

Department of Labor



At A Glance

GLENN MARSHALL, Commissioner

Dennis Murphy, Deputy Commissioner

Established - 1873

Statutory authority - CGS Sec. 31-1 to 31-403 (excluding chapter 568)

Central office - 200 Folly Brook Blvd., Wethersfield, CT 06109-1114

Web site - www.ct.gov/dol

Average number of full-time employees - 783

Recurring operating expenses - Federal - \$108,312,706; State - \$69,212,744

Capital outlay: Federal - \$770,787; State - \$20,236; CEPF - \$132,703

Organizational structure - Central Office, Annex Office and 14 statewide CTWorks One-Stop Centers

Mission

The Department of Labor is committed to protecting and promoting the interests of Connecticut workers. In order to accomplish this in today's ever-changing environment, we must assist workers and employers in becoming competitive in the global economy. We must take a comprehensive approach to meeting the needs of workers, employers, and other agencies that serve them. We must provide the highest-quality, integrated services in response to our customers' needs.

Statutory Responsibility

The Connecticut Department of Labor meets the needs of workers and employers to become competitive in the global economy. For workers, this is accomplished through income support between jobs, assistance in searching for jobs, protection and fairness on the job, training programs, and information about the economy, wages and the workplace. Services offered to

businesses include workplace data, labor market information, recruitment assistance, regional job fairs, programs to help maintain and upgrade employee skills, such as apprenticeship and incumbent worker training, OSHA guidance and consulting services, and tax credit information. Informational services to workers and employers, as well as enforcement responsibilities include the payment of wages, health and safety, employment of minors, family and medical leave, representation by labor organizations, and resolution of labor disputes. As the Connecticut arm of the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the agency collects, analyzes and disseminates workforce data to inform businesses, the general public, government planners and policymakers about employment issues and trends.

Public Service

Unemployment Insurance and Related Assistance

- *Unemployment Insurance* (UI) benefits are provided to unemployed persons pursuant to statute while claimants look for new work or take part in approved training programs. The agency offers two options for filing unemployment compensation claims – *TeleBenefits*, an automated voice system, and *WebBenefits*, an Internet system – both available in English and Spanish. *WebBenefits* gives claimants access to their benefit payment and the capability to print out the information. The online system also provides an appeals filing application for unemployment insurance decisions. Most individuals filing weekly unemployment claims use the Internet.
- The state *Rapid Response* Unit, in conjunction with local Workforce Investment Boards and other One Stop partners, is responsible under Workforce Investment Act (WIA) regulations (Part 665, Subpart c) for carrying out rapid response activities statewide. WIA funding supports all rapid response activities in the state. Headed by the Connecticut Department of Labor, the unit reaches out to employers contemplating or experiencing layoffs or closings. Employers, affected workers and their unions are provided information on layoff aversion, mass layoff/plant closing and other labor laws, unemployment insurance, WIA, and One Stop employment services and coordinates services with DOL units, other agencies, and programs for special intervention or supportive services applicable to dislocated workers.

During the reporting period, Rapid Response staff made 170 outreach calls, received and responded to 148 WARN notices, met with 88 employers and/or unions and held informational sessions with 3,766 dislocated workers. Where face-to-face contact was not possible, 4,078 informational packets were provided to human resources managers and union representatives.

- *Trade Act Assistance* services provide programs and benefits to individuals who are part of worker groups certified by the U.S. Department of Labor as having lost their jobs or experienced partial separation due to foreign competition. Various trade act programs provide assistance to eligible workers to enable them to return to suitable employment as quickly as possible and include training; job search, relocation and readjustment allowances;

health coverage tax credit; and wage subsidies for individuals 50 years of age and older who return to lower-paying work. Programs provided under the Trade Act include:

