

Department of Labor



At a Glance

SCOTT D. JACKSON, Commissioner

Kurt Westby, Deputy Commissioner

Established - 1873

Statutory authority - C.G.S. Sec. 31-1 to 31-403 (excluding chapter 568)

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

Average number of full-time employees - 733

Recurring operating expenses 2015-16: Federal - \$93,047,656; State - \$89,133,879

Capital Outlay: Federal - \$106,504; State - \$4,417; CEPF - \$460,928

Website - www.ct.gov/dol

Mission

The Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL) is committed to providing the state's jobseekers and business community with services to strengthen our workforce, communities and the state's economy.

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, CONN-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

Workforce Policy Advisors

- Through its *Office of Workforce Competitiveness* (OWC), CTDOL serves as the Governor's principal workforce development policy advisor. OWC works to coordinate employment, education and training programs and promote innovative strategies and ideas that will stimulate employment opportunities and job growth. OWC staff also provides technical assistance to the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission (CETC) whose members represent Connecticut businesses, employers, key state agencies, regional/local entities, organized labor, community-based organizations and other stakeholders.

Unemployment Insurance Assistance

- *Unemployment Insurance* (UI) benefits are provided to unemployed persons while claimants look for new work or take part in approved training programs. This year the agency enhanced its online benefits filing system, located at FileCTUI.com. The [new system](#) now allows claimants to file a first time (initial) or re-opened claim by using the web. Prior to this improvement, claimants had to use wait on the phone and speak to a Customer Service Representative to complete a new claim. While the phone system remains available in English and Spanish to all claimants, FileCTUI.com offers a quicker, more streamlined process. A "Quick Links" section on the site also allows claimants to access a variety of related services, such as benefit payment history or a request a change a mailing address. The online system also provides an appeals filing application for unemployment insurance decisions. During the year, \$670 in benefits was provided to unemployed workers needing assistance while securing their next job. The average number of weeks a claimant collected benefits before finding new employment was approximately 17 weeks.
- *Shared Work*, a component of the unemployment insurance program, was expanded in 2014 to cover additional Connecticut employers and employees. When companies are facing tough economic conditions, Shared Work offers an alternative to layoffs. Employers can remain open, and retain skilled workers while employees work a temporarily reduced workweek and receive partial unemployment benefits for the hours lost. Additional information can be found under the *Grants and Awards* section.

- *Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)* is designed to help individuals return to suitable employment as quickly as possible. Participants are part of worker groups certified by the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) whose jobs were believed to be affected by increased imports or a shift in production to a foreign country. Benefits to eligible workers include job training, job search assistance, 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. TAA activity during the program year included:
 - *Worker group certifications*: Petitions filed on behalf of workers from 17 companies were approved, with the workers determined by USDOL to be adversely affected by foreign trade and certified as eligible to apply for TAA; petitions filed on behalf of workers from four companies were denied.
 - *Individual applications*: 792 individuals were identified by USDOL as potentially eligible to apply for TAA benefits and 294 eligibility determinations were issued in response to submitted applications.
 - *Training*: 123 individuals entered TAA-approved training programs and 373 individuals were active in training. Training payments totaled \$789,133.
 - *Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA)*: A total of \$3,558,445 was paid for 7,138 weekly TRA claims, representing 3,146 weeks of basic TRA, 3,701 weeks of additional TRA, 27 weeks of remedial TRA and 264 weeks of completion 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, 65, or 78 weeks of additional TRA, depending on the Trade Act petition number; and up to 26 weeks of remedial/completion TRA.
 - *Reemployment/Alternative Trade Adjustment Assistance (R/ATAA)*: A total of \$193,527 in payments was issued to eligible workers.
 - *Health Coverage Tax Credit (HCTC)*: The HCTC tax credit covers 72.5% of qualified health insurance premiums for eligible individuals and their families. This IRS program expired January 1, 2014, but was reauthorized in June of 2015.
- *Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN)* is also geared to lend timely re-employment assistance to workers that will soon be losing their jobs. The federal program requires Connecticut employers of 100 or more full-time workers to give 60-days advance notice of a plant closing or mass layoff if they: (1) close a facility or discontinue an operating unit affecting at least 50 employees, not counting part-time workers, or (2) lay off 50-499 workers (and these workers comprise at least 33% of the total workforce at a single site of employment); or (3) lay off 500 or more workers at a single site of employment. The 60-day advance notice, which must also be given to the appropriate local chief elected official, allows state and municipal entities to offer workforce assistance to affected employees prior to layoffs, including “*Early Intervention*” sessions.

