



BILL FINCH
Mayor

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF BRIDGEPORT, CONNECTICUT
999 BROAD STREET
BRIDGEPORT, CONNECTICUT 06604
TELEPHONE (203) 576-7201
FAX (203) 576-3913

Bridgeport's Economic Development Plan

1. This is an exciting time for Bridgeport. In 2005, the public and private sector brought the Urban Land Institute to the city to evaluate the City's economic development strategies. They basically called for a comprehensive overhaul emphasizing projected market forces, transit-oriented development, energy conservation, and open and transparent government.
2. Over the past two years, Bridgeport has committed over \$1 million to develop a new Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy steeped in market research provided by Urbanomics, Inc. Overhaul all of its land use policies and regulations with the assistance of the team of BFJ Associates, Santec, Preiss, Phillips, Shapiro and Associates, and the Regional Plan Association. The market research is available to your consultants to assist in your efforts.
3. The updated Master Plan and new Plan of Conservation and Development is scheduled for approval by the PZC later this month. It calls for a 10% reduction in Bridgeport Carbon Footprint. We will be putting our land use policies into action.
4. To date, we have completed a Downtown Master Plan and Strategy emphasizing the policies of mixed-use development. The state's first Transit-Oriented Development/Urban Village zone will be submitted to the Planning and Zoning Commission next month. This is in direct response to the Governor's call for Responsible Growth and Sustainable development.
5. A new zoning map and updated regulations are next on the spring schedule. It is anticipated that the Master Plan policies will be put into clear regulatory parameters for the investment community. We anticipate incentives for green development, workforce housing, transit-oriented development, Brownfield remediation, and reduction in the City's carbon footprint. We will also have a Storm Water Management Manual that will address the important environmental issues facing this waterfront community. Greening the City of Bridgeport is one of the top priorities of my administration, and I believe this will go hand-in-hand with our economic development policy.
6. In anticipation of this new regulatory environment, we are investing heavily in technology through an Enterprise Geographic Information System and soon to be Permit management software to track the development that is heading our way.

In putting all of this comprehensive planning into action, we now see over \$2 billion in mixed use development heading to Bridgeport. We are now able to participate fully in the region's economic future through implementing congestion mitigation strategies, and workforce housing for the region's commuter stressed workforce.

You have heard from Mr. Timpanelli from the BRBC on the progress of the important 'One Coast, One Future' Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. This will be the first regional CEDS for Southern Fairfield County. We have much work to do as a region to catch up to the efforts of the Hartford and New Haven Regions. Be assured that as Mayor, it is my goal to

further Bridgeport's role in the economic health of this important region. DECD's strategic plan should encourage developments that enhance the strength of the urban areas and the vitality of its regions. That is what sustainable development is all about. Bridgeport is ready to play that role in this region.

With regard to the four major multi-year developments; Steel Point, the former Remington Shaver Site, Canyon Johnson.Vornado/Mid City Urban development across from the Ball Field and Arena, and Downtown North along our historic downtown Main Street, you will see significant over two billion in private investment, requiring minimal public investment to close the infrastructure gaps. Bridgeport is committed to private developments with less than 20% public subsidy and is prepared to use Tax Increment Financing to expedite the growth of our tax base. However, please note that the City's tax base is currently 47% tax exempt. The burden on the remaining taxpayers is enormous. We accept the role the regional entities play, however, the tax burden needs to be reflected in other incentives to encourage the growth of our tax base.

Improvement of Bridgeport schools is also a main goal of ours. The revenues gained from our economic development projects will also be directed towards improvement of schools and the education system. Preparing young minds for the jobs that will be created in all this development is a top priority.

Bridgeport is raising the bar for the other regions through our emphasis on private investment. We are confident that it can be done. This heavy private investment will necessitate the state agencies to be flexible in their financing provisions, and take a supportive role. This will necessitate the State to look carefully at their leveraging provisions so as not to discourage the private investment. Bridgeport needs the State as its economic development partner as we continue to attract major private development.

I suggest that you have your consultants view our website www.Bridgeportmasterplan.com and the four-year report of economic development and transportation initiatives on the City's website: http://ci.bridgeport.ct.us/newdepartments/Eco_Dev_Dep/bridgeportde.aspx to glean the details of the tremendous revitalization underway in Bridgeport.



