOME OUTSIDE OF PRIMARY JOB (EXTENDED PROPRIETORS) IN SOUTHWEST CONNECTICUT, 2001-2014**



Source: Extended proprietor data from Bureau of Labor Statistics Non-employer data sets, combined with BEA and Census datasets. The data shown exclude proprietor income reported in financial services.

There are a number of reasons for this movement to a more flexible, contingent, and “freelance” work structure. In part, the demand for labor flexibility is a response from businesses uncertain about hiring, a possible residual effect from the recession. It is also a move by some businesses to find “just-in-time” help to respond to rapidly changing markets and competition. Other businesses may be trying to hold down labor costs.

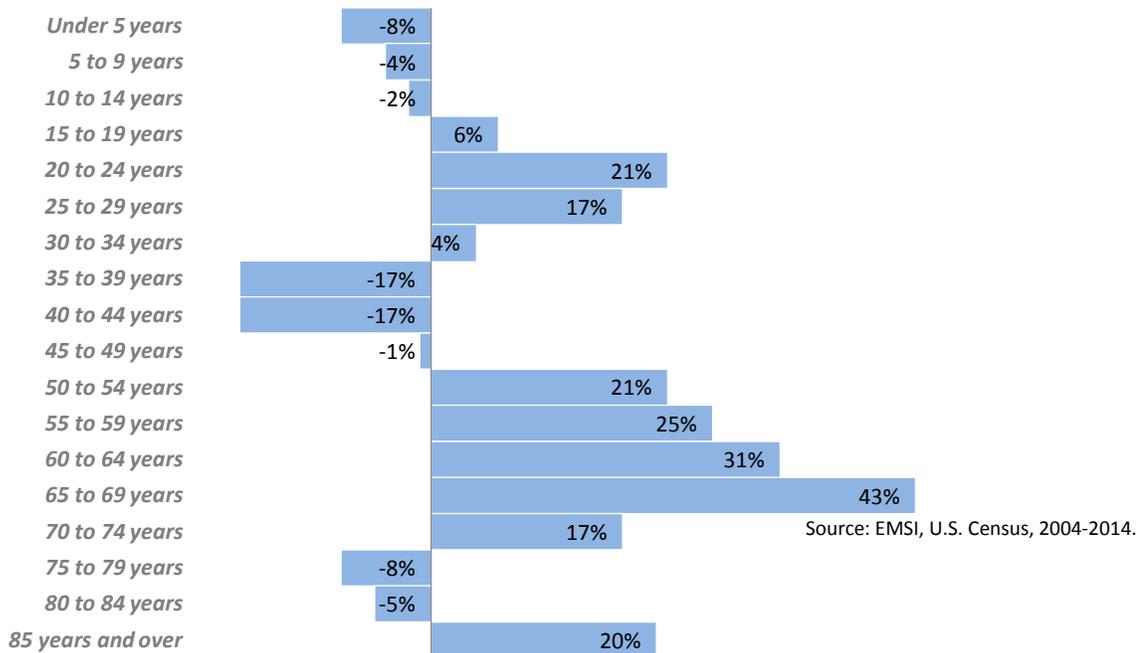
4. Provide an analysis of the workforce in the region, including current labor force employment and unemployment data, information on labor market trends, and the educational and skill levels of the workforce in the region, including individuals with barriers to employment.

The Southwest Connecticut Workforce Development Area is made up of 20 towns with a total Labor Force of 395,020 in 2014. Yet, the distribution of population among the 20 towns in the area varies considerably from the densely populated Bridgeport and Stamford areas to the nearly rural and sparsely populated towns of Easton and Beacon Falls. (See chart.)

SOUTHWEST CONNECTICUT LABOR FORCE 2014			
Ansonia	10,281	Norwalk	50,253
Beacon Falls	3,460	Oxford	7,552
Bridgeport	66,710	Seymour	9,409
Darien	9,497	Shelton	23,048
Derby	7,072	Stamford	69,412
Easton	3,823	Stratford	27,371
Fairfield	29,633	Trumbull	18,622
Greenwich	30,254	Weston	4,949
Monroe	10,752	Westport	12,922

Data shows that the population in Southwest Connecticut is growing slowly and that all of the growth is located in two key age groups. The result is that the population as a whole is trending older. The majority of the population growth occurred in the 50 to 74 year old cohorts, followed by less strong growth among those 20 to 29 years old. Further, there was decline in the population that is the heart of the working age population, those between 35 and 49 years of age. The chart on the next page shows the distribution of age groups in the region and the change between 2004 and 2014.

**PERCENT CHANGE IN POPULATION BY AGE, 2004-2014: SOUTHWEST CONNECTICUT**



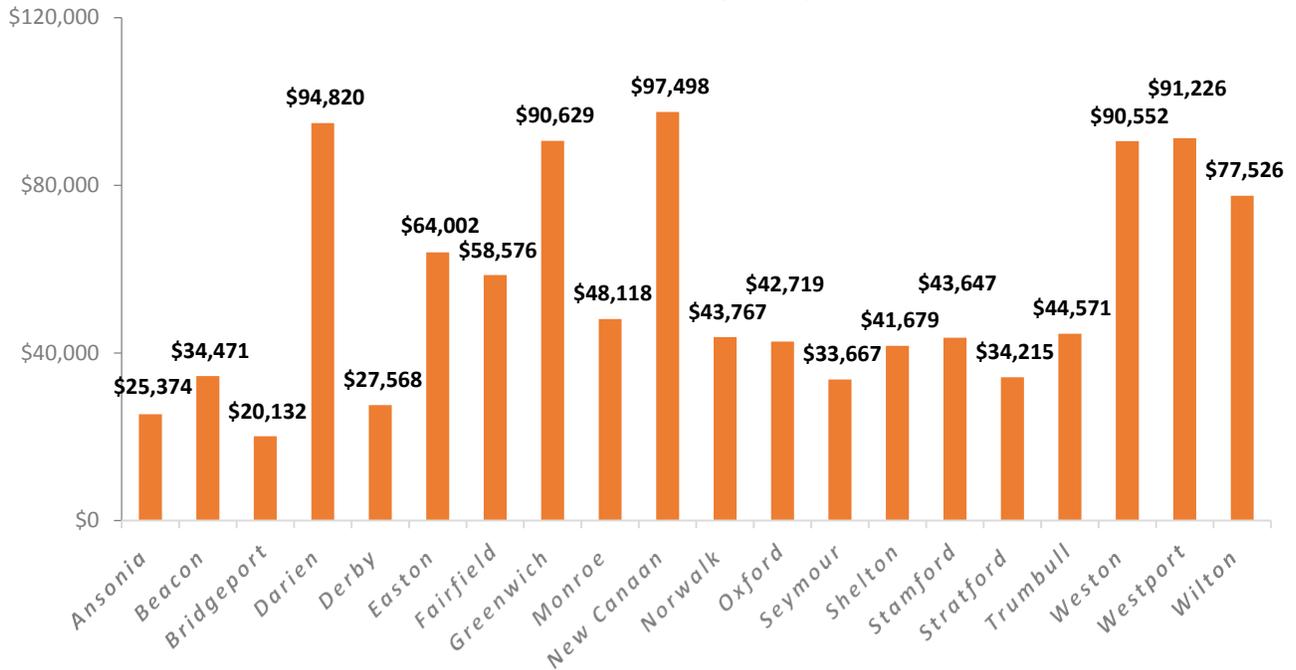
All of this net growth in population is coming from growth in non-white populations and among people of color. These groups are driving population growth in the region. In the past decade, Hispanic people, Asian people, and those who claim more than one race in the U.S. Census reports have each increased by over 25 percent. African-American or Black residents have increase by just 8 percent. But the traditional white population, still numerically the largest in the region, declined by 5 percent over the same period. This shift in the population is a reflection of immigration and the entrance of new people of color into the region. The impact of the changing ethnic and racial composition of the workforce will be significant.

**Income**

Across the region, per capita income is extraordinarily high. Per capita income in the region for 2013 was \$48,449, more than \$10,000 higher than Connecticut's per capita income and \$20,000 higher than the nation's. In part, this high average income represents the distribution of jobs in very high-paying industry sectors such as financial services, professional and technical services, and management of companies located in the region as well as in neighboring New York City. The strength and employment levels in those industry sectors play a significant role in the region. Of interest then is how income is distributed across the whole economy and population of the region.

The distribution of income and income growth across populations shows how incomes are accruing differently and depend very much on where people live in the region as well as their level of education. Again, some sharp differences in the accrual of income are to be expected given the concentration of incomes in financial and management related employment. Per capita income by cities and towns in the region show these sharp differences. (See chart on next page.)

**PER CAPITA INCOME BY CITY/TOWN, 2013**

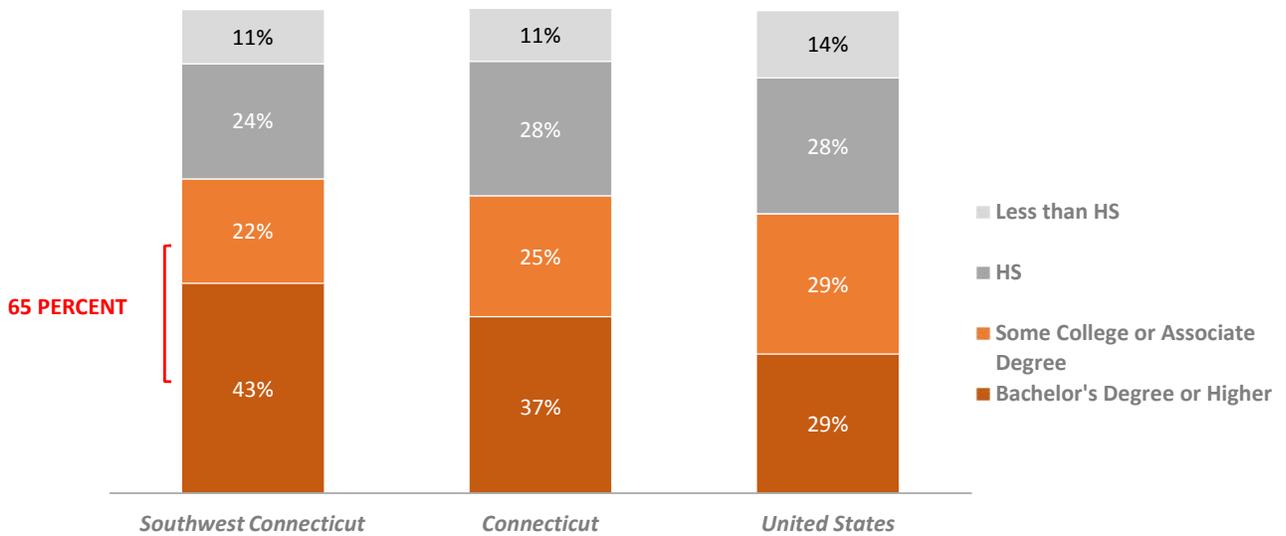


Source: U.S. Census, 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2013.