The state's *Rapid Response Team*, headed by CTDOL, reaches out to Connecticut employers contemplating or experiencing plant closings, helps to ease the impact of layoffs, and assures workers are offered a full range of benefits and services. Prior to layoffs, the agency's Rapid Response staff conducts "*Early Intervention*" sessions where employees can learn about unemployment benefits, job search assistance, training opportunities and receive information about community services and local agencies that provide support to dislocated workers and their families. The Team includes representatives from local Workforce Development Boards and agencies such as the departments of Economic and Community Development and Social Services.

From July 2015 to June 2016, the Unit made 261 initial outreach calls regarding potential layoffs and responded to 53 WARN notices affecting 6,385 workers. Staff made 90 employer and/or union visits and provided 103 presentations to 2,322 impacted workers, which included nine on-site job search and/or career planning workshops and 33 webinars for workers at companies that opted not to have on-site meetings.

Employment sites where face-to-face contact was not possible were provided packets of information, benefiting an additional 1,728 dislocated workers, including human resources managers and union representatives. An additional 484 webinar invitations were sent to workers who were part of large layoffs but whose employers declined on-site visits or had employees who work remotely. To increase awareness of these services, in FY 2015-2016, the Unit helped staff seven statewide job fairs and five company-specific job fairs and provided information to 1,895 jobseekers.

The Unit submitted 17 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. Nine of the 17 petitions, covering 620 workers, were certified as TAA eligible. Two petitions resulted in negative determinations while six were pending investigation at the close of the program year.

Employment and Training Assistance

- CTDOL's *Employment Services* (ES) program receives federal funding under the *Wagner-Peyser Act* to provide universal access to an array of labor exchange services. ES provides a variety of these services at *American Job Center* (AJC) locations throughout Connecticut, including job search assistance, referrals to jobs, placement assistance for jobseekers, reemployment services to claimants receiving unemployment insurance, and employee recruitment services to businesses with job openings.

During FY 2015-2016, 47,719 *Wagner-Peyser* program participants received services (staff-assisted or self-service) at AJC offices, with 143,458 staff-assisted services provided statewide. A total of 25,225 *Wagner-Peyser* customers benefited from employment services, including assistance with career choices and job searches; resources such as computers with Internet connection, phones/copiers; and résumé writing, interviewing and career exploration workshops. In addition, 9,042 individuals received résumé services at CTDOL-sponsored events and the job centers.

- *CTHires* (Connecticut Helping Individuals and Employers Reach Employment Success – www.cthires.com) was implemented December 2015 and is the agency’s new comprehensive workforce development system designed to provide cost-free integrated services via the Internet to individuals and employers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. From December 2015 through June 2016, a total of 2,653 registrations from businesses were processed by *CTHires* staff. During this same period, employers posted 18,152 new Connecticut job openings and jobseekers placed 4,037 new résumés into the system. In addition, 88,835 jobs have been indexed from corporate websites. Indexing allows jobseekers to click on a job title and be taken directly to the job listing on the employer’s website. *CTHires* users can look for jobs based on multiple search criteria including location, occupation, skills, salary and employer name. The system offers quality, unduplicated job listings entered directly into *CTHires* by Connecticut employers or drawn from an employer’s corporate website. Jobseekers can post their résumés online while employers can post jobs and search the résumé bank for qualified candidates. The Virtual Recruiter component of *CTHires* allows individuals to save a job search and run it periodically to identify new job postings that match their criteria.
- *Jobs First Employment Services (JFES)* serves families receiving state cash assistance, Temporary Family Assistance (TFA), through the agency’s partnership with the Department of Social Services (DSS) and the Workforce Development Boards. During, fiscal year 2015-2016, a total of 13,293 participants received employment services from *American Job Center* staff or through contracted service providers. Services included job search assistance, vocational education, adult basic education, subsidized employment, case management and other support services such as transportation benefits.

JFES Case Managers received training on several different topics including *Serving Customers with Cognitive Limitations*, *Presentation Skills*, and *Building Trust between Case Managers and Participants*. In addition, CTDOL Jobs First Unit staff began working on building the Jobs First component within the *CTHires* system that will enable Jobs First case management and administrative staff to track activities and successes of Connecticut’s Job First participants more accurately.