GrowJobsCT

MANUFACTURING MAKES CT'S FUTURE

365 New Britain Road, Kensington, CT 06037
Phone: 860-828-0359 Fax: 860-828-9542

Department of Economic & Community Development Strategic Planning Forum

Statement by John Harrity
GrowJobsCT Director
January 10, 2008

My name is John Harrity. I am a representative of the International Association of Machinists District 26, and serve as Director of GrowJobsCT. GrowJobsCT is a coalition of labor, business and community representatives, along with interested public officials, focused on sustaining and expanding manufacturing employment in our state.

First, I would like to congratulate Commissioner McDonald on holding this series of forums and seriously undertaking the need to craft long-term economic development strategies for our state. The days when Connecticut could rely upon the innate ability of our residents and the expanding fortunes of our industries to keep our economy growing and our state prosperous are long gone. As a state, we are still adjusting to this new reality – including the need to respond to economic development opportunities with the speed and focus necessary to win in a fiercely competitive environment. I am hopeful that these forums are an indication of a new commitment to a vigorous economic development program.

I also thank the Commissioner and the Department for this opportunity to give some input into the direction of the state's strategic planning efforts.

There are a number of areas I would like to address, based on daily conversations with manufacturing representatives, labor leaders and workers, community members and public officials. These recommendations are listed below:

Maintain and Enhance Connecticut's Commitment to Manufacturing: as an overall perspective, Connecticut needs to work aggressively to sustain our manufacturing base and find new ways to expand it. Manufacturing accounts for more than 11% of both state employment and the state gross domestic product. Earnings of manufacturing workers are consistently better than other economic sectors, as are benefits. Manufacturing workers, for example, have the highest rate of private-sector health insurance coverage.

These are good jobs – jobs that allow workers to raise their family, own a home, pay taxes, get medical care when needed, send their kids to college and retire with economic dignity. The state needs to be more aggressive, quicker and smarter in seizing opportunities and initiatives to keep manufacturing jobs here, and bringing in new manufacturing firms. This also includes spending more resources, and where appropriate, providing strategic incentives to employers to remain or relocate here, in exchange for reasonable but real commitments on jobs.

Let me give one anecdotal example to illustrate how, in my opinion, we need to step up, and also the intensity of the competition we face. I had several exchanges and meetings with a developer interested in opening a printing operation in the New Haven area, with projected employment of 250 workers. He dealt with DECD and was generally satisfied with the department's response. At the same time, he began discussions about the possibility of locating his facility in Philadelphia. This developer not only rapidly received a well-defined proposal on incentives for locating there; he also got a personal phone call from the Governor of Pennsylvania stating, "We want you here. We will help you find customers for your business if you locate here." Pennsylvania got the facility.

Within this over-arching theme of a commitment to manufacturing, there are a number of steps, both large and small, quickly-done and long-term, that I would ask the Department to consider:

- **Support Connecticut's hydrogen/fuel cell industry.** Connecticut currently has 13% of global employment in the fuel cell industry. If we were to retain that percentage as the industry expands over the next decade, it could mean 15,000 to 30,000 Connecticut jobs.

We are the world leaders in a technology whose time has come – but we are facing stiff competition from other states and other countries for this industry. The Department of Economic and Community Development has just received a "roadmap" for the future of the hydrogen economy in Connecticut, including recommendations for aggressively supporting this economic sector. It would be tragic if we responded in a too-familiar "penny-wise but pound-foolish" manner, and did not take these recommendations to heart. Without a doubt, if Connecticut is not prepared to help this industry reach its commercial potential, other states and countries will, and will reap the benefits.

In this regard, it should be particularly noted that right now, Connecticut is poised to take a major step away from progress in this critical field. The Department of Public Utility Control issued a draft decision on December 21, 2007 on the CT Clean Energy Fund's Project 100/125/150, rejecting three important fuel cell projects proposed for Bridgeport and Danbury. I am not a technical expert on energy prices or technology. But I do know that the DPUC's decision – which disregards exhaustive prior review by the CCEF and seems in conflict with the stated intent of the legislature to promote fuel cell use – casts a pall over the future of the industry in Connecticut. Commissioner McDonald should examine this situation closely before a final decision is rendered by the DPUC, for the sake of the future of our state.