- *Trade Act Assistance*: During the program year, 2,193 individuals were identified as potentially eligible to apply for Trade Act Assistance benefits and 1,321 eligibility determinations were issued in response to submitted applications.
 - *Trade Adjustment Assistance Act (TAA)* petitions on behalf of workers whose jobs were believed to be affected by increased imports or a shift in production to a foreign country. Of the eleven Trade Act petitions submitted, nine companies employing 747 workers were certified TAA eligible, one petition is still pending, and one was terminated.
 - *Training*: 600 individuals entered TAA-approved training programs and 802 individuals were active in training. Training payments totaled \$7,554,903.
 - *Job Search/Relocation Allowance*: Eleven workers received job search allowance and five received relocation allowance, with payments totaling \$4,559.53 and \$6,212.34 respectively.
 - *Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA)*: A total of \$1,734,491 was paid for 4,287 weekly TRA claims, representing 453 weeks of basic TRA, 3,114 weeks of additional TRA, and 720 weeks of remedial TRA. Individuals who satisfy applicable program requirements may receive one or more types of TRA income support: up to 26 weeks of basic TRA; up to 52 or 78 weeks of additional TRA, depending on Trade Act petition number; and up to 26 weeks of remedial TRA. TRA payments were less than during the prior program year because extended unemployment insurance benefits replaced some or all of the TRA otherwise payable to most TAA participants.
 - *Reemployment/Alternative Trade Adjustment Assistance (R/ATAA)*: A total of \$137,952 in payments was issued to eligible workers.
 - *Health Coverage Tax Credit (HCTC)* covers 80% of qualified health insurance premiums of eligible TAA and R/ATAA recipients. The Internal Revenue Service administers HCTC in partnership with the Connecticut Department of Labor, other federal and state agencies, and the private health insurance industry.
- The *Enhanced Reemployment Services (ERS)* program identifies unemployment insurance claimants who are likely to exhaust their benefits, are unlikely to return to their previous occupations, and will need job search assistance to make a successful transition to new employment. More than 17,000 ERS participants received orientation and were provided additional reemployment services to facilitate their return to work. In addition to posting notices in *CTWorks* Career Centers, DOL reached out to approximately 400 ERS recipients when Department of Labor Connecticut Career Trainee positions became available. Approximately 43,000 claimants received 229,000 staff-assisted ERS services during 2010.

Employment and Training

- Approximately 228,000 participants received an employment service (staff-assisted or self-service) through the *CTWorks Career Centers*. These services included assistance with career choices and job searches; job search resources such as fax machines and computers with Internet connection; and workshops on résumé writing, interviewing and career exploration.

- *Employment Services Outreach* was provided by CTDOL staff that traveled to locales around the state offering workforce and job skills development services to the public. Staff continued to focus on early intervention onsite at downsizing companies, assisting soon-to-be downsized workers with résumé preparation and job search strategies before they are separated. Certified Professional Résumé Writers provided one-on-one career counseling and résumé critique. Staff provided assistance with résumés, job search strategies, interviewing, Internet job search, online application assistance and labor market information to various organizations and events.
- *Alien Labor Certifications* staff handled 64 certifications. This included temporary certifications for foreign agricultural workers (H-2A). Prior to certification, the unit ensures that employers have exhausted all means to hire American workers before recruiting foreign workers. The unit also conducted pre-occupancy housing inspections for 41 farms in connection with agricultural certifications.
- *Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers'* program provided outreach services to 349 workers, including information on available workforce services, referrals to healthcare providers and other supportive services. Agricultural employers received recruitment assistance, mediation, and interpreter services, as well as technical guidance on compliance with the Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker regulations.
- *Office of Apprenticeship Training* administers the state's apprenticeship system for businesses. Apprenticeship is a long-term (one to four years) proven training strategy that prepares skilled workers for Connecticut industry. The program offers individuals an opportunity of "learning while earning" based on an employer-employee relationship. The agency provides registration, monitoring and consulting services to qualified employers while assisting them in recruitment efforts and making use of Connecticut business tax credits. During fiscal year 2010-2011, the Apprenticeship Unit received two grants to promote green apprenticeships. In spite of the difficult economy, sponsor registration increased from 3,055 to 3,185 and apprenticeship registration increased from 3,976 to 4,342.
- *Office for Veterans' Workforce Development* helps Connecticut veterans through its team of Veterans' Employment Representatives located at *CTWorks* Career Centers, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs offices, and various outstations throughout the state. During the year, employment and training services were provided to 8,753 veterans and more than 850 attended employment workshops through the Transition Assistance Program at the U.S. Naval Submarine Base in New London – a program that helps those leaving military life transition to civilian careers. In partnership with both the state and federal Department of Veterans Affairs and the Connecticut Military Department, demobilization services were also provided to returning troops from the CT National Guard and U.S. Armed Service Reserves.
- A series of eight *Connecticut Job and Career Fairs* drew approximately 240 companies and more than 4,700 jobseekers. In addition, the veteran-specific *Heroes4Hire Job Fairs*, co-sponsored with the Department of Veterans' Affairs, provided job-matching services to more than 138 employers and 2,290 veterans.

- *Jobs First Employment Services (JFES)* serves recipients of Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) through the agency's partnership with the Department of Social Services and the Workforce Investment Boards. During the year, approximately 16,500 participants received employment services from *CTWorks'* One Stop staff and/or through contracted service providers. Services include job search assistance, vocational education, adult basic education, subsidized employment, case management and other support services.
- The DOL administers the *Workforce Investment Act (WIA)* federal funding, which this year totaled \$21.3 million and provided workforce services to more than 7,000 individuals. The prolonged economic downturn, which has spread across most of Connecticut's industries, continued to present challenges for the state and its workforce investment partners during 2010. The needs of individuals affected by the economic situation have increased, and demand for employment and training services has surged.

