

The WorkPlace

Southwestern Connecticut's Regional Workforce Development Board Board of Directors Meeting December 15, 2023

Board Members Present:

Bing Carbone, Modern Plastics
Brian Truini, UFCW 371
Bruce Silvestone, Silverstone Consulting
Cindy Rafael, BRS
David Morgan, Team, Inc.
Dennis "DJ" Yaremich, Teamsters Local 1150
Doug Holcomb, GBT
Dwayne Smith, CSU
Frank Alvarado, Consultant
Garry Feldman, US Computer Connections
Jillian Baldwin, Park City Communities
Jim Lohr, Carpenters Labor Management
Jim Oddo, Exec. Search Professionals

John Loeser, CVS Health
Lindy Lee Gold, Department of Economic & Community Dev.
Mary Burgard, Vocational Rehab
Matt Seebeck, SoNo Properties
Meghan Hopkins, Operations Inc.
Mike LaBella, TD Bank
Mike Proto, Prestige Industrial Finishing
Nicole Russo, MicroBoard
Pablo Colon, Avangrid
Thomas Coley, CT State Community College
Thomas Sportini, IBEW Local 488 JATC
Victor Fuda, CT Department of Labor

OTHERS PRESENT:

Adrienne Parkmond, The WorkPlace
Alexa Williams, The WorkPlace
Alexandra Langston, The WorkPlace
Andrea Smith, The WorkPlace
Angela Jackson, The WorkPlace
Angela Porter, The WorkPlace
Angie Llanos, The WorkPlace
Anna Mariotti
Anne Leskow, The WorkPlace
Araceli Marquez, The WorkPlace
Arnold Johnson, The WorkPlace
Ashley Holtkamp, The WorkPlace
Ben Bissell, The WorkPlace
Ben Schuster, The WorkPlace
Beth Barton, The WorkPlace
Brandi Johnson, The WorkPlace
Carlie Clarcq
Carmen Nieves, The WorkPlace

Cal Glazier, The WorkPlace
Carrie McKeithen, The WorkPlace
Cathy Patton, The WorkPlace
Charlene Lee, The WorkPlace
Chelby Bragg, The WorkPlace
Cassandra Irby, The WorkPlace
Claire Duvernay, The WorkPlace
Constanza Benzant, The WorkPlace
Corey King, The WorkPlace
Corinne Harris, The WorkPlace
Cristina Alcantara, The WorkPlace
Charles Wilson, The WorkPlace
Dan O'Keefe, The WorkPlace
Davonnah Monk, The WorkPlace
Donna DeMattia, The WorkPlace
Dean Furness, The WorkPlace
Deb Oliver, The WorkPlace
Debbie Venditti, The WorkPlace
Dennis Proto, Ansonia Public School

Desiree Brooks, The WorkPlace
Diana Napier, The WorkPlace
Don Robinson, The WorkPlace
Daisy Tenor, The WorkPlace
Dwayne Miller, The WorkPlace
Elle Serendi, The WorkPlace
Elra Harris, The WorkPlace
Esley Romano, The WorkPlace
Fernando Hernandez, The WorkPlace
Fran Romano, The WorkPlace
Francheska Beato, The WorkPlace
Frank Biancur, The WorkPlace
Gloria Falkowski, The WorkPlace
Grixalix Rodriguez, The WorkPlace
Hailey Gerna, The WorkPlace
Ilissa Torrs, The WorkPlace
Jane Sikand Edelstein, The WorkPlace
Janet Brady, The WorkPlace
Janet Williams, The WorkPlace
Janice Bruno, The WorkPlace
Jasmin Reyes, The WorkPlace
Jason Galassi, The WorkPlace
Jennifer Colon, The WorkPlace
Joanni Rodriguez, The WorkPlace
John Szymanski, The WorkPlace
Joseph Carbone, The WorkPlace
Kapree Trip, The WorkPlace
Kayla Montenez, The WorkPlace
Kelly Mukisa, The WorkPlace
Ken Laryea, Jr. The WorkPlace
Kimberly Hare, the WorkPlace
Kimberly West, The WorkPlace
Krystal Deleon, The WorkPlace
Lewis Miller
Libby Johnson, The WorkPlace
Lisa Maloney, The WorkPlace
Lisandrey DeJesus, The WorkPlace
Liz Acevedo, The WorkPlace
Lorena Perez, The WorkPlace
Lorenzo Brooks, The WorkPlace
Lori Burgos, The WorkPlace