One last fuel cell-related point. Since Connecticut is currently the world leader in fuel cell technology, as a sign of our commitment to the industry, we should **power our State Capitol and the Legislative Office Building with Connecticut-manufactured fuel cells**, installed in manner that includes a display of and education about the technology.

- **Increase incumbent worker training funds.** Incumbent worker training not only enhances the employer's ability to get work done, it upgrades the skills of the participating workers, allowing them to move upward in their career ladder. These training dollars are a smart investment – certainly smarter than waiting until workers lose their jobs and workplaces downsize to provide training dollars.

Last year, Connecticut spent about \$500,000 on incumbent worker training, while Massachusetts spent close to \$24 million and Rhode Island spent about \$8 million. That is a jarring disparity that needs to be corrected in this legislative session.

- **Increase funding for manufacturing training.** Funds for technical training schools, and especially manufacturing curricula, need to be increased, not cut. Connecticut manufacturers consistently state that one of their greatest challenges is finding qualified workers, and especially young workers entering the field with sufficient preparation. The state needs to put more resources into education programs for a career in manufacturing, including an across-the-board updating of computer equipment available to manufacturing track students.

One technical school I visited had an annual budget of \$1200 for materials, including metal stock, cutting fluid, hydraulic oil and other essentials, for a program training 80 students in machining. The faculty spent time almost daily calling area manufacturers, asking for scrap metal and other material assistance. That is not the way to attract young people to an occupation that everyone agrees needs fresh blood.

- **Increase apprenticeships.** Manufacturers must be supported, and encouraged, to establish machinists apprenticeship programs. Apprenticeships are the equivalent of degree programs for manufacturing workers, and provide great value for both workers and employers. In emphasizing the need for higher education, the apprenticeship system should be included, and given the resources needed to expand, including increased incentives to manufacturers who engage in apprenticeship programs.
- **Adopt the Maine college-loan re-imbursement program for staying in the state.** Last year, the State of Maine passed legislation that allows state university graduates to deduct college loans from their state taxes in exchange for staying in the state rather than relocating. Maine is using this as one means to address the dilemma which Connecticut shares: young state residents moving out once they get their degree. Maine took this step after calculating that the long-term increase in tax revenues from keeping college-educated people in the state far outweighs the cost of the loan forgiveness program.

Connecticut should follow Maine's example. Connecticut businesses, including manufacturing, need skilled employees at all levels of their operation, including those that require advanced degrees.

- **Embrace healthcare reform, moving towards universal coverage.** Besides electricity, the primary cost concern of manufacturers in this state is healthcare costs, which are among the highest in the nation. Inevitably, our state and this nation will eventually arrive at the same conclusion as the rest of the industrial world, and adopt some form of universal healthcare. It is the only way to reduce costs and level the playing field, both between companies that provide insurance coverage and those who do not, and companies in countries where healthcare costs are already lower due to universal coverage.

In the meantime – open the state employees health insurance pool to private employers. This could be done this year, and would save employers significant money on the cost of healthcare coverage. As a strictly voluntary measure for those who are interested, this step has no downside to it.

The insurance industry is important to Connecticut, and is hyper-sensitive to any initiative that seems to threaten their current prosperity. They often cite jobs in opposition to any healthcare proposal that would reduce costs while preserving or expanding coverage.

Two points should be kept in mind: there are approximately 22,000 Connecticut workers who work on health care insurance coverage, while there are 191,000 manufacturing workers, in an economic sector severely disadvantaged by the present cost of health insurance.

Secondly, it must be said that the insurance industry uses their employees as a shield against healthcare reform, but has no qualms about off-shoring thousands of Connecticut jobs to claim centers in low-wage havens like India.

- **Establish a “Buy Connecticut” purchasing policy for state procurement.** For the past several years, the state legislature has debated legislation which says simply – if all other factors are relatively equal, state agencies are allowed (not compelled) to give preference to a Connecticut supplier of goods or services, or a US supplier if no Connecticut company is under consideration. The over-whelming majority of Connecticut taxpayers would expect nothing less, and our purchasing policies should include this common sense provision. At the very least, we should do a study of where we currently purchase goods and services, to have an accurate understanding of where our money goes.
- **Provide legal assistance and consider subsidies of Connecticut companies’ international patents.** Small companies with innovative products face the challenge of protecting their intellectual property around the globe, in a process that is extremely costly and often difficult to maneuver. Several states – Ohio, South Carolina and Michigan among them – assist companies with this struggle, through either legal/technical assistance and/or financial assistance in securing patents for products that will be made in-state.