**Educational Attainment**

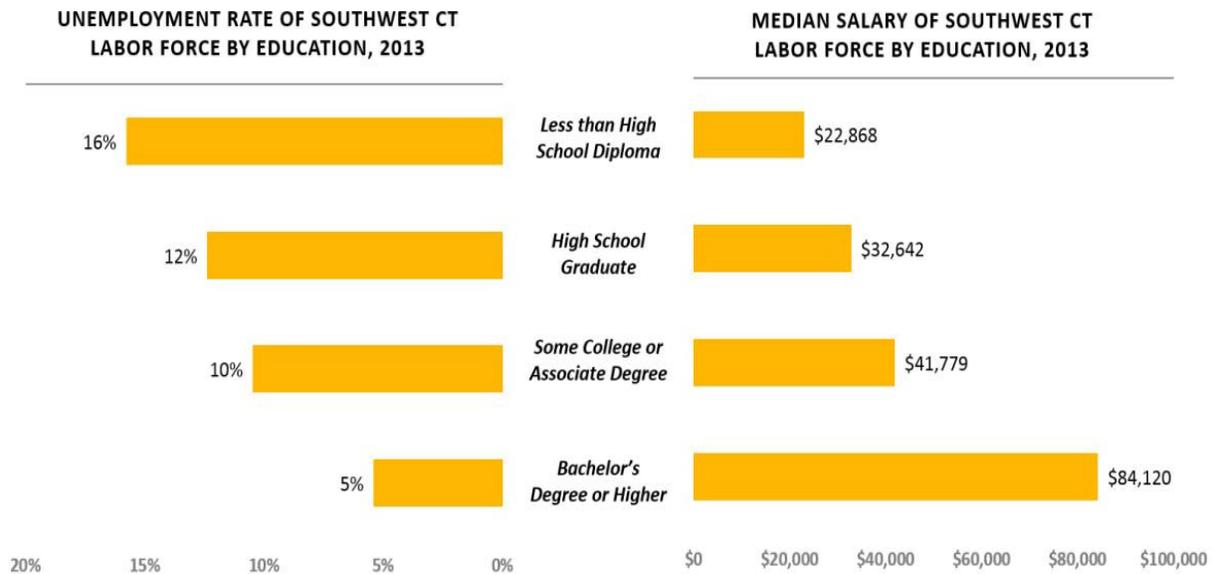
As a whole the population of Southwest Connecticut is among the most highly educated in Connecticut and in the nation. The region ranks first in the nation among metropolitan areas with 43 percent of its population completing a bachelor's degree or more. Another 22 percent have an associate's degree or have completed some college, for a total of 65 percent of the population with some postsecondary credential. Elsewhere in Connecticut, residents show slightly less postsecondary attainment, with 62 percent completing some college or a degree while the nation as a whole is 58 percent. (See chart below.)

**EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF POPULATION (AGES 25 YEARS AND OVER), 2013**



Source: U.S. Census, 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; Total population ages 25 years and over in Southwest Connecticut is 537,710.

Research shows that educational attainment is directly related to jobs and incomes. Southwest Connecticut residents with higher levels of educational attainment show higher incomes and lower rates of unemployment. Those with less than a high school diploma in Southwest Connecticut fare especially poorly in the labor market; their unemployment rate at 16 percent in 2013 is three times that of their counterparts with a bachelor's or higher degree and their incomes are just 25 percent of that group. (See chart below.)



Source: U.S. Census, 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

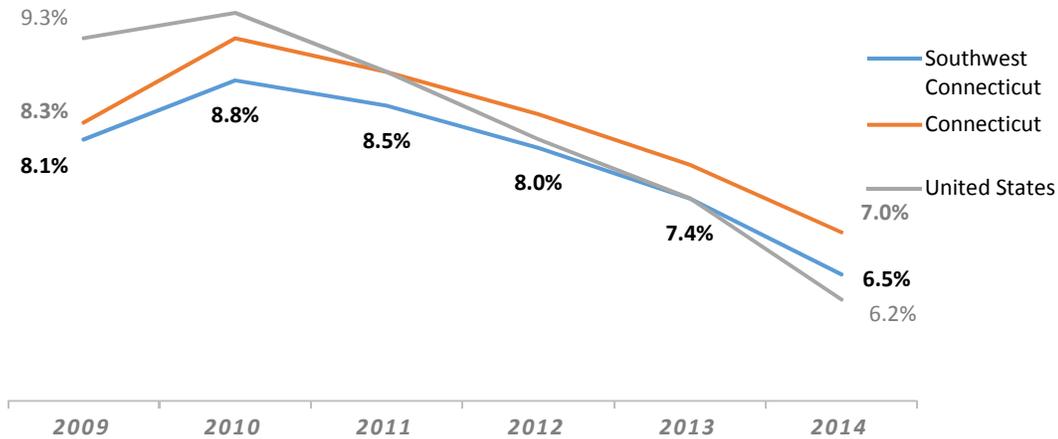
Labor force participation rates are an important indicator of the health of employment structures and opportunity in a region. It is a measure of the engagement of the working age populations in the economy. During the national recovery from the last recession of 2008, the U.S. rate of labor force participation declined as more working age individuals were not working and not seeking employment. While labor force participation depends on a number of factors, recently, the decline in participation nationally has been interpreted as a perception on the part of workers that jobs are not available or that the opportunities for work are so low in quality and quantity that it is simply not worth looking for work or taking a low-quality job.

In Southwest Connecticut, the labor force participation is relatively high as is the rate for Connecticut as a whole. In part, this is a legacy of the relatively strong job market that residents of Southwest Connecticut enjoyed in the years prior to the recession. There are some indications that this rate of labor participation has fallen. Research by the authors of "The State of Working Connecticut" indicates that the state's historically high labor force participation rate has experienced steep drops.<sup>21</sup> Their research indicates that Connecticut's labor force participation rate peaked in 1991 at 72 percent, and since that time has declined. Still, while rates of participation are cause for concern, and the rates can vary by race and ethnicity, the overall relatively high rate of labor force participation is an indicator that groups across the labor force are engaged in work. (See Attachment J.)

Our description of the labor force includes a picture of a slowly improving unemployment rate among residents of the region. The number of unemployed people in the labor force has been in steady decline since 2010. The unemployment rate of 6.5 percent in Southwest Connecticut in 2014 is slightly higher than the unemployment rate in the U.S., but lower than the rest of Connecticut. The chart on the next page depicts the rates of unemployment in the region between the depth of the recent recession and recovery to 2014. The number of unemployed people in the region peaked in 2010 with just over 36,000 unemployed residents. Just four years later, that figure declined by almost 10,000 residents, with workers from the region either gaining jobs or leaving the labor force. In 2014, there were 26,600 unemployed people in Southwest Connecticut seeking employment. (See chart on next page.)

<sup>21</sup> Nicholas Defiesta and Wade Gibson, *The State of Working Connecticut 2014*, Connecticut Voices for Children, 2014.

## UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, 2009-2014



Source: Connecticut Department of Labor Office of Research, 2014.

### Individuals with Barriers to Employment

#### Recipients of Public Assistance

Regulations and economic cycles have been key factors in the rise and fall of individuals and families receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits and Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) in Southwest Connecticut. On the one hand, there has been substantial growth in the number of people receiving SNAP benefits in Southwest Connecticut over the recent years. In 2014, there were 72,723 individuals in the region receiving SNAP benefits, an increase of 42 percent from 2010. This increase is slightly higher than the increase in Connecticut as a whole (35 percent increase from 2010 to 2014). Much of the increase in the region and state followed federal expansion of eligibility for the SNAP program. New legislation increased the income thresholds for people eligible to receive SNAP, thus allowing more working and even middle-income people to receive benefits in the state. (See Attachment K.)

While the number of individuals receiving SNAP increased during this time, the number of families receiving Temporary Family Assistance declined in Southwest Connecticut. In 2014, there were 5,139 family recipients of TFA in Southwest Connecticut, down from 6,881 families in 2010. This drop is a 25 percent decline in TFA caseload, or decline that is about twice as fast as the state as whole.<sup>22</sup> (See Attachment L.)

There is wide variation in the number of TFA recipients in the region by town. Most recipients are current residents of Bridgeport (2,813 TFA families), Stamford (820 families), and Norwalk (375 families). Two-thirds of the TFA decline in the region came from more than 1,300 Bridgeport families no longer receiving TFA over the last four years. Statewide, advocates assert that some of the decline in the region could be due to families who received the TFA benefit during the recession and since have reached Connecticut's 21-month time limit.

**Non-Custodial Parents** – Non-custodial parents are individuals who do not have custody of their child (ren), yet still have an obligation to provide necessary supports. Non-custodial parents are identified by the CTDSS Child Support division in partnership with the Judicial Support Enforcement Services Division. Together, both units will assist parents in securing financial and medical support for their children by providing quality services and information in a courteous, efficient, and effective manner. Non-custodial parents, in order to achieve economic stability, need education, employment services and various supports like affordable housing, transportation, nutritional assistance and child care to insure the well-being of their children. For more information on Non-custodial parents see Attachment M.

Experts in the state indicate that recipients of public assistance face at least three major challenges to employment. One is the prospect of inflexible and unpredictable jobs. Many times, recipients who enter the job market often do so in jobs that require

<sup>22</sup> The number of families receiving TFA in Connecticut fell by 12 percent from 2010 to 2014.

non-traditional or on-call hours. This makes it difficult to negotiate childcare or other family supports that these families often need while working. Another challenge is the lack of access to high-quality and affordable early childcare and education. According to research by the Connecticut Association of Human Services, full-day childcare in Connecticut costs \$1,750 per month for two children, the third most expensive cost for childcare in the country. Full-time earnings for a job at the minimum wage are less than the cost of childcare. A third barrier is the spatial mismatch between where good-paying jobs are located and where many low-income residents live. Poor transportation access to jobs in growth areas can make it difficult for residents receiving public assistance to get these jobs. For example, recipients of public assistance who live in Bridgeport often find prohibitive cost and untenable commute times to take transportation to jobs located in Stamford or Shelton. The same is true for residents of Ansonia and Derby who need to get to job hubs in Norwalk or Stratford.

### Long-term Unemployed

The long-term unemployed are people who have been out of work for more than half a year. Nationally, the number of long-term unemployed workers reached its peak in 2010, a record high of 6.7 million workers. Since then, the number has declined considerably to roughly 2.8 million workers by the end of 2014. In Southwest Connecticut, while the numbers have fallen, there are indications that there are still many workers who have been looking for and unable to find suitable work over the long term.

At one point in 2010, there were as many as 23,000 workers in Southwest Connecticut who were claimants of long-term unemployment benefits. These were workers who were dislocated from their jobs, exhausted their first six months of unemployment benefits, and were filing for long-term unemployment insurance extensions under the Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) program and the Extended Benefits (EB) programs.<sup>23</sup> Research by the authors of "The State of Working Connecticut" indicates that at one point only Florida saw a higher share of long-term unemployed workers without a job for more than half a year than Connecticut.<sup>24</sup>

Even though the number of long-term claimants has shrunk considerably, there are still thousands of workers who "exhaust" their six-month unemployment compensation, are still looking for work, and receive no long-term unemployment benefits. Data available from the Connecticut Department of Labor Office of Research show that there were 29,543 "regular" claimants for unemployment in Southwest Connecticut in the fiscal year May 1, 2014 to April 30, 2015. Of these, there were 9,432 Southwest Connecticut residents who exhausted their six months of benefits and still had not found a job or registered as being employed. That is roughly one-third of all unemployment claimants in the region who "exhaust" their benefits, meaning they are likely unemployed after six months.