- *STRIDE (Skills, Transitional Support, Respect, Integrity, Direction, and Employment)*: Through an agreement with the state’s community colleges, CTDOL funds Quinnebaug Valley Community College’s STRIDE re-entry program that provides transitional support services to incarcerated and paroled individuals. The program offers job search and job placement assistance and services to support self-sufficiency and re-integration into the community. Services this year included pre-release classroom instruction and case management; transportation for job-related activities; and assistance at the *American Job Center* offices, including online job searches. The program exceeded performance goals with 125 participants placed in full- or part-time employment.
- *Business Services* helped Connecticut employers to hire, train and retain workers by analyzing the needs of businesses and customizing solutions. Between July 2015 and June 2016, Business Services staff assisted employers with more than 496 employee

recruitments attended by approximately 5,925 jobseekers. State-funded training programs Business Services provided to employers include the following:

- The *Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) Program* helps employers upgrade employee skills, thereby helping businesses to remain competitive and avert layoffs. Employers provide a 50% or greater match for each training program, which includes training in manufacturing, allied health and green technology. This year, CTDOL provided \$680,000 in Incumbent Worker Training funds to 69 Connecticut employers with 2,495 employees participating. Legislation requires that a minimum of 50% of the Incumbent Worker Training funds go to new employers, however, CTDOL surpassed this requirement and provided 89% of the funds to new employers, far surpassing the legislative requirement.
- The *Manufacturing Innovation Fund Incumbent Worker (MIF IWT) Program* provides financial assistance to Connecticut manufacturers for growing innovative and technology-based manufacturing businesses. MIF IWT helps employers meet emerging market needs and improve productivity and efficiency by enhancing the skills of their current workforce. This year, 98 companies were awarded \$2,616,823 to train 4,054 workers. More than 20% of those workers have already achieved an upgraded position due to skills training and 71% of the companies completing training report that upgraded skills are expected to increase production rate. The program is in collaboration with the Department of Economic and Community Development.
- *Subsidized Training and Employment Program (Step Up)* promotes job creation and worker opportunities for Connecticut small businesses and unemployed workers and offers employer incentives for hiring new workers. This state program, part of the 2011 Jobs Creation Bill, has resulted in the hiring of 5,049 new employees with 1,695 companies participating in the program. This includes those hired under *Step Up for Vets*, a 2012 expansion of the original program.
- *Career Fairs*: Nine Connecticut Career Fairs were held this past fiscal year, including a veteran-specific Heroes4Hire Job Fair co-sponsored by the Department of Veterans' Affairs, as well as a Diverse Ability fair focused on hiring individuals with disabilities. The fairs drew 366 company recruiters and 3,550 jobseekers. The events also included no-cost résumé writing critiques and assistance provided by trained résumé staff at the Labor Department. Employers are not required to report hires as a result of the job fairs; however, exit surveys from jobseekers and employers indicate that companies are highly satisfied with the caliber of candidates attending these events while jobseekers have noted that employers have hired them at the event or set up additional interviews.
- *Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)* program provides a federal tax credit for employers hiring individuals from specified groups and a new target group identified as *The Long Term Unemployed*. A total of 4,817 tax credit certifications were granted between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016.