If Connecticut wants to continue to pursue high-tech, high-value growth, it should consider doing the same.

- **Advocate for fair trade.** As a state, we have an opportunity and obligation to serve as an advocate for national policies that support Connecticut businesses. Connecticut depends on trade, but the so-called “free trade” policies of the past 14 years have put state-based manufacturers, especially small and medium-sized businesses, at a severe disadvantage, and have created real hardship for manufacturing workers. Connecticut should advocate for national and international policies that lift standards throughout the world, rather than agreements that lower standards here while exploiting workers internationally.

These two last points address the Department of Economic and Community Development, and other state agencies involved in promoting and/or regulating business. Your charge is complex and often regulated in turn by a myriad of conflicting agendas and directives. I offer these points with all due respect:

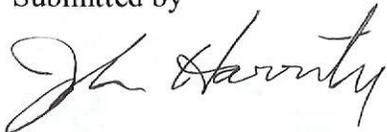
- **DECD needs to consider more clearly-defined incentives for developers and manufacturers seeking assistance to locate in our state.** It is not enough to say, “Tell us what you need once you have a deal.” Investors and entrepreneurs need to know upfront how the state will help. Not having that type of information, for instance, has made it more difficult to find a new manufacturer to move into the space vacated by US Repeating Arms in New Haven.

- **Simplify and speed up the permit process where at all possible.** State agencies involved in permitting and other “gate-keeper” functions in approving development simply have to move more quickly, and without sacrificing the public interest, move from a culture of “No” to one of “Can we make this happen?”. Connecticut has a reputation which discourages investment, and is at odds with other states both in our region and beyond. We have a lot to offer, but we also have significant cost challenges that limit job creation. That is part of the trade-off for doing business here. But when it takes months to get a permit to put up a shed, or environmental regulations are promulgated that cannot be administered, or rules change, and change again, months applications have been filed, it is deadly to investment and job creation.

The Governor and the DECD can help change this climate both through use of the “bully pulpit” in encouraging a more responsive state apparatus, and by demanding accountability on application processes that drag on over many months. It should not be the “safe choice” to simply delay the process rather than make a decision.

Thank you for this opportunity to address these issues. Connecticut is a great place to live and to work, and I hope that working together, we can make it even better.

Submitted by



John Harrity
Director, GrowJobsCT

4 FUNDAMENTALS

#1 As a state, we must **provide:** positive support for manufacturers who want remain or grow in Connecticut, or relocate here.

#2 At the same time, **Connecticut citizens deserve:** appropriate and reasonable commitments from businesses in return for state support.

#3 **Connecticut must:** help ensure that manufacturing workers receive the training and education necessary to maintain superior skills, while recruiting young people into the fields which will sustain manufacturing here in the future.

#4 **Connecticut can and must also:** seek to have an impact in the national and even international arenas where policies have for too long ignored local manufacturers and manufacturing workers.

GROWJOBSCT
MANUFACTURING MAKES CT'S FUTURE



365 New Britain Road, Kensington, CT 06037
Phone: 860-828-0359
Fax: 860-828-9542



GROWJOBSCT MISSION STATEMENT:

GrowJobsCT is a coalition of labor, business and community interests, together with elected officials, working to preserve and expand manufacturing in Connecticut.

GrowJobsCT engages in dialogue, education, research, and advocacy to increase public awareness of the crucial role of manufacturing in our state's economy, and to encourage policies that foster manufacturing and manufacturing jobs in our state.

GrowJobsCT also seeks to assist in specific situations where manufacturing jobs are at risk or opportunities for growth arise.

We see these efforts as vital to the quality of life of Connecticut's citizens, their families and our communities.