Louie Reyes, The WorkPlace
Maria Matarazzo
Maria Bartoli, The WorkPlace
Marilyn Marquez, The WorkPlace
Mario Sarro, The WorkPlace
Marlon White, The WorkPlace
Mary Dunleavy, The WorkPlace
Maurice Douglas, The WorkPlace
Maurice White, The WorkPlace
Michael Gordan, The WorkPlace
Michael Hayden, The WorkPlace
Michael Lazarus, The WorkPlace
Michael McCarthy, The WorkPlace
Michael Morgan, The WorkPlace
Michael Stokes, The WorkPlace
Michelle Artis, The WorkPlace
Michelle Cruz, The WorkPlace
Mirlande Pressat, The WorkPlace
Monica McGinnis, The WorkPlace
Morgan Esdaile, The WorkPlace
Nicole Brewster, The WorkPlace
Nigel Wynter, The WorkPlace
Pandora Williams, The WorkPlace
Patrick Balcazar
Phillip Foster, The WorkPlace
Poonam Sharma, Bridgeport DSS
Pricillia Santiago, The WorkPlace
Rakiya Bello, The WorkPlace
Ramon Peralta, The WorkPlace
Richard Borer, The WorkPlace
Rob O'Mara, Griffin Health
Robert Frost, The WorkPlace
Roberta Cemprola, The WorkPlace
Sabrina Mancini, CT State Department
of Education
Sai'Cha Griifin, The WorkPlace
Sarah Lewis
Sean Fredriksen , The WorkPlace
Shanice Goffe, The WorkPlace
Shannon Rule, The WorkPlace

Shirl Watson, The WorkPlace
Stephanie Latha-Magee, The WorkPlace
Stewart Battle, The WorkPlace
Tamieka Butler- Afable, The WorkPlace
Tarrol Stafford, The WorkPlace
Taylor Van Antwerp, The WorkPlace
Teresa San Roman, The WorkPlace
Terri Williams, The WorkPlace
Thomas Powell, The WorkPlace
Tiffany Johnson, The WorkPlace

Tim Demarco, The WorkPlace
Tom Long, The WorkPlace
Tracey Sampson, The WorkPlace
Veronica Rodriguez, The WorkPlace
Victoria Medina, The WorkPlace
Vincent Santilli, Homes for the Brave
Yalitz Dormez, The WorkPlace
Yusuf Hasaan, The WorkPlace
Yvette Garcia, The WorkPlace

Ms. Russo called the meeting to order at 8:15am. She then proceeded to introduce our guest speaker, Daniel O’Keefe, Commissioner-Designate, Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) & Chief Innovation Office, State of CT. He is a passionate advocate for economic growth, workforce development, vibrant communities, and job creation.

Guest Speaker: Mr. O’Keefe shared information about the State of CT, economic progression and what needs to take place to accelerate and promote Connecticut’s economy. He discussed the following topics:

- CT’s GDP Growth ranked the seventh fastest growing state economy in the US, last time we were in the top 10 was 2004
- Population growth of 20,608, the second straight year of net population growth
- Building dynamic & vibrant communities
- Cultivating an innovative and creative ecosystem
- Filling Connecticut job vacancies
- Workforce Development, Housing Development and Public Education
- Business Development over the last 12 months

To conclude his presentation, Mr. O’Keefe shared that he is excited and humbled to be in his new role. He strongly feels that the DECD is in a unique position to strategically invest and support our economy in the future.