- CTDOL's *Alien Certifications Program* ensures that employers have exhausted all efforts to hire American workers before recruiting foreign workers prior to receiving certification. Acting as an agent for USDOL, in fiscal year 2015-2016, CTDOL staff processed 49 H-2A job order certifications for temporary foreign agricultural workers. A total of 94 pre-occupancy housing inspections in connection with agricultural certifications were also completed.
- The agency's *Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers* program provided outreach services to 727 workers, including information on available workforce services, referrals to healthcare providers, and related supportive services. Agricultural employers received recruitment assistance, mediation, interpreter services, and technical guidance on compliance with the Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker regulations.
- *Job Corps*, a federally funded educational and vocational training program administered by USDOL, enrolled more than 400 students who earned a high school diploma or GED, learned a trade, obtained third party certifications and receives assistance finding a good job. The program helps low income youth (ages 16-24) gain workplace skills, train for high-demand occupations, and become independent and self-sufficient. CTDOL has an assigned staff member providing on-site support to the Hartford Job Corps Academy and New Haven Job Corps Center.
- *Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG)* is a national program dedicated to preventing dropping out of school by youth who are most at-risk. The program focuses on personal engagement and accountability, education and training needed for in-demand careers, and employment. JAG also includes mentoring, project-based learning, community engagement and 12 months of post-graduation follow-up. CT has a state-based JAG program operated by the Hartford Consortium for Higher Education. The JAG CT program is located in six high school systems – East Hartford, Manchester, New Britain, New Britain High School Satellite Career Academy, and New Haven's Hillhouse and New Horizons schools. During the 2015-2016 school year, JAG CT served 239 students with graduation rates ranging from 73% to 95%.
- The *Jobs Funnel Initiative*: Comprised of public-private joint efforts around the state, the program places unemployed and underemployed individuals in a variety of employment opportunities including construction and non-construction jobs in both union and non-union settings and apprenticeship training programs. The Funnel partnerships have placed more than 4,308 individuals into jobs since their inception.
- *Individual Development Accounts (IDAs)*: Since it began in 2000, \$5,419,363 has been administered by CTDOL. The program helps create self-sufficiency, enhance careers and build assets. IDAs are matched savings accounts designed to help low-income individuals and families save money to purchase assets. Since the IDA program began, CTDOL has received \$907,500 in federal funding, \$2,725,250 in state-appropriated funds, \$600,000 in Connecticut Housing Trust Funds, and \$1,186,613 in contributions from financial institutions and/or community action agencies. CTDOL has administered four federal Assets for Independence Act grants, two Housing Trust Fund initiatives and three

Connecticut Individual Development Accounts (IDA) initiatives to provide 962 Individual Development Accounts statewide, resulting in 424 asset purchases to date.

Apprenticeship Services

The *Office of Apprenticeship Training* administers Connecticut's Registered Apprenticeship system, which is supported by the state's general fund and industry support from registration fees. Registered apprenticeship is a proven solution for training and retaining talent and offers individuals the opportunity of "learning while earning." Currently, 1,666 active employer-sponsors and 5,875 registered apprentices are involved in the program. In addition, 246 apprentices completed their apprenticeship training while 342 new apprentices were registered in the program this year.

The Office provides registration, monitoring, technical assistance and consulting services for the administration of apprenticeship agreements per state regulations and standards. Registered Apprenticeship provides a structured training strategy that combines on-the-job training with related technical instruction.

As part of its efforts to expand registered apprenticeship within the manufacturing sector, the program administers the *Manufacturing Innovation Fund*, a collaborative effort funded by the Department of Economic and Community Development to subsidize wages, classroom instruction, and credentialing for apprentices registered by manufacturers. To date, nearly 75 companies and 90 registered apprentices have participated in this initiative.

The office also administers the recently-awarded *American Apprenticeship Initiative (AAI)* which has the goal of growing registered apprenticeship in advanced manufacturing as well as non-traditional sectors such as information technology, healthcare and businesses services.

The office also qualifies employers for tax credits, works with the Department of Education, Department of Consumer Protection and other state agencies, and performs outreach to veterans, employer groups, and many community-based organizations to promote Registered Apprenticeship in Connecticut.

Veterans' Services

Office for Veterans' Workforce Development (OVWD) helps Connecticut veterans through its team of Veterans' Employment Representatives located at *American Job Centers*, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs offices, and various outstations throughout the state.

During the year, employment and training services were provided to more than 5,900 veterans. 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.

In April 2016, OVWD sponsored a *Heroes4Hire* job fair, that featured 100 employers and was attended by more than 1,000 veterans. In addition to having the chance to meet with

representatives from companies with job openings, veterans were provided information on veterans' benefits, vocational rehabilitation, résumé critique assistance, education and career options, and career development guidance.

OVWD continues to work toward ending veteran's homelessness and chronic homelessness through its Homeless Veterans Employment Program. Under a state grant, six employment specialists provide information on federal, state and local programs to assist veterans with their needs and refer veterans to USDVA and CTDVA for housing needs and the *American Job Centers* for employment and training needs. During fiscal year 2015-2016, staff met with 326 homeless veterans or those at risk of becoming homeless, and provided job assistance and helped secure housing. More than 130 of these clients are employed, and the success of Connecticut's program was recognized this year in national remarks made by President Obama.