During the peak period of long-term unemployment in Southwest Connecticut, most long-term unemployed persons were separated from jobs in health care, retail, staffing services, and manufacturing. Long-term claimants were roughly equally split by gender, tended to be slightly older, and consisted of a relatively higher proportion of minorities than the general population.

While the federal extension of long-term benefits has lapsed and the number of official claimants has declined, many acknowledge that people who are long-term unemployed are still very much present in the region and face many barriers to employment at pre-recession wages and conditions. Nationally, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics says that still 11.4 percent of all unemployed people in 2014 are chronically unemployed, meaning they had been looking for work for 99 weeks or longer.

<sup>25</sup> Statewide and national research on the topic indicates that long-term unemployed persons face a number of challenges and barriers before the nation and region can get back to its pre-recession normal.<sup>26</sup>

The most prominent barrier to long-term unemployed individuals finding work is shifts in the labor market and the absence of jobs. Earlier in this document, we detailed the shifts in the type of jobs and the structure of work that have begun to take hold in Southwest Connecticut, including declines in some of the area's biggest industries (financial services and manufacturing)

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<sup>23</sup> Long-term claimants are defined as claimants filing under the Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) program and the Extended Benefits (EB) program. Claimants are eligible to file under the EUC and/or EB programs after six months of unemployment. The program began July 6, 2008 and expired on January 1, 2014, with no phase-out period

<sup>24</sup> Defiesta, Nicholas and Wade Gibson, *The State of Working Connecticut 2014*, Connecticut Voices for Children, 2014.

<sup>25</sup> Kosanovich Karen and Eleni Theodossiou Sherman, *Trends In Long-term Unemployment*, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, March 2015.

<sup>26</sup> Defiesta, Nicholas and Wade Gibson, *The State of Working Connecticut 2014*, Connecticut Voices for Children, 2014.

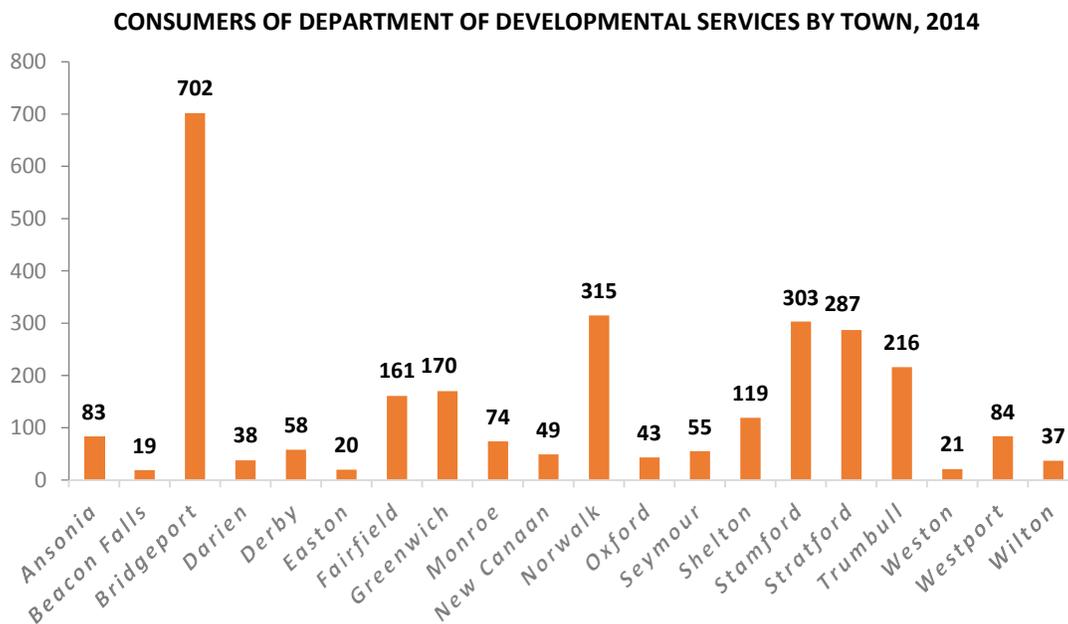
and shifts to more non-traditional work structures (contract, part-time, and contingent work). In the face of these shifts, a barrier can become the lack of preparation and loss of self-confidence among those who have been out of work for a long time.<sup>27</sup> Sometimes where new jobs have grown in the economy, the skills of long-term unemployed persons no longer match. One report calls this the “attachment gap.”<sup>28</sup>

Another challenge cited is the unwillingness of employers to take a chance on someone who has not been working for an extended period. Studies have shown that the longer someone is out of work, the more difficult it is to find a job because of hiring bias. Two studies on this issue found that hiring biases exist against applicants as soon as they are unemployed and it only gets worse the longer they are out of work.<sup>29</sup>

### People with Disabilities

There are 76,000 people over the age of 16 years who identify themselves with a disability in the metro area of Southwest Connecticut, or about 10.7 percent of the total population. More people with disabilities in the Southwest Connecticut metro area are in the labor force and more are employed relative to the U.S. as a whole. In 2013, the U.S. Census estimated that 30.6 percent of people with disabilities in the region are in the labor force, and of those 25.3 percent work. Those are higher rates than the nation as a whole, and slightly higher than the State of Connecticut. Local data on consumers of disability services show a wide variation in the numbers of residents with a disability and where they live.

In 2014, the Connecticut Department of Developmental Services reported that there were 2,854 people living in the 20 towns of Southwest Connecticut who were consumers of its services. Ten years ago, there were 2,576 consumers of Department of Developmental Services, an increase of 275 people since 2005. About one in every four consumers of DDS services lives in Bridgeport. The next highest concentrations of DDS consumers live in Norwalk, Stamford, Stratford, and Trumbull. (See chart below.)



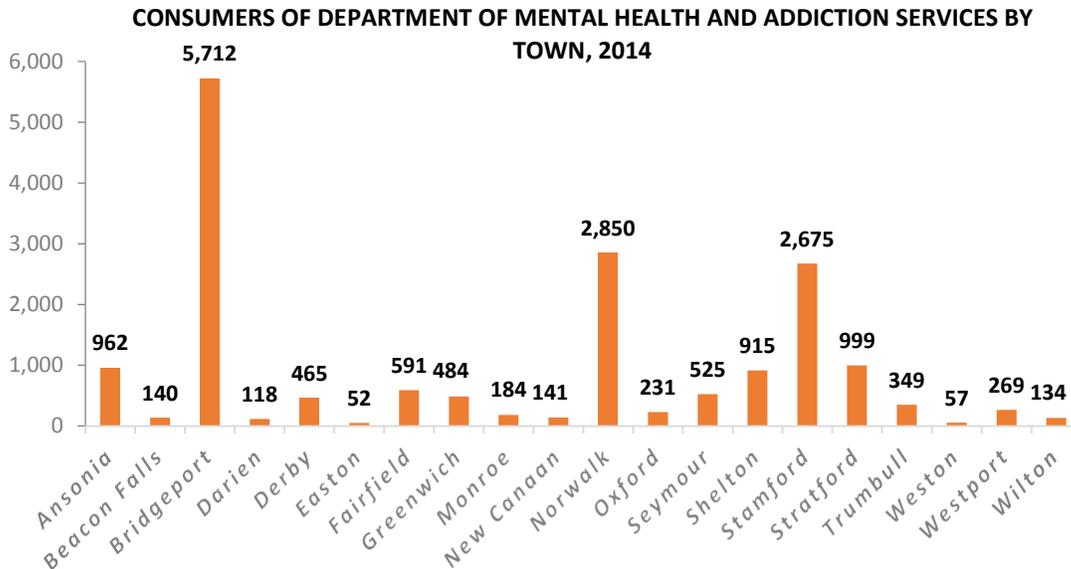
Source: Connecticut Department of Labor, Office of Research, Connecticut Department of Developmental Services, 2014.

<sup>27</sup> “Long-Term Unemployment and the 99ers: An Emerging Issues Report from the Blue Green Institute,” The WorkPlace, 2012.

<sup>28</sup> Krueger, Alan B., et. al., “Are the Long-Term Unemployed on the Margins of the Labor Market?” *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*, Spring 2014.

<sup>29</sup> Ho, Geoffrey C., et. al., *The Stigma of Unemployment: When joblessness leads to being jobless*, Institute for Research on Labor and Employment, UCLA, 2011. National Employment Law Project, *Barriers Facing the Long Term Unemployed*, Statement of the National Employment Law Project before the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, December 6, 2011. Ghayad, Rand, *The Jobless Trap: Job Market Paper*, Northeastern University, 2013.

There are a greater number of consumers of mental health and addiction services in Southwest Connecticut compared with 2005. There were 17,853 consumers of the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) in Southwest Connecticut in 2014, up from a low of 14,627 consumers in 2005. However, between 2009 and 2014 there has been an overall decline from a 2009 peak of 20,623 consumers in the region receiving DMHAS service. Just under one-third of the consumers of DMHAS in Southwest Connecticut reside in Bridgeport, followed by other high concentrations in Norwalk and Stamford. (See chart on next page.)



Source: Connecticut Department of Labor, Office of Research, Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, 2014.

People with disabilities work in all types of industries and jobs, often closely matching the proportion of industries and jobs of those workers without a disability. According to census estimates, people with disabilities are slightly more likely to work in service occupations and twice as likely to work in production and material moving occupations than the general population. They are also slightly more likely to work in the retail and manufacturing industries.

Experts often cite social stigma and a lack of information in the workplace about the abilities of people with disabilities as a major barrier to employment. That is, employers often have perceived notions of what duties a person with a disability can or cannot perform at the workplace, and these notions often do not match reality. Moreover, employers often do not have the right kind of information on assistive technology that is on the market to help people with disabilities perform at their highest level of ability. A final barrier can be employer concerns and uncertainty about compliance and regulatory issues with hiring, supervising, or terminating a person with a disability. These stigmas and information gaps often affect the person with a disability who is searching for a job. That can leave persons with disabilities with less confidence and greater uncertainty about how employers will respond to their desire for a job.

### Out-of-School Youth

Out-of-school, or disconnected, youth are generally defined as young people between the ages of 16 and 24 who lack a high school diploma, are not enrolled in school, and are detached from work. National research points to this population as more likely to have increased interactions with the juvenile and criminal justice systems, more likely to be unemployed later in life, and more likely to live in poverty. There are 86,750 young people between the ages of 16 and 24 in the 20 towns of Southwest Connecticut. In recent years, the unemployment rate of this age cohort has averaged 22 percent, roughly three times the rate for all adults and 2.5 percentage points higher than the state.