WIA funding has helped Connecticut's workforce investment partners to increase the availability of employment and training assistance, which is an important component to the economic recovery of the state. The goal was to develop initiatives that provided immediate opportunities and future potential, and support established projects that strengthen the workforce and business. Although the exceptional economic difficulties have created quite a test for the state's workforce system, it is expected that Connecticut's commitment to employment and training efforts will help employers and citizens on the road to economic recovery.

- *Job Corps* is primarily a residential, no-cost education and vocational training program administered by the U.S. Department of Labor that helps young people ages 16 through 24 get a better job, earn more money and take control of their lives. Onsite Labor Department employees provide staffing support for the two Job Corps centers. This includes screening, selection, assignment, enrollment of clients, counseling and job placement, community and participation and demonstration projects. With centers in Hartford and New Haven, more than 400 Job Corps students enroll each year to learn a trade, earn a high school diploma or GED, or get help finding a good job. Job Corps students are paid a monthly allowance and provided health and dental services, drivers' education, onsite daycare for children of non-residential students, career counseling, and transition support for up to 12 months after graduation. The Job Corps was awarded over \$118,000 in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding for construction improvements and green initiatives.
- Hundreds of educators, employment professionals and members of the business community attended the *Connecticut Learns and Works Conference* held annually in conjunction with the Connecticut Career Resource Network, a partnership between the Departments of Labor, Education, Economic Development, and the state's community college system. Now in its 15th year, the Conference provides a forum for exchanging workforce strategies and promoting partnerships.

Web-Based Services

- More than 8.2 million people visited the agency website and approximately 3.6 million people searched for information related to Unemployment Insurance benefits from July 2010 to June 2011. Visitors also searched the site for information relating to their job search efforts: 208,000 visitors sought job fair information; 123,000 sought employer recruitment information; 56,000 were interested in veterans' services; and 105,000 visitors sought information related to other job seeking methods.
- The *Connecticut Job & Career ConneCTion (JCC)* continues to receive more than 15,000 visitors each month – a monthly increase of nearly 3,000 or 23% from last year. The JCC site provides job descriptions, education and training requirements for each job category, wage information and employment projections for nearly 800 occupations. Included in the JCC is the VETCENTRAL Website, which allows military veterans to find similar civilian occupations by military code, rank, or branch of service.
- Nearly 9,000 visitors a month made use of the agency's *Connecticut Education & Training ConneCTion*, a leading online source of information on education and training in the state that provides access to thousands of training programs and courses.
- *CT JobCentral*, a self-service job bank, provides a wide range of employment services including job listing distribution to and from state employment websites and participation in a national labor exchange with other states. Job seekers can search all types of occupations and post their résumés online. Employers can post jobs and search résumés for qualified candidates. Technical assistance is provided to both employers and job seekers by CT *JobCentral* staff. A total of 1,928 new account requests from employers were processed by CT *JobCentral*. In addition, employers posted more than 22,110 new Connecticut job opportunities to the system and job seekers posted 9,675 résumés.

Workplace Guidance and Safety

- *Wage and Workplace Standards* enforces a wide range of workplace laws including minimum wage and overtime, wage payment, prevailing wage, and the employment of minors. Wage and Workplace staff recovered \$6,075,682 in owed wages for Connecticut workers this year.
- *State Board of Labor Relations* defines and protects the statutory rights of employees including the right of public employees to form, join, or assist labor organizations. The Board also encourages and protects the right of employees and employers to bargain collectively and remedies certain practices on the part of employees and employers that are detrimental to the collective bargaining process and to the general public. More than 80 percent of the cases filed with the State Board of Labor Relations are resolved short of a Board hearing, largely due to successful mediation efforts of Assistant Agents.
- *State Board of Mediation and Arbitration* provides mediation and arbitration services to employers and employee organizations in the public and private sector. The objectives of the Board are to save jobs by maintaining peaceful employer/employee relations and to promote equity between labor and management by resolving labor disputes.

- *Connecticut Occupational Safety and Health Division (CONN-OSHA)* enforces health and safety standards in public sector workplaces by conducting safety inspections, responding to complaints or requests, and investigating fatalities and serious accidents. Citations are issued where violations are discovered. Safety training and onsite safety and health consultations are provided to private and public sector employers on request, and the division offers no-cost technical assistance and information services on workplace hazards. The statistics unit collects data and provides information on workplace injuries, illnesses, and fatalities that occur in Connecticut.
- The *Office of Program Policy* provides legal counsel to the agency's executive administration and divisions, as well as technical assistance in unemployment insurance matters to agency adjudicators, as well as written opinions and verbal guidance in complex cases. In addition, staff provides classroom and workplace-based training in unemployment compensation statutes, regulations, case law and the adjudication process. Staff members also represent the Unemployment Compensation Administrator in hearings and related proceedings before the Employment Security Appeals Division and the Employment Security Board of Review. Staff members are involved in an employer education program that covers a wide range of topics.
- As the Connecticut arm of the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the *Office of Research* collects, analyzes and delivers information on the state's labor market. Information is collected and disseminated on employment levels, unemployment rates, wages and earnings, estimates of available labor, employment projections, business staffing patterns, and career planning information. Employers, career counselors, educators, economic developers, training program planners, policy makers, economists and the general public use the information.