In September 2015, veterans in need were provided services by OVWD staff at Stand Down. This event, held at the State Veterans' Home in Rocky Hill, offered opportunities for veterans who are homeless, chronically unemployed, or have difficulty adjusting in society. CTDOL services included résumé writing assistance, online job search guidance and registration for employment services.

Transitioning services were also provided by OVWD staff to Connecticut's National Guard and Army Reserve troops returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. At four demobilization briefings, services were provided to more than 150 Army, Marines, Sailors and Airman. Services included information and referrals to benefits and federal training programs, and education, and employment programs offered through the *American Job Centers*. Unemployment information was also provided to those discharged from active military service. OVWD staff participated in numerous 30, 60 and 90 day follow-ups with these units and their families. This important transitioning process for retuning troops is accomplished through the joint efforts of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, CTDOL's veterans' staff, CT Department of Veterans' Affairs, USDOL, and the Connecticut Military Department.

The Subsidized Training and Employment Program (Step Up), expanded by the Legislature to allow all unemployed veterans to take part in the wage subsidy and training program (previously, the program was only available to post 9-11 combat veterans) is part of the original Step Up program created under the Jobs Bill of 2011. The "Step Up for Vets" program has now provided 284 employers the opportunity to hire 546 veterans using state funding to help subsidize the positions for up to six months.

Reemployment Services for Unemployment Insurance Claimants

During periods of unemployment, the agency provides a variety of federally-funded reemployment services to residents. Reemployment assistance to UI claimants is delivered through several linked programs: Unemployment Insurance Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (UI RESEA); Unemployment Insurance Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment (UI REA) program; and the Enhanced Reemployment Services (ERS) program. The goal of these programs is to provide UI claimants early access to services that will help get them back into the workforce

faster. The UI RESEA and UI REA programs also serve as prevention/detection programs regarding improper UI payments.

Unemployment Insurance Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment (UI REA) program:

CTDOL implemented the UI REA program in October 2015 by scheduling UI REA appointments in the Bridgeport, Hartford, Hamden, New London, and Waterbury *American Job Centers*.

Claimants selected to participate in the program report in-person and receive services listed below. Each claimant is referred to an appropriate service(s) and/or training consistent with a reemployment plan. UI REA Services include:

- UI eligibility assessment and referral to adjudication if a potential issue is identified
- Provide labor market and career information specific to the claimant's needs.
- Registration with the *CTHires*, state's job bank.
- Orientation to *American Job Center* (AJC) services.
- Develop/review individualized reemployment plans; includes work search activities, accessing AJC services, and training if approved.
- Referral to at least one reemployment service and/or training, based on assessment of the claimant's most critical need.

Since implementation of UI REA through June 2016, a total of 8,428 UI REA appointments were scheduled with 6,126 appointments successfully completed and 5,164 claimants participating in a required reemployment activity.

Enhanced Reemployment Services (ERS) program:

ERS identifies UI claimants who are likely to exhaust their benefits, unlikely to return to their previous occupations, and will need workforce services to find new employment. Orientation sessions conducted for 2,034 ERS participants included providing labor market information, career guidance and assistance with the *CTHires* state job bank, overview of AJC services, and details on UI benefit rights and responsibilities. Many ERS participants also benefited from employment services and training. Also during the program year, staff-assisted reemployment services were provided to 17,381 UI claimants.

Unemployment Insurance Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (UI RESEA):

UI RESEA is similar to UI REA, which is an earlier version of the program. Efforts to transition from UI REA to UI RESEA and provide UI claimants with employment services has continued this year (see more under "*Grants and Awards*" section).

Safety and Wage Services, Public Guidance

- *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 *Wage and Workplace Standards Division* recovered \$7,147,775.07 in owed wages for Connecticut workers this year. The Division enforces approximately 160 state statutes and administers a wide range of workplace laws, including the minimum wage (currently \$9.60 and increasing to \$10.10 effective Jan. 1, 2017), overtime laws, wage payment laws, prevailing wage, employment of minors, Family and Medical Leave Act, and misclassification of workers as independent contractors.
- The *UI Tax Division* administers an equitable unemployment insurance tax program that protects both workers and employers through the fair enforcement of the Unemployment Compensation law. UI benefits paid to unemployed workers totaled \$670 million. Of that amount, \$620 million was paid to claimants formerly employed by employers paying quarterly UI taxes under the regular UI benefits program, and \$50 million was provided to claimants formerly employed by non-taxable employers and/or under other programs. Total taxes paid by more than 100,000 employers whose employees were covered by Unemployment Insurance totaled \$815 million.