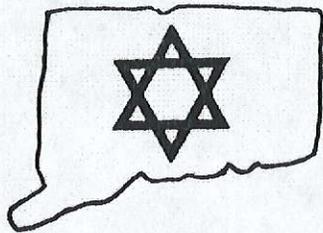
GrowJobsCT Points of Agreement

Issues on which labor, business, community, elected officials and other interested parties share common ground – or must work to find it, for the sake of our state’s future – include the following:

- Manufacturing has a **key role** in the state’s economy.
- **Manufacturing involves both employers and workers.** Both are crucial to the manufacturing sector; neither should have to lose ground for manufacturing in Connecticut to grow.
- **Manufacturing creates a “ripple effect,”** generating 2 to 5 other jobs for each manufacturing job. Construction, retail, public works, health care, education and a host of other important occupations are supported by Connecticut’s manufacturing base, and in turn help sustain Connecticut manufacturing.
- **Technical training for current and future workers is crucial to sustaining manufacturing.** Attracting young people to manufacturing, and providing them the proper training to succeed in this field, is essential to Connecticut’s future.
- **The state must engage in smart and strategic investment** to promote industrial growth, with a special focus on new technology.
- **Energy is a critical issue** for Connecticut manufacturing. Renewable energy can mean a more reliable power supply, jobs for our state and ending dependency on foreign oil.
- Connecticut health care costs discourage business growth. **Universal health care** can lower costs, cover all citizens and make Connecticut businesses more competitive globally.
- **Trade should help expand domestic employment, not undermine it.** Current trade policies have led to dramatic losses of manufacturing jobs. Trade should be fair, and balance the interests of companies, communities, consumers and workers.
- Regulations should protect the public and encourage responsible business activities. **Excessive bureaucracy stifles growth and job creation.** Connecticut needs to eliminate “red tape” and accelerate its processes. State agencies must be properly staffed and given adequate resources to move applications and permits quickly.

If you are interested in helping sustain and expand manufacturing jobs in Connecticut – contact GrowJobsCT today!

GrowJobsCT
365 New Britain Road
Kensington, CT 06037
www.growjobsct.org
860-828-0359



JFACT

Jewish Federation Association of Connecticut
40 Woodland Street Hartford, CT 06105
Phone: (860) 727-5701 Fax: (860) 727-5767
email: jfact@mcmgmt.com www.jfact.org

*Testimony to Department of Economic and Community Development on
Connecticut's Strategic Economic Plan
January 10, 2008*

David A. Baram
President

Martin C. Shapiro
Chair

Eric Albert
Vice President

Bert Boyson
Vice President

Arlene M. Elovich
Vice President

David Zieff
Treasurer

Robert D. Lesser
Secretary

Robert J. Fishman
Executive Director

**Constituent
Jewish Federations:**
Greater Danbury
Eastern Connecticut
Eastern Fairfield
Greenwich
Greater Hartford
Greater New Haven
Greater Stamford-
New Canaan- Darien
Western Connecticut
Westport-Weston-
Wilton-Norwalk

I am Robert J. Fishman, President of the Connecticut Immigrant and Refugee Coalition (CIRC) and the Executive Director of the Jewish Federation Association of Connecticut (JFACT). I want to address three areas of concern to myself and these two nonprofit organizations.

First, as active members of the Connecticut Association of Nonprofits, we completely support their efforts to promote an understanding in our State that the approximately 20,000 registered nonprofit agencies employ over 165,000 people in Connecticut. This represents almost 12% of the state's labor force, which should be seen and heard as a vital component in this discussion on enhancing responsible economic growth in our state. In many cases, nonprofits operate like a business and provide "value added" to the state's economy and are often overlooked or not even invited to sit at the table in the critical discussions of economic growth. We advocate that Connecticut provide adequate funding to allow nonprofits to preserve core services and address increased demand and properly fund higher energy, medical and other insurance costs.

Second, the CIRC advocates for Immigrant and Refugee rights, but also strives to promote the "value added" that refugees and immigrants bring to their new communities. About 10% of Connecticut's population is foreign born and the median age is younger than American born residents of Connecticut. Therefore, we in Connecticut should be looking to properly educate this new American population in our schools to help them become productive workers in our state. The federal government does guarantee public education through high school for both legal and undocumented immigrants. However each state has the right to determine if it will grant in-state tuition to the children of undocumented immigrants. In Connecticut, CIRC has worked now for six years and finally last year, both the House and the Senate overwhelmingly voted to support in-state tuition for these children. However, it was not a veto proof majority and we were most disappointed that our governor chose to veto this action. In any discussion of economic growth and smart growth, I urge you to consider that from a pure business point of view it makes sense to allow these children (some of whom have become valedictorians in their High School) to grant them their request to continue their dream for higher education in this state. I would hope that this panel will look into the merits of CIRC's argument and urge the governor to support in-state tuition for children of undocumented parents. Even Republican candidate Mike Huckabee supported and signed legislation to allow the children of undocumented parents to receive in-state tuition in the state of Arkansas.