President’s Report

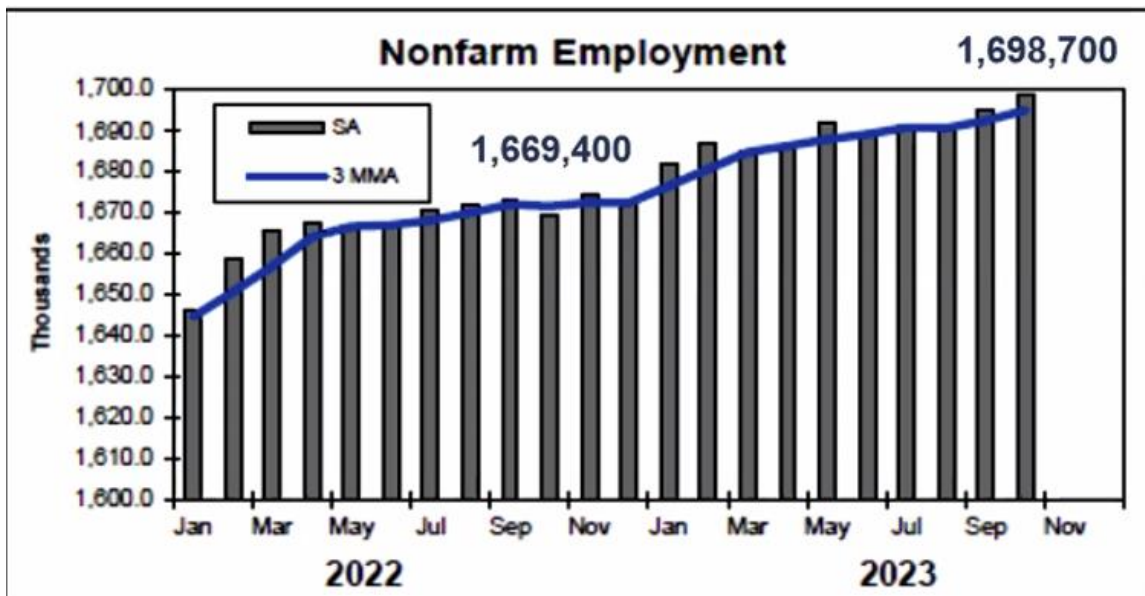
Connecticut Employment Situation: Employers added 3,700 jobs in October. The state has fully recovered jobs lost due to the pandemic in 2020. Five of the state’s ten main industry sectors have recovered all COVID losses and are in growth mode, led by Professional & Business Services.

Concerns remain in two key sectors: Manufacturing has recovered just 76% of the jobs loss while Financial activities currently employ 8,100 fewer people than before the pandemic.

SWCT Non-Farm Employment: The economy is in transition from recovering from the pandemic. Below reflects job losses and gains in several sectors.

Retail	43,000	100	0.2%
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	9,900	300	3.1%
Education Services	14,500	900	6.6%
Health Care & Social Assistance	67,900	2,500	3.8%
Government	44,200	1,600	3.8%
Information	12,800	100	0.8%
Financial Activities	34,400	-1,100	-3.1%
Manufacturing	28,800	-700	-2.4%
Leisure & Hospitality	42,600	-800	-1.8%
Professional & Business Services	65,700	-500	-0.8%
Construction	14,100	-100	-0.7%
Total Non-Farm Employment	409,000	3,800	0.9%

CT Non-Farm Employment: This chart measures employment from October 2022 to October 2023. Creating 30,000+ jobs.



Unemployment & Labor Force: This chart reflects the labor force from a national standpoint including CT’s neighboring states.

	Feb. 2020	Oct. 2023	Variance	
NATIONAL				
Unemployment Rate	3.5%	3.9%		
Labor Force	164,546,000	167,728,000	3,182,000	1.9%
MASSACHUSETTS				
Unemployment Rate	2.8%	2.5%		
Labor Force	3,793,932	3,721,607	-72,325	-1.9%
RHODE ISLAND				
Unemployment Rate	3.7%	2.7%		
Labor Force	574,293	572,230	-2,063	0%
CONNECTICUT				
Unemployment Rate	3.8%	3.5%		
Labor Force	1,937,900	1,899,000	-38,900	-2.0%
SW CT (not seasonally adjusted)				
Unemployment Rate	4.6%	3.7%		
Labor Force	407,159	406,777	-382	0%

Job Openings September 2023: CT advertised 103,000 jobs. This number varies day to day.