The *Office of Research* also produces the monthly *Labor Situation* report and partners and with the Department of Economic and Community Development to produce the *Economic Digest*. The *Labor Situation* provides a monthly and over-the-year snapshot of the state's industry sectors and unemployment rate. Monthly estimates are later revised, using actual employer surveys. The *Economic Digest*, published each month, provides comprehensive and timely data on the state's workforce and economy.

- The *Employment Security Appeals Division* conducts appeal hearings from decisions granting or denying Unemployment Compensation benefits through two levels of Appeals. The first level (Referee Section) decided 19,301 appeals while the second level (Board of Review) decided 2,532 appeals. This year, the division continued to exceed the federally-mandated quality standards in issuing decisions.

Employer Services

- The *Tax Division* administers an equitable unemployment insurance tax program that protects both workers and employers through the fair enforcement of the Unemployment Compensation law. Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits paid to unemployed workers

totaled \$2.3 billion. Of that amount, \$856.5 million was paid to claimants formerly employed by employers paying quarterly UI taxes under the regular UI benefits program and \$1.5 billion was provided to claimants formerly employed by non-taxable employers and/or under other programs. Total taxes paid by more than 97,667 employers whose employees were covered by Unemployment Insurance totaled \$788.9 million.

- *Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)* program provides a federal tax credit for employers hiring individuals from specified groups. A total of 6,635 tax credit certifications were granted, an increase of 2,290 over 2009-2010 year end totals. Of this number, 2,264 certifications were provided to employers using the two new target groups Disconnected Youth and Unemployed Veteran created by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA).
- *Business Services* helps Connecticut's employers to hire, train and retain workers by analyzing the needs of businesses and customizing solutions. Between July 2010 and June 2011, Business Services staff administered the 21st Century Skills Training Program, a unique program for new and expanding Connecticut businesses that need to enhance the skills of the current workforce to remain competitive. Using an allocation of \$427,500, the staff developed agreements resulting in over \$800,000 in training that included green manufacturing, Lean government practices, and quality systems. The program trained 1,486 workers from 53 Connecticut companies. Additionally, Business Services staff helped Connecticut businesses with approximately 450 recruitments attended by 9,858 jobseekers.
- The *Center for Lean Government* offers Connecticut businesses and state agencies customized training programs and group work sessions that examine work processes for ways to reduce waste, identify customer values and finds ways to increase productivity through the elimination of unnecessary reports, paperwork, approval processes, information retrieval, work backlogs and time-consuming forms.
- The *Shared Work* program provides companies with an alternative to layoffs, allowing the employer to retain skilled workers. The company is able to cut back on the workweek by 20 to 40 percent, and employees retain a portion of their salary that is then supplemented by partial unemployment compensation benefits. *Shared Work* has been an outstanding resource for hundreds of Connecticut companies and their employees. The program experienced a dramatic increase in participation as the number of companies trying to stay open and keep the same level of skilled employees.

Grants and Awards

- In late 2010, a \$3.36M State Energy Sector Partnership (SEP) grant, made available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, and administered through the Office for Workforce Competitiveness (OWC) at the Connecticut Department of Labor, was awarded to the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission (CETC).

The primary focus of the SESP grant is to provide free and low-cost green training to unemployed and underemployed jobseekers, and incumbent workers in Connecticut. Regional project teams meet on a quarterly basis and steer regional training activities leading to employment in the green economy. Regional training efforts training began in January,

2011 and a minimum of 895 individuals will be served through December 31, 2012.