The Jewish Federation Association of Connecticut (JFACT) is a statewide Association serving as a legislative representative for the nine Connecticut Jewish Federations and their associated agencies, an advocate for the Jewish Community, a public affairs spokesperson and coordinator on statewide programs on issues of mutual interest and concern in the state of Connecticut and Israel

Third, Connecticut has not kept up with other states in the field of Globalization. Our Department of Economic and Community Development has cut funds to those critical international trade programs which have actually increased the state's share of international trade. In specific, JFACT believes that Connecticut should restore funding for commissions such the Connecticut Israel Exchange Commission (CONNIX). When in operation with less than a \$100,000 budget created many business connections between Connecticut and Israel, a small country that is an international leader in the fields of technology, pharmaceuticals and biomedicine.

Thank you for your time and I am available to answer any questions you may have,

Robert J. Fishman

Department of Economic and Community Development
Public Act No. 07-239
Public Hearing
Bridgeport – January 10, 2008

My name is Wayne Valaitis, I am Director of Literacy Volunteers of Southeastern Fairfield County, a program of FSW, Inc. we provide Adult Education and Workforce Development services in the greater Bridgeport and Norwalk areas.

I would like to thank Governor Rell and the Legislature for enacting Public Act No. 07-239 and its plan to ensure that economic growth reaches our inner cities. But, in addition to making productive use of the 'brownfields' in our inner cities, you should also consider taking advantage of the potential of our residents in our inner cities. It is largely upon the immigrants, minorities and underemployed residents of our inner cities that the foundation for economic growth rests.

In empowering these individuals to impact the economic growth of Connecticut, I would strongly suggest that your plan includes investments in workforce development such as those in the legislative request being presented by the Campaign for a Working Connecticut. This Campaign's request of \$8.5 Million will provide additional funding in Basic Education, Occupational Skills Training, Career Services, and Incumbent Worker Training. These funds would provide 4100 residents with training and development that will have a measurable impact on Connecticut's Workforce.

For many inner city residents of Southwestern Connecticut there exists a distinct incompetence in mathematics, and English reading, writing and fluency:

- 21% of the labor force does not possess a high school diploma,
 - Bridgeport 30,000 residents
 - Norwalk 15,000 residents
- 19% of the population is Foreign Born
 - Stamford 37,000
 - Bridgeport 36,000
 - Danbury 27,000
- 12% of the population "Speak English Less than very well"
 - 77,000 residents of South Western Connecticut

While these statistics certainly present a challenge, I prefer to look at the individuals who embody these statistics as an opportunity. This group could serve as an economic asset for the immediate, as well as, future economic growth. The Campaign has identified proven strategies such as our own WorkSkills program. Literacy Volunteer's WorkSkills program blends vocational skills with basic skills to prepare unemployed adults in Bridgeport for employment in Customer Service and Sales. Over the past three years after taking this 8-week training program:

- 93% of participants received their certification as Customer Service Professionals from the National Retail Federation.
- 74% of our participants have significantly improved their basic skills.
- 67% of our graduates entered and maintained unsubsidized employment.

This program and many other programs identified by the Campaign can be implemented immediately should the state choose to invest in its economic future.

To offer some other statistics about the value of education in terms of economic impact. According to the U.S. Census Bureau:

- An individual that earns a High School Diploma or GED will earn an additional \$200,000 in their life time.
- An individual that also has some College will earn an additional \$500,000 in their life time.

An investment in education and training will pay dividends on many levels.

In summation I applaud the Department of Economic and Community Development in developing the plans as called for in Public Act 07-239. I strongly urge you to include in your strategic plan long-term investments in workforce development initiatives such as those presented by the Campaign for a Work Connecticut. Connecticut's economic success ultimately will depend on its ability to consistently produce a highly skilled workforce. Investing in Connecticut's inner city residents is one means toward that end.