The four-year graduation rate for students in Southwest Connecticut schools is widely divergent, and communities with lower graduation rates and limited employment opportunities for youth are at the greatest risk for experiencing higher numbers of disconnected youth in their communities. In 2013, there were an estimated 2,385 youth between the ages of 16 and 19 years of age who were not in high school or employed in Southwest Connecticut. These are high-risk disconnected youth, as

identified by a recent report by Connecticut Voices for Children.<sup>30</sup> Bridgeport was home to 1,189 of this cohort of high-risk disconnected youth, or roughly half of all youth ages 16 to 19 not in school or not employed in the region. National experts note that there are many barriers to employment and school for disconnected youth. Lack of employment and pathways to higher education remain the biggest challenge for this group of younger workers.

- 5. Provide an analysis of the workforce development activities (including education and training) in the region, including an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of such services and the capacity to provide such services, to address the identified education and skill needs of the workforce and employment needs of employers in the region.**

Education plays a vital role in developing our current and future workforce system. With 35% of our population having only a high school diploma or less this poses a large problem. With employers seeking better qualified candidates the career pathways for individual with only a high school diploma or less become narrow.

The Southwest region has always prescribed to the "Lifetime Learning" philosophy. This lifetime learning means that we are committed to assisting our customers as they progress through our products and even employment. We currently house an Adult Basic Education (ABE) and General Education Development (GED) class in our comprehensive Bridgeport AJC. This allows us to begin addressing the core educational skills so that our customers can attached to their desired trainings. We have use WorkKeys and KeyTrain which are career development tools designed to develop core basic skills in a contextualized fashion, further assisting our customer base in achieving educational gains. Our youth initiatives imbed educational skill attainment alongside occupational skills training. This approach allows for the delivery of educational services over a longer period of time.

Overall the Southwest region works well with the local adult education providers, the community colleges and the community that provides educational services to our customers. Our strength is in our system flexibility. We can customize approaches to assist our customer base on achieving their educational goals. A weakness is that for far too many of our customers remaining in the educational activities for the needed time is difficult. Many of our customers with a high school degree or less are dealing with life issues. Many are parents or need the hours to pay for rent and or transportation. This limits the overall impact on the types of careers that are available to them.

Moving forward we are seeking to further partner with our employer base to identify their educational needs. We will do this in partnership with our the local adult education providers, the community colleges and the community through targeted

- 6. Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area.**

Adults and Dislocated workers in the Southwest service delivery have a rich offering of services. Beginning with orientations on accessing our services to assessment that align Adults and DW's with the proper information on selecting in-demand, high growth training opportunities. Positive recruitments in our AJC's and quality case management allow for our Adults and DW's to create the appropriate mix of services to reach positive outcomes.

For those Adults and DW's wanting training opportunities, they may choose qualifying training from the Eligible Training Providers Listing (ETPL). The ETPL provides access to over 160 certification and/or credentialing training programs. All of these services are coordinated through case managers. Our case managers are equipped to provide workforce development services to our customer base.

Additionally Adults may qualify for our Healthcare Academy. Our Healthcare academy provides a healthcare sector approach and is funded through the Federal Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

- 7. Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in the local area, including activities for youth who are individuals with disabilities. The description and**

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<sup>30</sup> Connecticut Voices for Children, *Thrive by 25: Youth Pathways to Success in Fairfield County, Pre-Read Packet*, Commissioned by Fairfield County's Community Foundation, May 2015.

**assessment must include an identification of successful models of such youth workforce investment activities.**

Youth workforce development services in the Southwest service delivery area are coordinated under our YouthWorks unit. YouthWorks is strategically designed to deliver workforce development services to youth ages 14-24. YouthWorks connects all relevant workforce development services a youth may need to become successful in one package.

YouthWorks has access to area vendors who have been selected under and RFP process to deliver, assessment, financial literacy, entrepreneurial skills, educational advancements, occupational skills training and placement services. YouthWorks also works with area business to develop and support internships and work experience opportunities for our youth.

#### **8. Identify gaps in service based on the above analyses.**

There is the big challenge of addressing how to maintain opportunity for highly educated workers in the region, while also increasing economic opportunity to a growing minority population. A focus on developing talent across the whole workforce is a critical area of intentional design. This includes talent creation, attraction, and retention and lends itself to region-wide collaborative efforts among employers, educators, and civic leadership.

The WorkPlace has initiated and supported good ideas among employers, communities, and educational leadership. Under the new WIOA implementation, it may be possible to extend that leadership to focus more resources on critical intermediary functions of staffing sector partnerships and providing the glue required to accomplish and sustain innovation. Some areas of innovation that are important are:

- Deepen employer engagement by sector. Sector-based partnerships can be deepened to engage employers more comprehensively.
- The WorkPlace has taken important steps to adapt employment services to new work structures. Yet, we have just begun to provide the kinds of services that many in the “new workforce” need from new sources if traditional attachments to jobs and the labor force are changing, as they seem to be. This includes job networks, support services like insurance and education, and helping groups of “new” workers craft a sustainable career while their dependence on and attachment to employers may be less and less.

## **LWDB VISION, GOALS AND STRATEGIES**

#### **1. Identify the vision, goals and strategies adopted by the LWDB in response to the passage of WIOA and how these will affect the preparation of an educated and skilled workforce.**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) presents an opportunity to improve job and career options for workers and jobseekers through an integrated, job-driven workforce system that links diverse talent to businesses. It supports the development of a strong, vibrant regional economy where businesses thrive and people want to live and work.

### **2018 Plan Update**

#### **The need to revise strategies to meet local performance goals**

Our system is designed to progressively move customers into successful outcomes. With the addition of measurable skill gains, we are better accounting for the progression to successful outcomes. We are not revising any strategies, but are accounting for the performance in real time rather than solely upon exit.

#### **Vision**

To establish innovative collaborations that inspire success and support an environment conducive to economic development, while providing opportunities for lifelong learning and personal growth, which contribute to building a vibrant economy through increased employment opportunities.

## Goals

- To increase access to and opportunities for employment, education, training, and support services needed for success in the labor market, particularly for those with barriers to employment.
- To support alignment of workforce investment, education, and economic development systems in support of a coordinated, accessible, and high-quality workforce development system.
- Develop and maintain a high quality workforce system that supports and enhances the economic health of the business community and provides a prepared workforce with the skilled workers needed for businesses to succeed in a global economy.
- Increase opportunities for youth to participate in work based learning through summer employment, apprenticeship, internships and other similar experiences.

## Strategies

The WorkPlace and the regional agencies responsible for administration of the core WIOA programs propose and will support a set of broadly conceived strategies intended to achieve the vision and goals outlined above. These strategies will serve as a framework for implementation efforts, with corresponding detailed State actions to be developed.

### Strengthen Current Workforce

- Promote expanded implementation of effective, integrated employment and training/contextualized learning strategies to improve skills acquisition and employment outcomes for targeted low-skill jobseekers, including adult education students and participants in time-limited public assistance. Expand proven best practices as feasible to include additional prospective participants, working closely with businesses/employers in key sectors seeking qualified skilled workers. Maintain fidelity to rigorous program standards. Use the recommendations of CETC's 2015 State Plan Addressing Contextualized Learning, Early College and Career Certificate Programs as a framework.
- Maximize opportunities for success for all individual jobseekers and workers in Connecticut's talent pool, promoting innovation, effective coordination, resource alignment and integrated service delivery to advance the employability and career prospects for the broadest possible range of customers, including (but not limited to) veterans, the long-term unemployed, public assistance participants, individuals with disabilities, ex-offenders, homeless individuals, out-of-school youth, low-skilled adults, limited English proficient, etc.
- Promote and maximize opportunities to fulfill WIOA statutory language that adults receiving public assistance benefits receive priority access to services.

### Support Business Growth

- Promote implementation of **business/employer-led industry partnerships** at both State and regional/local levels, focusing on targeted sectors. Focus of these partnerships will be on high-priority, high-value, high-demand sectors and occupations.
- Promote effective implementation of **regional/local sector-based initiatives** in targeted sectors, intended to address employers' priority needs, building on the achievements of existing successful regional sector initiatives. Strategically connect qualified jobseekers produced by the workforce system to job opportunities with employers benefitting from public investments, to strengthen the link between workforce development and economic development strategies.
- **Support local sector partnerships** through ongoing program initiatives that align with statewide policies related to sector partnerships. WIOA requires sector partnerships as a local workforce activity, and requires states to use of a portion of statewide discretionary funds to support local areas in the development, convening, and implementation of industry/sector partnerships.
- Continue efforts as incubators of innovative, effective sector partnerships. For example:
  - Over the past five years, the WorkPlace has utilized HHS and USDOL funding to implement the **Southwestern Connecticut Health CareRx Academy**, a regional partnership of hospitals, colleges, businesses, business groups, labor and CBO's. The Academy addresses two major needs of the region: providing low-income populations with core skills and supports to obtain employment, and helping ameliorate healthcare industry workforce shortages. The Academy provides no-cost training and support to help participants get a career in the growing healthcare field.

- The **American Job Center Career Coach** is a career center on wheels and a mobile classroom designed to go where people are and deliver career services and training opportunities traditionally available in an American Job Center. Employers can provide customized training to their employees by reserving the American Job Center Career Coach.
- The WorkPlace began exploring the challenges that long-term unemployed workers face searching for employment. A need to transcend traditional remedies for the unemployed became clear. **Platform to Employment** was created to address the unique challenges of returning the long-term unemployed to work while providing employers a new avenue to a skilled workforce. Businesses receive a risk-free opportunity to evaluate and consider hiring participants during an eight-week work experience funded by Platform to Employment.
- The WorkPlace is committed to helping increase the economic mobility of entry-level workers in retail and adjacent sectors. In the coming years we will implement programs to support retail and related sector workers gain the knowledge and training they need to advance in their careers through programs that will provide skills training, job placement support and develop interactive maps to showcase career paths within retail and adjacent sectors.

#### Transform System Capacity

- Re-imagine delivery of customer services to individual jobseekers and workers in the American Job Center One-Stop system. Develop and implement streamlined service flow with efficiently aligned and integrated processes implemented by coordinated service teams representing the full range of contributions from system partners and stakeholders.
- Develop and implement strong, effective cross-program, functional partnerships to enhance efficient delivery of effective customer services. Develop consensus on unified consistent messaging and communications to key audiences/market segments. Pursue critical resources, including grants, collaboratively and leverage available resources strategically. Implement consistent cross-agency/cross-program staff training on shared/common functions and responsibilities.
- Conduct ongoing research and analysis to identify opportunities for system continuous improvement and maximize system capacity, making strategic use of data to focus training efforts and align resources. Focus training investments and advocacy on clearly identified best practices for each targeted sector and each customer segment.

#### Develop Future Talent:

- Develop pathways for academically low-performing at-risk students and out-of-school youth leading to certifications and credentials that enhance their viability in the job market. Build on the year-round YouthWorks program to academically prepare at-risk high school students for college success. Build on and expand the opportunity youth coordinated career pathways model to help targeted out-of-school youth acquire valuable post-secondary credentials and get a job.

## 2. Describe the process used to develop the LWDB's vision and goals, including a description of the participants in the process.