The *Wage and Workplace Standards Division* and the *UI Tax Division* work to ensure workers are not misclassified. Workers misclassified as independent contractors can experience a loss of many worker protections such as UI benefits, workers' compensation coverage, no overtime pay, pay below minimum wage, and often a job without health benefits. This also creates an unfair advantage over companies abiding by state laws.

During the year, in an effort to deter misclassification, CTDOL's Wage and Workplace Standards Division visited 263 construction projects and reviewed 512 contractor records. This resulted in the issuance of 226 Stop Work orders, which requires cited employers to show proof of appropriate coverage, such as worker's compensation, before worksites can be re-opened and work resumed.

The UI Tax Division conducted nearly 1,700 employer audits and approximately 9,000 individual wage investigations. These examinations resulted in the reclassification of more than 7,000 workers and the discovery of more than \$53 million in previously unreported payroll.

Information about misclassification from Connecticut's Joint Enforcement Commission on Employee Misclassification is available [online](#) to assist employers in the proper classification of their workers.

- *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.
- The *Employment Security Appeals Division* conducts appeal hearings from decisions granting or denying unemployment compensation benefits through two levels of appeal. The first level (Referee Section) decided 15,678 appeals while the second level (Board of Review) decided 1,772 appeals. This year, the Referee Section and the Board of Review continued to exceed the federally-mandated quality standards in issuing its decisions. In June 2016, the Appeals Division hosted the National Association of Unemployment Insurance Professionals conference in Hartford.
- The *Office of Program Policy* provides legal counsel to the agency, technical assistance in unemployment insurance matters to agency adjudicators, and written opinions and verbal guidance in complex cases. Employees also provide training in unemployment compensation statutes, regulations, case law and the adjudication process and represent the Unemployment Compensation Administrator in hearings and related proceedings before the Employment Security Appeals Division and the Employment Security Board of Review.

In 2015-2016, Program Policy staff issued decisions in 656 individual unemployment compensation cases and 61 multi-claimant cases and entered more than 494 decisions associated with the multi-claimant cases. More than 90 appeals, written arguments or motions were submitted to the Board of Review and Appeals Referees. In addition to providing educational presentations to employer groups, office attorneys handled Freedom of Information requests, FMLA complaints, and retaliation cases that concerned complaints filed by individuals under three retaliation statutes – wage retaliation, unemployment compensation retaliation, and public-sector OSHA retaliation.

- The agency's *Office of Research*, in cooperation with the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 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. A survey of workplace injuries and illnesses and a census of work-related fatalities are conducted annually. 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 *Labor Situation* report and partners 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. The *Economic Digest* provides data and articles on the state's workforce and economy. This year also saw the addition of added detail statistics about job postings from the Conference Board Help Wanted Online Data series.

- The *Lean Government Process Improvement* program continues to actively promote its services to state agencies and organizations. The program, which consists of formal classroom training and group sessions, works in a team setting to map out work processes, identify customer values, and find ways to slash waste. The goal is to promote increased productivity, fewer errors and improve quality by eliminating unnecessary reports and paperwork and streamlining approval processes and information retrieval.

Grants and Awards

- *Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA)*: In fiscal year 2015-2016, CTDOL received \$32 million in federal funding that was used to provide workforce services to approximately 5,500 individuals and to help state workforce partners increase the availability of employment and training assistance. The CTDOL and the Workforce Development Boards developed new employment and training initiatives to promote employment opportunities that show the best potential for job growth, and funded projects to strengthen Connecticut's workforce and businesses.
- *Shared Work*: The agency was awarded a \$1.2 million federal grant in 2015 to improve technology and programming used to administer this unemployment insurance program, improve the administration of the program with direct oversight, and develop outreach materials and activities to help promote Shared Work to Connecticut employers. As part of the grant, outreach events and presentations are spreading the word to employers about the program and its benefits, and informational materials such as brochures, tip sheets, testimonials, mailers, video and [new website](#) are available.

Due to increased outreach efforts, this year the program has served 2,979 UI claimants and 341 employers, of which 58 were new to the program. Outreach also has included informational workshops with PowerPoint presentations for both employers and employees to help explain the benefits of Shared Work. Materials can be found at the new web address: www.sharedworkct.com.