I thank you for the opportunity to present these points today. The members of the Campaign stand ready to assist you as you move forward with the development of your strategic plan.

Thank you,

Wayne Valaitis, Director
Literacy Volunteers of Southeastern Fairfield County, a Program of FSW, Inc.
(203) 579-2208
wvalaitis@fswinc.org

Campaign for a Working Connecticut

Developing workforce solutions for a stronger economy

Campaign Purpose

The Campaign for a Working Connecticut (CWCT) is a coalition with an aligned vision for Connecticut: To promote the state's economic competitiveness through the development of sustainable, effective workforce solutions to increase workers' skills and advance families to self-sufficiency.

The Campaign's vision for Connecticut's workforce system spans traditional divides across agencies and funding streams to include a broad range of services to assist individuals to develop the skills they need to succeed personally and professionally. Services include case management; literacy, basic skills and English language instruction; occupational training; employment preparation and development; transition to post secondary education; and work-based learning. Building largely on the federally funded system, the Campaign seeks state resources to expand services, add flexibility, target gaps in current services, promote coordination and collaboration, improve accountability and address local needs for workforce development.

Connecticut's Workforce

Connecticut's economic success ultimately will depend on its ability to consistently produce a highly skilled workforce with the prerequisite basic and technical skills needed for the 21st century economy. With an ever-increasing number of jobs in this state requiring a college degree, the barriers to employment and advancement up the career ladder are substantial for those with limited skills. Without these skills, many individuals will be stuck in low-wage work in the dual economy. As much as 40% of tomorrow's available workforce lives in the state's major cities, and many are living and learning in poverty.

Many of Connecticut's residents are not prepared for the workforce or prepared to move beyond entry level employment.

- 29 percent of Connecticut residents lack a postsecondary education.
- 40 percent of Connecticut adults lack adequate literacy skills to function effectively in the workplace.
- 37 percent of adults in the Jobs First Employment Services (JFES) program lack a high school diploma.
- Students enrolled in the state's Adult Basic Education system represent only 7.6% of the adults in the state without a high school diploma.
- 32 percent of employers report that poor reading and writing skills are among the most serious skill deficiencies of current hourly production employees.
- In CBIA's 2007 Survey of CT Businesses, 24% of respondents stated that availability of skilled workers was the number one concern facing their business within the next five years, only surpassed by the cost of doing business (30%).
- Nearly half of Connecticut occupations do not provide an income sufficient to afford a most two bedroom apartment.
- An individual needs to earn \$19.30 an hour (or hold 2.5 full time minimum wage jobs) to afford a two bedroom apartment in Connecticut.
- In 2006, 16.8% of CT workers earned a poverty wage of \$9.91/hour (the federal poverty level for a family of four for a full time year round worker).

Under these conditions, the needs and skills of Connecticut's businesses and workers are mismatched. Investments in key workforce education and development strategies can strengthen the state's economic health by supporting workers, employers, families and communities. The strategies outlined and the investments called for in these areas will help turn the curve and foster a stronger match between workers skills and employers needs.

For more information about the Campaign, contact Alice Pritchard at the CT Women's Education and Legal Fund 860-247-6090 or apritchard@cwealf.org

Campaign Supporters

1199 Training & Upgrading Fund
AFSCME
Betty Gallo & Co.
Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition
Capitol Region Education Council (CREC)
Capital Workforce Partners
Career Resources, Inc.
Chamber of Commerce of Eastern CT
Charter Oak State College
CT Association for Human Services
CT Association for Adult and Continuing Education
CT Puerto Rican Forum
CT Workforce Development Council
CT Urban Libraries Council
CT Women's Education and Legal Fund
Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board
Family Services Woodfield
Greater Hartford Legal Aid
Greater Hartford Literacy Council
Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce
Legal Assistance Resource Center of CT
Literacy Volunteers of SE Fairfield County
Literacy Volunteers of Greater Hartford
Middlesex Chamber of Commerce
National Assoc. of Social Workers—CT Chapter
New Opportunities, Inc.
Northwestern Regional Workforce Investment Board
Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
Regional Growth Partnership-New Haven
TEAM, Inc.
The Workplace, Inc.
Thames Valley Council for Community Action
Workforce Alliance