Prior to the development of the vision and goals in this plan, The WorkPlace convened a series of public forums in 2014 and 2015. As part of our long-term strategic planning process we hosted a series of workforce forums in 2014 to explore topics such as business growth, employment trends and workforce evolution. This series focused on industries which are of great importance to Southwest Connecticut including; financial services, retail, hospitality, healthcare and manufacturing. We partnered with local and regional business associations to produce these events.

Each of these forums was open to the public and included a dynamic panel of Connecticut-based public and private sector leaders. This was an appeal to the community for advice, support and collaboration. Invited parties included members of local chambers of commerce and business associations, human resource departments, public & private education providers, transportation organizations, labor, human service agencies, government officials and philanthropy.

Subsequently in 2015 we conducted a community audit and needs assessment which included a series of public forums to review and contribute information on the local workforce. During these forums we reviewed an analysis of in-demand of occupations and skill sets for key jobs that are important to industries in the region. The keynote presentation was delivered to

the Board of Directors of The WorkPlace by FutureWorks, a policy development firm that helps design strategies which promote sustainable, skill-based regional economic growth and competitiveness. These forums helped The WorkPlace confirm the relevance of existing efforts, target the needs of specific populations, and identify new areas to concentrate workforce development programs and policies in Southwest Connecticut.

Based on the feedback from these public forums, concepts for the LWDB's vision and goals were presented to the Executive Committee of the LWDB for initial feedback and guidance. The WorkPlace collaborates with a broad network of partners to bring together expertise and diverse experiences to serve the region. In the spring of 2016 the vision and goals were presented to a planning Work Group to allow for a variety of stakeholder input. Participants in this Work Group included representatives from; Connecticut Department of Labor, Career Resources, Inc., Department of Rehabilitation Services, Board of Education and Services for the Blind, Department on Aging, Norwalk Housing Authority, Housatonic Community College, Norwalk Community College, The Urban League, Fairfield County's Community Foundation, Local Adult Education, Connecticut State Department of Education, Council of Churches, Department of Corrections, Career Technology, Norwalk Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Valley Chamber of Commerce.

**3. Describe the local area's strategy to work with entities that carry out the core programs to align resources available to the local area to achieve the strategic vision and goals established by the local board.**

Though our AJC partner meetings we will continue to meet and review our service delivery system. At these meeting we discuss the available resources and strategize on how best we can align our resources to have the greatest impact. The development of new Memorandums Of Understanding (MOU's) shall assist greatly in carrying out our strategic vision region wide.

**4. Describe service strategies the LWDB has in place or will develop that will improve meeting the needs of customers with disabilities as well as other population groups.**

The southwest region has done considerable work with integrating customers with disabilities into our centers. Our Bridgeport AJC houses our assisted services unit. This unit is designed to assist customers with disabilities in navigating the American workforce system. We coordinate all disability related services through our assistive services unit to address the needs in partnership with the Voc-Rehab system in our satellite offices.

**5. Describe how the LWDB's goals relate to the achievement of federal performance accountability measures to support economic growth and self-sufficiency.**

The federal performance measures are used as guiding principles in our strategic design. The federal performance measures are based around placement, credentialing, earning change and retention. Our system is set up to provide access to employment and credentialing in high demand fields which should result in earning change. While our retention unit continues to assist our customers under the twelve months of follow up. Our goals are systematically aligned to increase access to and opportunities for employment, education, training, and support services needed for success in the labor market, particularly for those with barriers to employment. With the federal performance goals under common measures, the attainment of a credential and movement into either employment or post-secondary schooling is designed into our process. We have business services staff as well as retention staff to continually assist our customer's into successful outcomes.

**6. Indicate anticipated local levels of performance for the federal measures.**

The region has yet to negotiate their local performance for the federal measures with the State.

**7. Describe indicators used by the LWDB to measure performance and effectiveness of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), contracted service providers, and the one-stop delivery system in the local area.**

In ongoing efforts to both monitor and improve upon our system delivery we formally monitor our system. Monitoring of our partners is conducted against our Memorandums of Understanding (See Attachment N). Moreover, we will begin to use surveys with employers, customers and partners to better gauge our effectiveness.

## COORDINATION OF SERVICES

### 1. Coordination with Partner Programs and Services

**Describe how individualized career services will be coordinated across programs/partners in the one-stop centers, including Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education and Literacy activities and TANF. Specify how the local area will coordinate with these programs to prevent duplication and improve services to customers.**

Individualized career services are coordinated in a manner that allows for customer to seamlessly attach to them. Vocational Rehabilitation has an on-site presence in our comprehensive Bridgeport AJC. Our Bridgeport AJC houses our assisted services unit. This unit is designed to assist customers with disabilities in navigating the American workforce system. We coordinate all disability related services through our assistive services unit to address the needs in partnership with the Voc-Rehab system in our satellite offices.

We have an open entry Adult Basic Education (ABE) and a General Educational Development (GED) program at our comprehensive Bridgeport AJC. We refer customers to the existing ABE and GED programs available through the States Department of Education (SDE) programming in our satellite offices.

We have fully integrated our Jobs First Employment Services (JFES) program in all of our AJC's. This reduces duplication and allows for co-enrollment into WIOA if the customer requires additional services. Our work with the TANF/JFES program has been an ongoing program administered by The WorkPlace for several years.

In our MOU's we define the career services, how to access them and who is providing them to ensure we are not duplicating any services.

### 2018 Plan Update

#### Changes in the financing available to support WIOA title I and partner-provided WIOA services

The changes in available financing were minimal to support WIOA Title I. Through the IFA's, the Southwest goal remained the same; to build an integrated model that served our customers' needs. Through our partnerships we now have more services for customers available in our AJC's.

### 2. Coordination with Economic Development Activities

**Provide a description of how the local board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with economic development activities.**

Economic Development (ED) representatives are integral members of our local boards. Our regional Business Services Representatives have regular communication with EDs in order to both listen and share information. Because we have shared customers (employers) and shared interest in viable training solutions for a work-ready workforce, the collaboration with EDs is a win-win for the workforce system and the employers.

We work with ED as a team alongside the Connecticut Department of Labor to inform new employers interested in coming into our region about the available services to them. During the coming year, we will continue to strengthen communication with our economic developers and continue to share intelligence we gain from them with our training partners.

The WorkPlace regularly convenes forums with ED and local business leader as part of our long-term strategic planning process. These forums help us explore topics such as business growth, employment trends and workforce evolution. Recent forums focused on industries which are of great importance to southwest Connecticut including; financial services, retail, hospitality, healthcare and manufacturing. We partner with local and regional business associations to produce these events.

3. **Coordination of Education and Workforce Development Activities**  
Describe how the LWDB will coordinate education and workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services.

The two community colleges in our service delivery area have their Presidents on our board. As board members they receive and provide guidance that shapes our AJC system. Furthermore, both Community colleges attend our AJC partner meetings to discuss client flow, changes in programming and overall labor market information.

The primary training vehicle in our area is the Individual training Accounts (ITA'S). ITAs are issued to qualifying Adults, Dislocated Workers and Youth via the statewide Eligible Training Provider Listing (ETPL). The community colleges have both credit and non-credit programs on the ETPL. Furthermore, we partner with Housatonic's Advanced Manufacturing Program and underwrite a 4 week pre-manufacturing boot camp.

We allow our WIOA eligible youth to select post-secondary training via the ETPL.

4. **Coordination of Transportation and Other Supportive Services**  
Describe how the LWDB will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out under this title in the local area with the provision of transportation, including public transportation, and other appropriate supportive services in the local area.

We work with our local transit operators in an effort to maximize access to both employment and training. We train our counselors using the transit operators transportation 101 curriculum. We have transit operators at our AJC partner meetings. At these meetings we discuss new routes and schedules. During the summer for our youth program we coordinate public transportation access via bus passes. We cover transportation under our support services policy for adults, Dislocated workers and youth.

5. **Coordination of Wagner-Peyser Services**  
Provide a description of plans and strategies for, and assurances concerning, maximizing coordination of services provided by the state employment service under the Wagner-Peyser Act and services provided in the local area through the one-stop delivery system to improve service delivery and avoid duplication of services.

Unemployment Insurance Services for prospective and current claimants.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE SERVICES	Responsible Party
Implementation of the provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) related to UI programs.	CTDOL
Provide in-person UI assistance (dedicated area) in the American Job Centers.	CTDOL
Provide UI assistance in the American Job Centers using a dedicated phone line which prioritize calls to the front of the line to our trained UI Call Center staff.	CTDOL
Referring UI claimants for training, education resources and all other programs provided by DOL Employment Services and partner staff. Therefore, increasing reemployment of UI claimants and providing employers with skilled workers matching the labor market needs.	CTDOL
Expose claimants to other UI programs offered by DOL. These include Short-Term Compensation/Shared Work, military and federal civilians programs to veterans, Reemployment Eligibility Assistance, Enhanced Reemployment Services, Rapid Responses, etc.	CTDOL

Improve efficiencies in the UI process by answering in-person customer questions/inquiries in lieu of long wait times with the Tele-benefits line. Inquiries include: assistance in filing appeals, on-line account assistance, provide UI status letters, identity verification, address changes, processing continued UI claims, and providing desk aids for web assistance.	CTDOL
Provide UI assistance including new claims taking for individuals with special needs.	CTDOL

**6. Coordination of Adult Education and Literacy**

Describe how the LWDB will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out under this title in the local area with the provision of adult education and literacy activities under Title II in the local area, including a description of how the local board will carry out, consistent with subparagraphs (A) and (B)(i) of section 107(d)(11) and section 232, the review of local applications submitted under Title II.

WIOA promotes coordination between the Local Board and adult education providers by requiring in section 107(d)(11) that the Local Board review a provider's application for AEFLA funds before the application is submitted to the eligible agency. The purpose of the Local Board review is to determine whether the application is consistent with the local workforce plan, and to make recommendations to the eligible agency to promote alignment with the local workforce plan. We shall address this provision in our MOU's with both SDE and our local Adult-Education providers.

**7. Cooperative Agreements**

Provide a description of the replicated cooperative agreements (as defined in WIOA section 107(d)(11)) between the local board or other local entities described in section 101(a)(11)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29U.S.C 721(a)(11)(B)) and the local office of a designated state agency or designated state unit administering programs carried out under Title I of such Act (29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11) with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross-training staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers and other efforts of cooperation, collaboration and coordination.

As of this submittal, formal cooperative agreements have not yet been completed with providers of adult education and literacy, career technical education in the schools, and Vocational Rehabilitation system, but discussions are ongoing and will result in agreements that address each of the areas identified above.

**2018 Plan Update**

Current status of MOUs and IFAs and development plans for post June 30, 2018

In accordance with The Office of Workforce Competiveness (OWC) IFA and MOU guidance, GP 17-02 the Southwest convened its partners to execute MOU's and IFA's. All required MOUS and IFA were executed by the December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017 deadline. We are currently in discussions with our partners for the post June 30<sup>th</sup> deadline.