Area	Open Positions	# Unemployed	Variance	Open Jobs Per Unemployed Person
CT	103,000	65,500	37,500	1.6
RI	32,000	14,892	17,108	2.1
MA	229,000	96,535	132,456	2.3

Connecticut Remains A Place For Business Investment:

- Ranked number four in the U.S. for employees with advanced degrees
- Ranked number three for the quality of K-12 education
- Ranked fifth in the quality of life in the U.S.
- Ranked seventh in terms of businesses that invest in Research and Development (R&D)

2023 Survey of Connecticut Businesses: Connecticut’s labor shortage is the dominant issue facing Connecticut companies and the greatest threat to the state’s economic prospects. Businesses face strong demand for their products and services but what’s missing are the workers to meet that demand.

What is driving a decade plus of stagnant population growth?

- An aging workforce and the state’s high cost of living
- The dearth of workforce housing options
- A lack of accessible, affordable childcare

A Unique Moment In Time: We are experiencing a vibrant economy working against headwinds of structural change in our labor force which we cannot easily adjust.

Identifying ways to access new talent and grow the talent pool is essential by:

- Leveraging remote work opportunities to broaden the pool of job candidates
- Utilizing the skills of mature workers who can be kept in the labor force through part-time assignments, job sharing mentoring and retraining.
- Internships and apprenticeship programs which create new opportunities for youth entering the workforce.

We must explore the most practical and robust ways to connect people to jobs for the moment in time we are in.

Renewable Energy: Renewable energy is energy produced from sources like the sun and wind that are naturally replenished and do not run out. Renewable Energy can be used for electricity generation, space and water heating and cooling and transportation.

The federal infrastructure bill and ARPA funds became a stimulant for a greater focus on this sector. Clean energy employment totals over 43,000 jobs in CT.

Clean energy professional and business services accounted for 41% of total contributions to GDP, followed by manufacturing at 22% and utilities at 19%. Construction and wholesale trade accounted for 10% and 8% respectively.

EnergyWorks Renewable Energy Job Training: TWP received a \$2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor to develop a new, clean energy workforce training program.

This program will produce positive outcomes for diverse groups: including unemployed individuals, historically marginalized and underrepresented groups, people with disabilities, justice- impacted individuals and young adults,

Training will consist of a two week, job readiness and foundational skills seminar followed by an 8-week renewable-energy curriculum based on successful elements of EnvironmentalWorks and Building Better Futures.

Partners Include: Avangrid Inc., Fuel Cell Energy, the Bridgeport Regional Business Council, the Bridgeport Regional Energy Partnership and the Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology.

The EnergyWorks grant is an opportunity for The WorkPlace to become the state-wide leader for training in this industry.

Nanoramic Laboratories: The U.S. Department of Energy awarded \$47.5 million in funding, a Massachusetts electric-vehicle battery startup company has chosen Bridgeport for its first major factory, which in time could employ 200 or more individuals.

Nanoramic is developing technology to enable batteries that charge faster and last longer between charges. In addition, Nanoramic signed on to provide The WorkPlace a \$300,000 match to our recent grant application with the Department of Energy to create a Clean Energy Training Academy.

Additional Program Highlights:

- **ApprenticeshipWorks** enrolled 75 individuals, 30 have completed training with a 90% placement rate
- **Health Career Academy** hosted 62 training cohorts across 7 occupations. Just launched Nursing Careers Pathways program to create 200 nurses
- **Platform to Employment** 90% of participants placed in a work experience hired by employers with an average salary of \$55,328
- **P2E Re-Entry** 92 individuals completed training with placement rates above 80%. Zero Recidivism this program year

Driven to Serve 1996-2023: The chart below reflects the growth since December 2022. Overall + \$35,304,395 which is 10.7% growth.

<u>Cumulative as of:</u>	<u>September 2023</u>	<u>December 2023</u>
Public Funding	\$326,062,086	\$328,579,612
Partner with Business and Foundations	\$13,473,698	\$13,534,660
Fee- For-Service	\$19,874,588	\$20,680,632
Total	\$359,410,372	\$362,794,904

Board Business

Minutes: A motion was made and seconded, the Board of Directors voted to approve the minutes from the September 2023 BOD meeting.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:24am.

Our next Board of Directors meeting will be held on March 15, 2024.

Submitted by Tiffany Johnson, Executive Assistant