- *Dislocated Worker Grants*: The agency continued to administer three National Emergency Grants.
 - *Quebecor*: Contract period was extended to June 30, 2011 to enable the local Workforce Investment Board to continue to work with existing program participants (dislocated workers) to complete training. The extension also resulted in an increase the number enrolled in training and receiving supportive services. This extension addresses those participants who were late entries into the program and ensures an increased level of successful exits (entering employment).
 - *Tri-State Financial Sector*: Contract period was extended to June 30 to enable the local Workforce Investment Board to work with dislocated workers from Health Net. The company will experience layoffs through the end of the current calendar year and throughout 2011. The extension of the grant through June 2011 allows the provision of workforce support services to an additional 363 workers being laid off.
 - *Foxwoods Resort and Casino*: Contract extended to December 30 to serve an overwhelming response for training from newly-enrolled Foxwoods workers looking for training and job development assistance.
- *Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) - CT-NY Talent for Growth* is a collaborative effort with the Workplace, Inc. - southwestern Connecticut's Workforce Investment Board, to use the region's high growth industries to create an integrated, regionally-based talent development system linking education, workforce and economic development system partners in a seamless collaboration with regional employers. The \$4.5 million federal grant spans a three-year period and the region extends across state lines to include Westchester and Putnam Counties in New York.
- *USDOL-VETS Jobs for Veterans Act*: The \$1,860,000 grant was used to continue an agreement with the Connecticut Military Department to provide employment and training services for pre-mobilization and demobilization efforts on behalf of Connecticut's Army National Guard and Armed Forces Reserve members who have been activated for duty in the Global War on Terror.
- The agency received \$673,776 in federal funds to help match unemployed individuals with companies through an on-the-job training (OJT) program. The funds allowed the Department of Labor to put more people directly into the workplace at both large and small businesses so that they can gain the skills needed for long-term employment. The agency contracted with four of the state's Workforce Investment Boards to provide short-term, on-the-job training opportunities to unemployed individuals. The *CTWorks* Centers have seen a steady increase in interest for OJT and, as a result, the Workforce Boards have waiting lists for the program. The federal funds allowed more people to participate.
- Federal stimulus funds in the amount of \$1,393,069 were received to help retrain workers who lost their jobs as a result of foreign competition. The Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) grant is part of \$119.6 million awarded to states in a second distribution for fiscal

year 2010. The allocation brings Connecticut's grand total for the fiscal year to \$6,730,050. The TAA program provides displaced workers with the training, skills, resources and support needed to obtain re-employment. The \$1,393,069 will be used to provide career training and to pay for associated administrative costs. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) included a major expansion and reform of the TAA program. It also authorized an increase in the maximum amount of TAA funds that may be used for training nationwide from \$220 to \$575 million.

- *Getting Ahead of the Curve: Raising Educational/Skill Levels of Workers in Declining Industries:* A federal grant in the amount of \$2 million is being used to support an Early Warning System for declining industries and businesses. Early Warning System business service teams from the Department of Labor and local Workforce Investment Boards work one-on-one with employers and incumbent workers in need of training to avert layoffs.

The EWS project is an extension of Rapid Response services and a helpful platform for fostering and strengthening its statewide communication network. As a result of increasing interest from the state's employer community, Connecticut was awarded a no-cost one-year extension through June 30, 2012. To date, more than \$1.5 million has been budgeted for incumbent worker training for 29 Connecticut manufacturers. It is expected that funding for the EWS project will be fully committed by Dec. 31, 2011.

- The DOL administers the *Workforce Investment Act* federal funding, which this year totaled \$21.3 million and provided workforce services to more than 7,000 individuals. The prolonged economic downturn, which has spread across most of Connecticut's industries, continued to present challenges for the state and its workforce investment partners during Program Year 2010. The needs of individuals affected by the economic situation have increased, and demand for employment and training services has surged. Funding under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) has helped Connecticut's workforce investment partners to increase the availability of employment and training assistance, which is an important component to the economic recovery of the state.

The Connecticut Department of Labor and the Workforce Investment Boards (WIB) are focused on utilizing funding in the most effective manner, developing initiatives that provide both immediate opportunities and future potential, and supporting established projects that strengthen the workforce and business. Although the exceptional economic difficulties have created quite a test for the state's workforce system, it is expected that Connecticut's commitment to employment and training efforts will help employers and citizens on the road to economic recovery.

- *Individual Development Accounts (IDAs):* Funding in the amount of \$4,965,438 was administered by the agency since the program's inception in 2000 to help create self-sufficiency, enhance careers and build assets. IDAs are matched savings accounts designed to help low-income individuals and families save money that can be used to purchase assets. Since inception the agency has received \$907,500 in federal funding, \$2,355,000 in state-appropriated funds, \$600,000 in Connecticut Housing Trust Funds and \$1,147,500 in contributions from financial institutions or Community Action Agencies. The agency

administered four federal Assets for Independence Act grants, two Housing Trust Fund Initiatives and two Connecticut IDA Initiatives, to provide 973 IDA accounts statewide resulting in 318 asset purchases to date.