**LOCAL ONE-STOP SYSTEM**

**1. General System Description**

**Describe the one-stop delivery system in your local area including the roles and resource contributions of one-stop partners.**

The Southwest Workforce Development Region serves the following 20 municipalities: Ansonia, Beacon Falls, Bridgeport, Darien, Derby, Easton, Fairfield, Greenwich, Monroe, New Canaan, Norwalk, Oxford, Seymour, Shelton, Stamford, Stratford, Trumbull, Weston, Westport, Wilton.

AJC Location	On-site Partners	Services
<b>BRIDGEPORT</b> 2 Lafayette Square Bridgeport, CT 06604	CT Dept. of Labor  Career Resources, Inc.  The WorkPlace, Inc.  BRS / DORS  A4TD (SCSEP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ WIOA – Adult, DW, Youth</li> <li>▪ Wagner Peyser (Labor Exchange Services), Veterans, Trade Act, UI Assistance</li> <li>▪ TANF/JFES Services</li> <li>▪ ABE / GED</li> <li>▪ AJC Career Coach</li> <li>▪ Dress for Success</li> <li>▪ Community Resource Center / Food Pantry</li> <li>▪ Mortgage Crisis Job Training Program (statewide)</li> <li>▪ P2E (statewide)</li> <li>▪ SCSEP</li> <li>▪ Step Up (statewide)</li> <li>▪ STRIVE</li> <li>▪ ReEntry</li> <li>▪ VITA site</li> <li>▪ Business – hiring, recruiting, job posting, incentives, credits, training, (throughout SDA)</li> </ul>
<b>*ANSONIA</b> 4 Fourth Street Ansonia, CT 06401	Career Resources, Inc.  *CTDOL – as requested	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ WIOA – Adult, DW, Youth</li> <li>▪ TANF/JFES Services</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Services delivered upon request:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Wagner-Peyser (Labor Exchange Services)</li> <li>▪ Veterans</li> </ul>
<b>*DERBY</b> 101 Elizabeth Street Derby, CT 06418	Career Resources, Inc.  *CTDOL – as requested	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ WIOA – Adult, DW, Youth</li> <li>▪ TANF/JFES – Services</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Services delivered upon request:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Wagner-Peyser (Labor Exchange Services)</li> <li>▪ Veterans</li> </ul>
<b>*STAMFORD</b> 141 Franklin Street, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Fl. Stamford CT 06901	Career Resources, Inc.  *CTDOL – as requested	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ WIOA – Adult, DW, Youth</li> <li>▪ TANF/JFES Services</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Services delivered upon request:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Wagner-Peyser (Labor Exchange Services)</li> <li>▪ Veterans</li> </ul>

*\*Ansonia, Derby and Stamford AJCs are affiliate or satellite locations.*

Programs & Services	Description
AJC Career Coach	Mobile classroom that brings career services and computer training to you! The American Job Center Career Coach visits cities and towns every week stopping at various community sites (public housing, libraries, community centers, churches, job fairs).
ABE / GED Preparation	Adult Basic Education, work towards achieving GED Diploma
Dress for Success	Women's interview and work outfits
Community Resource Center / Food Pantry	Assist in connecting to area/community resources (211 info line)
Mortgage Crisis Job Training Program	Training funds, career/financial counseling & employment services for those with mortgages 60+ days past due
Platform 2 Employment	Long term unemployed- assistance re-entering the workforce
SCSEP	Low-income, unemployed adults aged 55+ can participate in part-time, paid community service providing training and job search assistance leading to unsubsidized employment. Title V (SCSEP) of the Older Americans Act, administered by the US Department of Labor
Step Up	Employer wage subsidies for small business/ manufacturing firms hiring unemployed candidates and veterans
STRIVE	A unique three-week attitudinal job readiness course in a simulated work environment, emphasizing personal accountability; includes case management, job leads and two years of follow-up support
Reentry	Serving ex-offenders/ previously incarcerated in reentering the workforce as well as GED assistance
VITA site	Free, high-quality tax preparation assistance and filing, and connection to financial literacy services and all eligible tax credits. VITA is open to all families earning \$50,000 or less annually

- A. Is each of the required WIOA partners included in your one-stop delivery system? Describe how they contribute to your planning and implementation efforts. If any required partner is not involved, explain the reason.**

All of the required WIOA partners are part of our one-stop delivery system and are listed in Attachment O. The required partners are all represented on the Workforce Development Board as voting members, with some members serving on the Executive Committee. The partners attend regular meetings to discuss the on-goings at the AJCs and strategize on how to improve the one-stop delivery system going forward. The Workplace maintains open lines of communication with the partners and seeks to both streamline and leverage services, products and cost whenever possible.

- B. Identify any non-required partners included in the local one-stop delivery system.**

We have no non-mandated partners in our one-stop delivery system.

- C. The LWDB, with the agreement of the chief elected official, shall develop and enter into a memorandum of understanding between the local board and the one-stop partners. Please provide a copy of any executed MOUs.**

MOU's are currently being constructed to contain the new WIOA provisions. See Attachment N.

## 2. Customer Access

Describe actions taken by the LWDB to promote maximum integration of service delivery through the one-stop delivery system for both business customers and individual customers.

- A. Describe how entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and one-stop partners, will comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act regarding physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing needs of individuals with disabilities.

In compliance with the provisions of the American with Disabilities Act, The WorkPlace has coordinated with all partners to provide access to program services for customers with disabilities through our Assistive Services Unit. The Assisted Services Unit provides access to a wide variety of equipment, technology and partnerships. These enhancements are intended to increase accessibility to customers with visual, auditory, mobility, cognitive or language impairments. Equipment available consists of computers available with large monitors, magnification capacity, audio enhancements, scanners, reader technology, speech recognition and adjustable height workstations and telecommunication devices for individuals with hearing impairments. Staff is also available to assist with language translation and interpretation as well as access to the language line coordinated through the State. When an accommodation is necessary staff works to align resources and services to maximize accessibility and participation.

The coordination of partners' services is critical to effectively and efficiently address the needs of customers to access services. The Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) is also a partner in the one-stop system's efforts to provide services to customers with disabilities. The Assistive Services Unit coordinates with DORS, (BRS & BESB) to create life plans for customers attached to the States Voc-Rehab system. Our Bridgeport AJC has dedicated space for our partner agencies to assist customers with disabilities to transverse the American Job Centers services. The one-stop system also relies heavily upon other community partners whose mission is to assist individuals with disabilities. Many of these organizations are available for contact through the United Way sponsored 211 System.

- B. Describe how entities within the one-stop delivery system are utilizing principles of universal design in their operation.

The WorkPlace seeks to provide a seamless, comprehensive one-stop delivery system. Each SW AJC is designed to be universally accessible and customer-centered, providing a consistent experience to all customers at all locations. The SW AJCs are set up so that when a customer enters there is a reception to both greet them and assist them in moving towards the services they require. Technology access is available in all centers, and during normal business hours staff is on site to assist customers. All SW AJC's utilize the CTHires system to capture customer information. This allows for a seamless integration at the receptionist desk and more efficient information exchanges for the customers.

- C. Describe how the LWDB facilitates access to services provided through the local delivery system, including remote areas, through the use of technology and through other means.

The WorkPlace facilitates access to services through 4 geographical dispersed AJCs in the Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk-Valley service delivery area.

To provide one-stop services in areas where access to services may be a challenge to residents, The WorkPlace utilizes the Mobile Technology Career Coach. The Career Coach is a mobile technology vehicle offering 10 computer workstations, high-speed Internet access and a 42" plasma TV with SmartBoard overlay. Through the Career Coach customers have access to services and information such as: outreach materials explaining services available in the LWDA; computers for self-directed job search services, resume writing, and digital literacy; job postings and informational sessions on how to apply to positions online; information on accessing support services; referrals to community programs; information regarding area employers; and comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skill levels and services needed of adult, dislocated worker, and JFES customers. Services of the Career Coach are available at various venues including but not limited to: housing projects, libraries, senior community centers, veteran centers, schools as well as community and faith based organizations.

In addition to the Career Coach, The WorkPlace also maintains a network of community-based organizations and program partners to promote an effective service delivery system to address barriers to transportation.

3. **Integration of Services**

**Describe how one-stop career centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under this Act and programs carried out by one-stop career center partners.**

Customers seeking services through the one-stop system may visit one of the 4 SW AJCs directly or explore and register online for services wherever the individual may be located: home, work, or other gathering places wherever online access is available. First-time customers coming through the AJC doors receive an orientation to information and other services available through the SW AJC system. Customers are then guided through the registration process in CTHires. Once registration and assessments are complete, additional services are discussed, such as, job placement, short and long term training, additional supports, etc.

From the initial point of contact, staff will provide customers basic career services including orientation and intake. CTHires is used to capture intake and case management information that will be used to identify strategies that better meet the needs of individuals with barriers to employment, leveraging resources and the capacity within the local workforce office.

The SW AJCs will provide comprehensive career planning, referrals to occupational skills training, business services, and placement. Staff members will place emphasis on raising customers' skill levels and returning these individuals to work with skills to secure well-paying jobs appropriate to the individual's interests and abilities.

4. **Competitive Selection of One Stop Operator**

**Describe the steps taken or to be taken to ensure a competitive process for selection of the one-stop operator(s).**

The WorkPlace selected a one-stop operator through a competitive procurement process. In November 2015, The WorkPlace issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) soliciting proposals for the one-stop operator. The RFP articulated the responsibilities of the one-stop operator, including the coordination of one-stop partners and service providers, an accurate description of the technical requirements for the services being procured, proposal submission requirements, and the factors to be used in evaluating proposals.

The process below articulates the competitive process utilized by The WorkPlace:

- A. The RFP was posted on The WorkPlace's website with legal notices published in the Connecticut Post, New Haven Register and the Stamford Advocate upon the release of the RFP, notifying prospective bidders that the RFP was published on The WorkPlace's website. In addition, email notifications were sent to organizations on the bidders' list, directing them to the RFP posted on the website.
- B. A Bidder's Conference Call was held, during which time staff from The WorkPlace answered questions posed by prospective bidders. Prospective bidders were also given the opportunity to submit questions, in writing, prior to the call. The WorkPlace published the questions and answers to The WorkPlace website following the call. Per The WorkPlace's Procurement Policy and Procedures, staff did not answer questions about the RFP after the call, unless the questions pertained specifically to the technical aspects of the RFP or the RFP format).
- C. Prospective bidders submitted confidential Letters of Intent to The WorkPlace prior to the proposal submission deadline.
- D. An initial screening of all proposals was conducted by staff of The WorkPlace to insure (1) the proposal was submitted on time, in the proper format and with the required number of copies attached; (2) the proposal is responsive to the RFP and all RFP questions and sections; and (3) all required signatures appear on the document. If a proposal did not meet the technical requirements of the screening process, it did not continue through the review and rating process and was returned to the proposer.

- E. Proposals that met the technical requirements of the screening process were then evaluated by The WorkPlace Proposal Review Team using a point system based on a Proposal Evaluation/ Rating Form. Proposals were scored and recommendations made to the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of The WorkPlace for approval of tentative funding. The decisions of the Executive Committee were then ratified by the full Board of Directors at the quarterly meeting in December 2015.
- F. The final selection of the one-stop operator was primarily based on effectiveness, demonstrated performance, potential for meeting performance goals, costs, quality of training, and past workforce development experience and performance of the bidder.
- G. Following the Board of Directors meeting, the bidder selected as the one-stop operator was notified of the selection. Bidders whose proposals were not funded were also notified.

### 2018 Plan Update

5. **A brief description of the one-stop certification, process, and identification of certified one-stops. Identify recommendations to be implemented or pursued going forward based on the certification review.**

In accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Section 121(f), Connecticut Department of Labor's General Policy 17-01 and The WorkPlace's local One-Stop Certification Policy, The WorkPlace conducted an evaluation of the Southwest American Job Centers (SW AJC) as part of the one-stop certification process. Per WIOA, each local area must have at least one physical comprehensive one-stop center. Furthermore, the one-stop center must be certified in order to be eligible to receive infrastructure funding. WIOA partners were asked to contribute to the effort by serving on the one-stop certification team. The certification team was charged with conducting independent and objective evaluations of one-stop sites and providing feedback to The WorkPlace.

The certification team first convened on October 18th to evaluate the comprehensive site in Bridgeport. Following an overview of the certification process, the certification team was introduced to the evaluation tool and given an opportunity to ask questions regarding the overall certification process. The team was then taken on an interactive tour of the Bridgeport AJC, during which they viewed the physical space, met frontline staff and reviewed documents and materials on display and/or distributed to customers. At the end of the tour, the certification team reconvened for another Q&A session before being given an opportunity to independently complete the evaluation of the site. There were 7 certification criteria:

1. Functional and Programmatic Integration
2. Performance and Accountability
3. Service Provision including Services, Universal Access, and Outreach to Population with Barriers
4. Customer Satisfaction
5. Staff Competence and Staff Training Participation
6. Partnerships
7. Employer Engagement

The certification team met again on October 25<sup>th</sup> in Stamford and on October 31<sup>st</sup> in Derby and Ansonia for the evaluations of the affiliate sites. Overall, all sites received favorable feedback from the certification team. The evaluations and scores from the certification team were then compared to the self-evaluation completed by the SW AJC operator, Career Resources, Inc.

Per CTDOL GP17-01, for the purposes of initial certification, one comprehensive site in each of Connecticut's five workforce development areas must be certified. The WorkPlace submitted documentation to the Office of Workforce Competitiveness for the certification of the comprehensive site in Bridgeport. Certification for the affiliate sites is underway.

Through this certification process, The WorkPlace has initiated an ongoing dialogue with the mandated partners regarding the needs of jobseekers in the Southwestern Connecticut service delivery area and how best, as a system, to enhance the services provided in the SW AJC. Most notably, The WorkPlace is coordinating with the Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind to ensure that each affiliate site offers the same level of adaptive technology that exists in Bridgeport to better serve customers with disabilities. Furthermore, The WorkPlace is actively working with the State Department of Education to increase the breadth of workshops available to customers by aligning resources and broadening the availability of the workshops.

Going forward The WorkPlace is also working with the partners to coordinate staff cross-training. The objective of this cross-training is to increase the programmatic awareness of all frontline staff in the SW AJCs and partner organizations so that these individuals are better equipped to make referrals to one another. The WorkPlace believes that this initiative will help streamline one-stop system services as well as broaden outreach to populations with barriers. All of these efforts directly speak to the idea of continuous improvement articulated in WIOA.

6. **System Improvement**

**Describe the steps the LWDB will take to ensure continuous improvement of the area's one-stop system.**

The WorkPlace takes great steps to guarantee systemic, continuous improvement of the area's one-stop system. Continuous improvement is an ongoing cycle of identifying, planning, executing, and reviewing improvements to service delivery. Successfully serving the customers requires sustained collaboration and coordination over the long term with system partners, service providers, employers, and community leaders. The WorkPlace's commitment to continuous improvement is supported by the staff's constant awareness of evolving Federal, State, regional, local policies and daily engagement with customers. Information gathered from customer satisfaction surveys, employer feedback, provider feedback, and staff brainstorming will be used to identify inefficiencies, points of customer dissatisfaction, areas of customer need, unmet performance measures, and staffing challenges.

Through customer contact and the above mentioned collaborations, The WorkPlace will identify successes, implementation barriers, and unsuccessful strategies. The WorkPlace will adjust existing service strategies as well as develop new, informed service delivery designs, which will then be continuously monitored and outcomes evaluated to support better services going forward.

<b>DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM SERVICES</b>
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1. **System Description**

**Describe the local workforce development system. Identify the programs that are included in the system and how the local board will work with the entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs to support alignment in provision of services, including programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.), that support the strategy identified in the State Plan under WIOA section 102(b)(1)(E). WIOA §108(b)(2).**

The WorkPlace has strived to create a seamless one-stop customer experience. We have indoctrinated the universal aspects of a one-stop in both delivery and design. We seek to truly partner in an effort to maximize resources and create impactful outcomes. Through our Memorandums of Understanding, we outline a delivery system that both maximizes resources and leverages our respected strengths.

The WorkPlace delivers Adult and Dislocated Worker program activities through the American Job Center system via comprehensive and affiliate centers. Career services are provided to a wide range of jobseekers, with specialty programs directed to returning veterans and individuals with disabilities. Services include career coaching, guidance on job search techniques, skill and interest assessments, advice and support through group sessions, individual employment planning, and job development and placement. Occupational training is provided through access to Individual Training Accounts (ITAs). Business Services Teams engage employers and provide recruitment and hiring assistance. The Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL) business services and southwest AJC business service staff are co-located in comprehensive Bridgeport AJC.

## 2. Sub Grants and Contracts

**Provide a description of the competitive process to be used to award sub grants and contracts in the local area for WIOA-funded activities and the services to be made available.**

The WorkPlace utilizes an open and competitive process to award contracts in the local area. Requests for Proposals (RFP) are published in local newspapers with substantial distribution, on The WorkPlace website, social media and through notices sent to organization which have requested updates from The WorkPlace.

The WorkPlace conducts bidders' conferences to answer questions regarding published RFP's. All interested bidders are strongly encouraged to call into the conference, as The WorkPlace staff does not answer questions about the RFP after the conference (unless the questions pertain specifically to the technical aspects of the RFP or the RFP format).

To be considered for funding, bidders must submit printed, hard copy proposals along with a USB flash drive which contains an electronic copy of the proposal and any attachments prior to the published deadline. Bidders will be asked to submit proposals that comply with a set of standard presentation guidelines.

Deadlines for submission are published include the date and time. Proposals received after stated deadlines will not be accepted under any circumstances. Proposals may be hand delivered or submitted by U.S. Mail or other mail carrier service, such as Fed Ex, UPS or DHL. Faxed and emailed proposals will not be accepted.

The award of a contract for WIOA-funded activities is contingent upon: 1) Favorable evaluation of the proposal in relation to other proposals; 2) Approval of the proposal by The WorkPlace Board of Directors; and 3) Successful negotiation of any changes to the proposal.

An initial screening of all proposals will be conducted by staff of The WorkPlace to insure (1) the proposal was submitted on time, in the proper format and with the required number of copies attached; (2) the proposal is responsive to the RFP and all RFP questions and sections; and (3) all required signatures appear on the document. If a proposal does not meet the technical requirements of the screening process, it may not continue through the review and rating process and will be returned to the bidder.

If the proposal meets the requirements of the screening process, it will then be evaluated by a program review team. Proposals will be scored and recommendations made to the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of The WorkPlace, which will approve tentative funding. All decisions of the Executive Committee must be ratified by the full Board of Directors at its quarterly meetings.

## 3. Expanding Access to Employment

**Describe how the local board, working with entities carrying out core programs, will expand access to employment, training, education and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment, including how the local board will facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs, and improve access to activities leading to recognized postsecondary credential.**

Our AJC's are designed to assist customer into identifying what program or product is suitable to achieve their desired goal. From the moment you walk into our centers, our process is open and informative. Literature is available at every AJC and all AJC staff is cross-trained on all of our available programming. All of our AJC's have an agreed upon schedule of available orientations. These orientations are coordinated with our partners to leverage our resources and reduce a duplication of services.

We have a dedicated space to assist customers with disabilities in navigating the American Workforce System. Our Assistive Services Unit blends adaptive technology with qualified staff to provide a rich experience for our customers with disabilities. Furthermore we work alongside the State's Vocational Rehab system to create life plane with their employment eligible customers. We will continue to develop this promising practice.

4. **Key Industry Sectors**

Identify how the LWDB plans to better align its resources to support and meet the training and employment needs of key industry sectors in the local area. Describe policies adopted or planned for aligning training initiatives and Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) to sector strategies and demand occupations.

Over the incoming year, we will begin to develop our retail industry sector. We will continue to develop our Healthcare sector through our HHS funded Healthcare Academy while our partnership with Housatonic under the Connecticut Advanced Manufacturing Initiative (CAMI) program continues to flourish.

**2018 Plan Update**

Current career pathways and career pathways strategies supported by the local Board and future planning activities to be pursued.

In the Southwest we have always had strong career pathways for our customers. We have operated healthcare, retail, manufacturing and construction pathways. Our future pathways will address educational advancements for our academically low-performing at-risk students and out-of-school youth.

5. **Industry Partnerships**

Describe how the LWDB will identify and work with key industry partnerships where they exist within the local area, and coordinate and invest in partnership infrastructure where they are not yet developed.

As stated above, our approach moving forward will seek to develop a retail sector focus. Additionally we will continue to develop our Healthcare sector through our HHS funded Healthcare Academy while our partnership with Housatonic under the Connecticut Advanced Manufacturing Initiative (CAMI) program continues to deliver positive results.

6. **In-demand Training**

Describe the process utilized by the local board to ensure that training provided is linked to in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area, or in another area to which a participant is willing to relocate.

The WorkPlace conducts a comprehensive analysis of labor market information in our SDA to ensure that training provided is linked to in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area, or in another area to which a participant is willing to relocate. Specifically, The WorkPlace hosts publicly noticed forums in an effort to gather input from business and industry, trade associations, education, economic development groups on the local area's target occupations and information on emerging occupations.

AJC staff is trained on the use of Labor Market Information to assist our customers in making in-demand career training choices. The ETPL is the primary vehicle from which our customers choose qualified trainings. We currently have an industry focus on Healthcare, manufacturing and Retail.

7. **Employer Engagement**

Describe the strategies and services that will be used in the local area to:

- A. facilitate engagement of employers, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations, in workforce development programs;

The engagement of employers is a primary focus of the Board. We are consistently meeting with employer and bring employers through our AJC's to discuss our process and services. Our business services team frequently meets with employers to ascertain their needs for both current and future growth. We convene forums and work through our local chambers to get information out to our business community.

**B. support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area;**

We are consistently asking our employer base on their needs. We work closely with our business services reps to package products and services to meet our employer needs. Employers are readers for our Request for Proposals which gives them a voice in the types of trainings we are securing for our customers.

**C. better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development; and**

Economic Development (ED) representatives are integral members of our local board. Our regional Business Services Representatives have regular communication with EDs in order to both listen and share information. Because we have shared customers (employers) and shared interest in viable training solutions for a work-ready workforce, the collaboration with EDs is a win-win for the workforce system and the employers.