Technology/Website Enhancements

- A new Internet system was launched in June 2011 – a modernized interface as well as increased security for claimants and employers doing business with the Department of Labor.
- The agency Website underwent a redesign as a means of promoting consistency and professionalism in an initiative that involved all state agencies, while allowing visitors to obtain agency information much more quickly and easily.
- Valuable information from Connecticut’s Joint Enforcement Commission for Worker Misclassification is now available online to assist employers to correctly define workers as employees rather than “independent contractors.”
- *Connecticut’s Reemployment Portal* – the agency’s award-winning electronic tool displays occupations with similar characteristics such as knowledge areas, tools and technology, and general work activities of your selected occupation.
- The *Tax Division* provides expanded customer service to the state’s approximately 98,000 businesses by offering an Internet registration system and a quarterly tax filing system that includes the ability to pay electronically any monies that are due. Working with providers of commercial desktop payroll software and the Department of Revenue Services, the division also provides employers with a “Gateway” system to file and pay state withholding and state unemployment insurance taxes in one electronic transmission. Currently, the division receives electronic quarterly tax return submissions from approximately 60,000 employers via our Internet system, the Gateway or other electronic means such as diskettes and File Transfer Protocol (FTP) and processes roughly 600 Internet employer registrations each month.
- *1099 Online Retrieval System* – Beginning its second year of success, the online system allows Unemployment Insurance claimants to print benefits information required for federal tax reporting purposes directly from the Internet. The paper form equivalent (UC 1099-G) must still be mailed to claimants so the new system is most helpful to claimants who need a duplicate form due to loss of the original forms or change of address.
- *Digital Recordings* – The Digital Conferencing and Recording service has proven to be a major asset to the Unemployment Appeals Division. Hearing officers use the mechanism to record hearings in a digital format. The system is both efficient and cost-effective as it provides telephone conferencing, storage, archiving, retrieval of all hearing recordings and overall system maintenance. Recordings of hearings can be archived and paper records can be purged from storage in accordance with the existing retention schedule. Digital recordings of hearings are transferred to a permanent recording medium for archive in accordance with the existing retention schedule.

- The agency established a Web presence on *Facebook*, *LinkedIn* and *Twitter* social networking/media sites and has expanded its advertising and public outreach to a diverse, technology-savvy population.

Outreach Efforts/Public Education/New Publications

- The agency's *Speaker's Bureau* is a diverse pool of agency experts available for public speaking engagements on topics and issues within the agency's jurisdiction. Topics include employment law, worker health and safety, labor market information, workforce development, and unemployment insurance. Requests are made via telephone, fax, or by using the agency Website. This year, approximately 250 speaking requests were answered.
- The agency continued its successful Employer Education Breakfast Seminar Series. These seminars educate human resources professionals, business owners, attorneys and other interested parties about Connecticut employment laws. More than 600 participants attended seminars this past year.
- *CONN-OSHA* staff continued its monthly Employer Roundtable Discussion series of free events featuring guest speakers, panel discussions and an overview of state and federal safety and health regulations for the workplace. The discussion series, held on the third Tuesday of every month, continue to grow, with participation averaging between 30 and 40 attendees per event.

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Stimulus Programs

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 continued to help fund helps the financial stability of Connecticut families. In accordance with this Act, ARRA stimulus monies fund federal extensions to the unemployment insurance program and additional employment and training programs. The Connecticut Department of Labor directly administers the unemployment insurance program to provide weekly benefit checks, and works in partnership with the Office of Workforce Competitiveness and the *CTWorks* system to ensure effective and results-oriented employment programs.

The agency provides weekly updates on ARRA programs and funding through its internet site home page. A direct link can be accessed through www.ctdol.state.ct.us/recovery/index.htm

Labor Laws/Legislation

- The *Wage and Workplace Standards Division* administers a wide range of workplace laws, such as: the minimum wage (currently \$8.25 per hour effective Jan. 1, 2010); overtime laws, wage payment laws, prevailing wage; employment of minors, Family and Medical Leave Act, and misclassification of workers as independent contractors to avoid worker's compensation requirements. These responsibilities are contained in Title 31, chapters 557 and 558 of the State Statutes.

- The *Office of Program Policy* issued decisions on a variety of legal and policy questions within the agency's jurisdiction, including opinions in 341 individual unemployment compensation cases and 88 multi-claimant cases. Attorneys handled hearings before the Employment Security Appeals Division and the Employment Security Board of Review, whose decisions are precedent in similar unemployment compensation cases. More than 16 appeals, written arguments or motions were submitted to the Board of Review and Appeals Referees. A total of 69 FMLA complaints were received and 61 cases were closed either by settlement, withdrawal or dismissal.

Improvements/Achievements 2010-11

- As part of its *Unemployment Insurance Modernization* efforts, the agency introduced its new, *DirectBenefits* system of paying unemployment benefits – replacing paper checks with options for Direct Deposit or debit card payment options. This initiative saves the approximately \$300,000 in postage costs per month. In 2010, there were 25,704 returned checks; 18,492 tracers issued; and 17,292 stop payments issued. As a result, additional savings are realized by no longer voiding and reissuing lost and returned checks.
- The Connecticut Department of Labor was one of only four states that met all federally-mandated effective dates for implementing timely UI benefit payment extensions. The agency continued its track record in 2010 by putting the necessary business processes and application programming in place to accommodate an additional Extended Employment Compensation payment initiative with no negative impact to the State's unemployed claimant population.
- A re-engineered Tax and Benefits Web intake system was successfully implemented in June 2011 – improving Web system performance and capacity and expanding access for select groups of claimants (ex-military and former federal employees) to file initial unemployment claims online.
- A common Login was introduced for the agency's online claims and tax systems – replacing the need for customers and employers to enter sensitive information (social security and employer registration numbers). Instead, self-selected User IDs and passwords are now used, thereby minimizing potential fraud and identity theft.
- In collaboration with the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) and the Bureau of Enterprise Systems and Technology (formally DOIT), the agency completed a complex Web/Interactive Voice Response (IVR) upgrade in less than 60 days. The endeavor resulted in a marked improvement in the agency's intake processes and significantly reduced wait times for UI claimants who file for benefits by phone.
- Several mission critical IT applications were migrated to an advanced server architecture allowing multiple testing and development in virtual environments. Expected benefits of deploying this new technology are lower acquisition costs; reduced operational costs for deployment, troubleshooting and repair; and lower power, cooling and space requirements.