We work with ED as a team alongside the Connecticut Department of Labor to inform new employers interested in coming into our region about the available services to them. During the coming year, we will continue to strengthen communication with our economic developers and continue to share intelligence we gain from them with our training partners.

The WorkPlace regularly convenes forums with ED and local business leader as part of our long-term strategic planning process. These forums help us explore topics such as business growth, employment trends and workforce evolution. Recent forums focused on industries which are of great importance to southwest Connecticut including; financial services, retail, hospitality, healthcare and manufacturing. We partner with local and regional business associations to produce these events.

**D. Strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs.**

The coordination with Unemployment Insurance program is quite seamless. We work in tandem through orientations to provide a complete overview of the available services to UI customers. We share a combined SW orientation calendar and have integrated our Bridgeport AJC reception area.

**8. Priority for Services**

**Describe the local policy and procedures that have been established to give priority to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient in the provision of individualized career services and training services in the Adult program.**

With respect to funds allocated for adult employment and training activities, priority for career and training services is given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient. (WIOA § 134(c)(3)(E)).

Under WIOA, priority must be provided regardless of funding levels (see NPRM § 680.600(a)). Veterans and eligible spouses continue to receive priority of service for all DOL-funded job training programs, which include WIOA programs. See priority of service policy in Attachment P. However, as described in TEGL 10-09, when programs are statutorily required to provide priority for a particular group of individuals, such as the WIOA priority described above, priority must be provided in the following order:

- A. First, to veterans and eligible spouses who are also included in the groups given statutory priority for WIOA adult formula funds. This means that veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient would receive first priority for services provided with WIOA adult formula funds.
- B. Second, to non-covered persons (that is, individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are included in the groups given priority for WIOA adult formula funds.
- C. Third, to veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA's priority groups.
- D. Last, to non-covered persons outside the groups given priority under WIOA.

9. **Training Services**

**Describe how training services will be provided, including, if contracts for training services are to be used, how such contracts will be coordinated with the use of ITAs.**

In the Southwest delivery system, we utilize the ITA's as primary vehicle for training. Once a customer completes WIOA eligibility, they are shown how to access the Statewide Eligible Training Providers List (ETPL). We enter into contracts with the ETPL vendors when a WIOA customer selects their training from the ETPL. We currently do not contract out for training services under Adult and Dislocated Worker funding.

For our WIOA Youth program, we follow our procurement process for the following services: Occupational Skills Training (OST), Career Pathways, and Entrepreneurial Training and leadership skills. Contracts are created for each agency selected.

10. **Customer Choice**

**Describe processes utilized by the local board to ensure customer choice in the selection of training programs, regardless of how the training services are to be provided.**

A customer may select any WIA approved education and training program in the state, as listed on the current ETPL, if the participant meets all other criteria relating to the initial and subsequent eligibility for such educational and/or training services. Individuals seeking WIOA funded assistance have the freedom of "customer choice" in selecting the educational and training program that best fits their personal and career needs. The American Job Center Staff will assist the customer in making an informed choice regarding their career path by disseminating appropriate labor market information in targeted industries and in occupations in demand. We use a variety of assessments and labor market information customized to the customer to illustrate the pathway. Ultimately, if the customer meets the requirements of their desired training they may evoke their rights under customer choice and they will be approved for that training.

11. **Individual Training Accounts**

**Describe the process and criteria for issuing Individual Training Accounts (ITAs).**

ITAs are issued by operator/provider counselors. Using the prescribed eligibility process under WIOA regulations they first determine if a customer is eligible. The customer must take the CASAS test and score above the agreed upon scale scores to consider that training tract. The customer will also conduct a program research, labor market analysis and a financial worksheet. Once the counselor approves the training, the file is sent electronically to a supervisor. The supervisor must approve for the customer to be laced in that training.

1. **Describe any ITA limitations established by the board.**

We currently pay a maximum of \$3,000 per ITA. We have a local cap of \$2,000 for the Certified Nurses Aid certification.

2. **Describe any exceptions to the use of ITA.**

Not applicable

12. **Enhancing Apprenticeships**

**Describe how the LWDB will enhance the use of apprenticeships to support the local economy and individuals' career advancement. Describe how job seekers are made aware of apprenticeship opportunities in the area's career centers.**

Job seekers are made aware of all products and services in three primary ways. The first is through a general orientation. These general orientations cover multiple offerings and provide instructions on how to gain further information on each program's eligibility requirements. The second way a customer can receive information is through our counselors. Counselors are crossed trained to have requisite program knowledge on all of our products and services. The third way is from our "how can we help you" flyer which provides a customer with quick access to pertinent contact information for all of our programs.

**13. Other Program Initiatives**

Describe the services to be provided that may include the implementation of initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies career pathway initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other initiatives in the support of the board’s vision and strategic goals described in Section III. WIOA §134(c)

We are in the beginning stages of developing our industry sector strategies. We are developing our retail sector strategies and supporting our healthcare and construction approaches through partnerships with the Federal Department of Health and Human services as well as Housatonic Community College.

**14. Service Provider Continuous Improvement**

Describe the LWDB’s efforts to ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services, including contracted services providers and providers on the eligible training provider list, through the system and ensure that such providers meet the needs of local employers, workers and jobseekers.

We go out under our procurement process every two years. This keeps our programming current and removes any provider(s) that is not meeting the performance outcomes. We pay our contracted vendors on performance based contracts. If providers do not achieve the negotiated performance their contracts are closed.

The Eligible Providers List is overseen by the Connecticut Department of Labor. We provide information on the training entities in our service delivery area.

**15. Youth Program Design**

Describe the design framework for youth programs in the local area, and how the 14 program elements required in §681.460 of the proposed WIOA regulations are to be made available within that framework.

Youth in the Southwest service delivery area are supported through YouthWorks. YouthWorks serves as the framework services providing both our youth and vendor base a consistent connection. YouthWorks serves as the “glue” keeping our youth engaged in services while monitoring our vendors for compliance. It’s a symbiotic relationship where the Youth Workforce Specialist seeks to provide our youth with access to any and all service they might need to be successful.

Per Section 129(c)(2) of the Act, the following fourteen (14) elements must be included in youth programs. These services listed must be accessible to participants (based on need) and can be offered through collaborative partnerships with community resources. The chart below illustrates the WIOA youth element and the responsible party for delivering the service.

WIOA ELEMENT	Responsible Party
1. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary credential;	All educational advancement services are secured through contracted vendors. For youth eligible to attend Adult-Ed, we shall refer them. We also work with our two community colleges to assist with the matriculation into their programs.
2. Alternative secondary school offerings;	Referrals through School systems
3. Paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component academic and occupational education, which may include:	Coordinated though YouthWorks in partnerships with employers and contracted vendors
a) summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year;	Coordinated though YouthWorks in partnerships with employers and contracted vendors
b) pre-apprenticeship programs;	Secured through contracted vendors

c) internships and job shadowing; and	Secured through contracted vendors
d) on-the-job training opportunities;	
4. Occupational skills training, which shall include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved;	Secured through contracted vendors
5. Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;	Secured through contracted vendors
6. Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors, as appropriate;	Secured through contracted vendors
7. Supportive services;	Coordinated though YouthWorks in partnerships with contracted vendors
8. Adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months;	Secured through contracted vendors
9. Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate;	Coordinated though YouthWorks in partnerships with contracted vendors
10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate;	Secured through contracted vendors
11. Financial Literacy Education;	Coordinated though YouthWorks in partnerships with contracted vendors
12. Entrepreneurial Skills Training;	Secured through contracted vendors
13. Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration;	Coordinated though YouthWorks in partnerships with contracted vendors
14. Activities that help youth prepare for transition to postsecondary education and training.	Secured through contracted vendors

- A. Definition of the term “a youth who is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual’s family, or in society.” Describe how the local board defines whether a youth is unable to demonstrate these skills well enough to function on the job, in their family, or in society and what assessment instruments are used to make this determination. 20 C.F.R. §681.290.**

A policy for the definition of “a youth who is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual’s family, or in society” is under development.

- B. Definition of “requires additional assistance.” Describe how the local board defines the term “requires additional assistance” used in determining eligibility for WIOA-funded youth programs.**

A youth who “requires additional assistance” for the purposes of WIOA youth eligibility is defined as follows:  
Is an at-risk youth who requires additional assistance to:

- (1) complete an educational program: a youth who is at risk of dropping out of high school as documented by his/her school or a youth who previously dropped out of an educational program OR a youth with poor attendance patterns in an educational program during the last twelve calendar months;

OR

(2) secure and hold employment: a high school graduate (or equivalent) who has not held a full-time job for more than three consecutive months and lacks work readiness skills necessary to obtain and retain employment as documented by the youth objective assessment and described in case notes;

16. **Rapid Response**

**Provide a description of how the LWDB will coordinate workforce development activities in the local area with rapid response activities.**

For companies and their workers, the effects of a plant closing or layoff can be devastating. Companies may be at a loss to prevent a closing, perhaps unaware of the help available to weather a downturn without having to lay off employees. Workers, too, are at a loss, shocked and discouraged by sudden layoffs, unsure of how to get back on their feet. The WorkPlace seeks to ease the impact of layoffs and to assure that workers are offered a full range of benefits and services in coordination with Connecticut's Rapid Response Team, headed by the State Department of Labor. The Team is made up of representatives from the Labor Department, The WorkPlace, and other state agencies including the Department of Economic and Community Development and the Department of Social Services.

The Rapid Response Team is available to conduct, prior to layoffs, "*Early Intervention*" sessions where employees can learn about unemployment benefits, job search assistance, and training opportunities. Information is also made available on community services and local agencies that provide help, advocacy, and support to dislocated workers and their families.

**Examples of information provided in this coordinated response include:**

- Overview of the Unemployment Insurance Program, Separation Packet and FAQ's
- Details on free career transition services
- Orientation to state supported websites employers post jobs
- Career transition networking groups
- Important Information Workers Need to Know to Protect their Health Coverage and Retirement Benefits
- Information on companies with approved individual major medical insurance policies
- United Way's "Where To Turn In Connecticut When You Become Unemployed"
- Connections to community service representatives

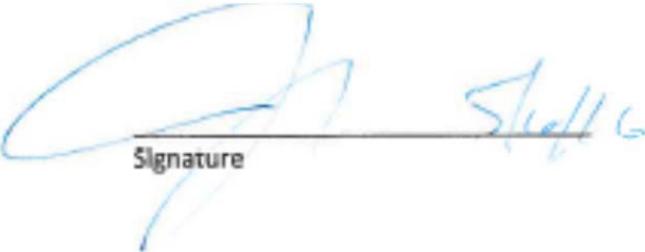
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This plan is submitted on behalf of (WDB) to implement the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act in the (Local Area).

Workforce Development Board Chair

Chief Elected Official

  
Signature

  
Signature

Leon Bailey  
Name (printed or typed)

Joseph P. Ganim  
Name (printed or typed)

5/4/16  
Date

5/6/16  
Date