- The *Connecticut's Reemployment Portal* earned employees in the Connecticut Department of Labor's Office of Research honors in the *Electronic Tools* category of a Workforce Information Council-sponsored contest. The national organization, which oversees the development of labor market information practices for LMI-related agencies, awarded the program "state winner" designation at a Bureau of Labor Statistics' Directors conference held in Minneapolis. *Connecticut's Reemployment Portal* provides users with the ability to look for available jobs in their chosen occupation, or to search for employers who might hire individuals with their skills.
- The Department of Labor and the Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board joined forces to offer free, online job training courses to 1,000 residents who used employment services at one of the state's *CTWorks* Career Centers. The "study licenses" were provided and valid for 90 days – allowing job seekers to use a learning portal with access to 5,000 courses of study. In some cases, the training courses could be transferred to college credits.
- Individuals who wish to report suspected fraudulent unemployment insurance payments have the gained the option to use a new centralized email system. Information can now be reported to the agency's Benefit Payment Control Unit (BPCU) staff by using the email address dol.bpcu@ct.gov. The BPCU is responsible for prevention, detection and recovery of unemployment benefit overpayments. The agency's fraud hotline has been in operation for many years and tips and reports can be reported using the toll-free phone number 1-800-894-3490. The "tips" the agency receives frequently lead to overpayment investigations. As part of ongoing efforts to deter fraud, the following initiatives were put into place this past year:
 - *Federal pilot to fight fraud:* Connecticut and five other states are participating in a USDOL program that educates individuals and employers about consequences when collecting benefits fraudulently. Planning taking place during fiscal year 2010-2011 include interviews with claimants and employers, and development of educational messages for web and printed materials. These messages will be piloted in late 2011 and early 2012.
 - *Expansion of UI garnishment program:* Prior to implementation, agency was processing 30 or less garnishment requests a week using a manual process and "snail mail." Working with the courts, the new system uses an electronic process to enact approximately 450 wage garnishment requests a week.
 - *Treasury Offset Program (TOP):* Working in collaboration with the Internal Revenue Service and federal DOL, the agency initiated a pilot program of identifying individuals with a fraud overpayment that have not responded to agency requests for re-payment. IRS then intercepts the federal income tax return or federal wages. The program, which will be fully operational in 2012, will recoup payments for deposit in the unemployment insurance Trust Fund.
- *Misclassifications:* The agency increased its efforts to stop the practice of employee misclassification by making this issue a priority in fiscal year 2010-2011. Through its Wage and Workplace Standards Division, the agency increased public awareness and strengthened its efforts to identify and deter willful employee misclassification. Misclassification occurs when employers intentionally misclassify workers as independent contractors rather than

employees of the company. In an attempt to circumvent the law and cut costs by failing to provide required employee protections (such as workers compensation) employers create an unfair advantage over companies abiding by state laws. During the year, more than 100 construction projects were inspected more than 100 construction projects were visited and approximately 500 contractors' records were reviewed. This activity resulted in more than 170 Stop Work Orders which requires cited employers to show proof of appropriate coverage before worksites could be reopened and work resumed.

Information Reported as Required by State Statute

Violations on Wages and Hours

- A total of \$6,075,682 was recovered in legally-due wages for employees over the past year. This amount included \$3,351,993 recovered by wage enforcement agents for wages due; \$1,480,556 for non payment of minimum wage and/or overtime; and \$1,235,704 for non-payment of prevailing wage rates. In addition, a total of 434 cases were assigned to the agency's Wage and Workplace Standards Division. Violations were cited in the following areas: personnel files; hours of labor (mercantile establishments); night work of minors (manufacturing/mechanical establishments); hours of labor of minors; prohibited employment of minors; working papers/certificates of age); smoking in the workplace; meal periods; and reasonable suspicion (drug testing).

Unemployment Compensation

- Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits paid to unemployed workers totaled \$2.3 billion. Of that amount, \$856.5 million was paid to claimants formerly employed by employers paying quarterly UI taxes under the regular UI benefits program and \$1.5 billion was provided to claimants formerly employed by non-taxable employers and/or under other programs. Total taxes paid by more than 97,667 employers whose employees were covered by Unemployment Insurance totaled \$788.9 million.

Population and Employment Data

- Through its Office of Research, the agency completes special state, local, or sub-state regional studies and economic analyses to provide information support for economic transition, workforce development initiatives, education program analysis and development, and responses to major layoffs or disasters. Strategies for addressing issues such as labor gaps, and for positioning the state's educational and workforce systems to be able to respond quickly to critical areas of workforce need, are a fundamental part of the Governor's vision for Connecticut's workforce and economic development efforts.
- The Office of Research collaborated with the University of Connecticut's Center for Population Research to produce *Mass Layoffs and Their Impact on Earnings During Recessions and Expansions* that examines the earnings losses of workers displaced due to mass layoff at various points in the business cycle.

Occupational Analysis Products and Publications

- *Connecticut Careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics* (STEM) provides statewide data on employment, wages, and educational attainment in STEM occupations, and compares Connecticut's employment concentration in STEM industries with the U.S.
- *Higher Education...Building Connecticut's Workforce* was updated to include labor market outcomes for graduates of the state's public colleges. The report summarizes employment and earnings results for students who graduated from one of the state's 18 public colleges during the 2008 school year, and provides detailed information on the employed graduates by industry sector, college and degree program.
- *How Green is Connecticut's Economy* addresses the impact of the "greening" phenomenon and its affect on Connecticut's economy. The report quantifies the number of "green" jobs in the state's economy and forecasts how the employment numbers will fare over time.
- *Your Job Search Guide* offers updated work search and career planning advice, interviewing tips, tips on writing effective résumés and cover letters, and a wide variety of state and online resources.
- *Connecticut Career Paths: 2010-2012* Narrative descriptions of over 150 occupations with number employed, job openings, training required, education & training sites and salary info. Includes articles on writing a great résumé, using the Internet for career & job development, choosing a career, hot jobs in Connecticut, health occupations, Connecticut's school-to-career initiative, and programs and resources available to help people with job and career decisions.
- *Connecticut Job & Career Connection*: Intended for use by students, teachers, counselors, job developers, job seekers, anyone in need of information on jobs and careers. It will guide you with a step-by-step process to explore the world of work - choosing an occupation, finding appropriate education and training, and finding the right job.
- *Connecticut's Middle-Skill Jobs*: Connecticut has more middle-skill jobs than low- or high-skill jobs. Over the next decade, strong growth in middle-skill jobs and wages is expected as the demand continues to rise. In Connecticut, it is projected that nearly four out of every ten job openings (new and replacement) will require only middle-skills. Overall, the demand for middle-skills is likely to grow rapidly over the next decade and beyond – both overall and within key sectors.
- *The Training and Education Planning System* is a tool designed to aid the analysis and discussion of the demand and supply of talent in Connecticut's workforce. It is intended to help identify where there may be skill shortages or surpluses in the labor market, and thereby guide investments in education and training programs by program planners and administrators, as well as by individuals considering career options.
- *Connecticut Occupational Employment and Wages – 2010*: Provides accurate and meaningful wage information to employers, job seekers, counselors, students, planners of vocational education programs, economic developers, Regional Workforce Development Boards, and others.
- *Connecticut Education & Training Connection*: Intended for use by students, teachers, counselors, job seekers, job developers, and others in need of information on education and training. It offers several search options to explore the world of Education & Training in Connecticut - find providers in your area, locate providers that offer the program or course you are interested in, or find out which programs or courses are related to the occupation you are interested in.

- *Connecticut's Reemployment Portal*: Job-hunting requires some creative thinking. Whether you've been in the same job for many years or find yourself having to "transition" to a new job, making a career change can be a frightening and frustrating experience. The Reemployment Portal displays occupations with similar characteristics such as knowledge areas, tools and technology, and general work activities of your selected occupation.

CONN-OSHA

- *Report on inspections*: The Occupational Safety and Health Division conducted safety and/or health compliance inspections at 96 public worksites, affecting workplace conditions of 2,814 state and municipal employees. Violations were documented in 41 of those inspections, with citations for 99 "serious" and 81 "other than serious" violations.
- *Report on consultations, training and clinics*: CONN-OSHA provided safety and health consultations to 256 private-sector businesses that collectively employ 21,379 workers, and to 46 public sector workplaces with a total of 13,640 employees. Additionally, safety training programs and outreach were provided to more than 5,691 employees.

Mediation and Arbitration

- During the year, 807 grievances were filed for arbitration and 1,054 formal grievance arbitration hearings were scheduled, which resulted in 913 cases being successfully closed and 100 awards issued. Expiration notices on 217 private sector contracts were received. In compliance with State Statutes, the Board of Mediation and Arbitration imposed binding arbitration on 337 municipal contracts and no state contracts. Mediators responded to a total of 568 requests for grievance mediation.