- *Unemployment Insurance Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (UI RESEA)*: The agency was awarded a federal grant of \$913,219 in 2016 for UI RESEA, a program addressing reemployment needs of transitioning military veterans receiving unemployment compensation and claimants identified as most likely to exhaust benefits. UI RESEA, which also helps to prevent and detect UI improper payments, is similar to Unemployment Insurance Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment (UI REA), an earlier version of the program. CTDOL has continued with efforts to transition from UI REA to UI RESEA and provide UI claimants with the intensive employment services required. As a condition of continuing eligibility for benefits, a claimant selected for UI REA/RESEA is required to report for an in-person meeting at a designated *American Job Center* (AJC) for an orientation to AJC services. At the AJC, the claimant is provided with labor market and career information specific to the claimant's job skills and employment prospects; an assessment of the claimant's needs; an individualized reemployment plan to expedite a return to work; appropriate referrals to reemployment services and/or training; and an unemployment insurance eligibility review with referral to adjudication if an eligibility issue or potential issue is raised.

- The *Disability Employment Initiative*: Connecticut was one of eight states to receive a grant under the U.S. Department of Labor’s Disability Employment Initiative (DEI). Awarded on October 2013 to CTDOL’s Office of Workforce Competitiveness, the three-year, \$3,058,706 grant is focused on enhancing employment services to individuals with disabilities in the public workforce investment system.

The Disability Employment Initiative builds upon previous CTDOL efforts, such as the Disability Program Navigator initiative, by hiring disability resource coordinators and case managers with expertise in disability and workforce issues to provide a full range of employment assistance, coordinate services, and leverage funding to meet the needs of jobseekers with disabilities using *American Job Center* services.

Under the grant, in PY2015, *American Job Center* staff received training on topics including assistive technology, asset development, the integrated resource team service delivery model, and job development training. New assistive technology was purchased for the *American Job Centers* and “Diverse Ability Career Fairs ” have been held in Rocky Hill, Waterbury and Hartford, with a fourth event planned in Waterbury for October 2016.

- *Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) Grant*: This \$6 million federal grant for an “Eastern CT Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative” involves bringing innovative approaches to the design/delivery of employment and training services that have the potential to generate long-term improvements in the workforce system. Administered by CTDOL in partnership with the Eastern CT Workforce Development Board, the grant runs from October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2019.

Connecticut’s model is focused on the current hiring needs of Electric Boat (EB) for skilled labor. Developing curriculum specific to EB’s need for trades workers; providing short-term training to unemployed and under-employed jobseekers; and placing training graduates in jobs at EB or other area employers are goals of the initiative. The project will be evaluated by an independent evaluator with potential replication of the project’s model elsewhere in the state and across the country.

As a result of the grant, 97 participants were enrolled in the WIF grant; 57 were enrolled in customized occupational training, 29 completed training, and 27 were employed in jobs following training – 25 of those in jobs at EB as of June 30, 2016.

- During 2015-2016, CTDOL administered *National Dislocated Worker Grants* (formerly National Emergency Grants under the previous Workforce Investment Act). The grants, awarded by the USDOL to serve dislocated workers, include the following:
 - *Job Driven National Emergency Grant*: CTDOL was awarded \$3,392,350 to implement a program to help dislocated workers get back to work, with focus on the long-term unemployed. CTDOL and Workforce Development Board partners (the Northwest Regional WDB, the Eastern CT WDB, and Workforce Alliance) provided services under this grant. The grant runs from July 2014 to September 2016 and as of June 30, 2016, the following

achievements were accomplished: CTDOL's Office of Apprenticeship Training placed 258 apprentices with 45 new and 118 existing employer sponsors; CTDOL purchased an employment tool for use by its Office of Research and the state's five WDBs to access labor market information for expanding job-driven strategies, particularly for dislocated workers; and the WDBs served 166 dislocated workers with all receiving intensive re-employment services and 130 enrolled in occupational skills training. Following training services, over 60 obtained new jobs.

- *Sector Partnership National Emergency Grant*: CTDOL was awarded \$3,889,995 for the period of July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2017 to partner and conduct regional planning with the state's five local Workforce Development Boards with the goal of identifying new or growing employment opportunities and sector strategies to build talent pipelines. Concurrently, three WDBs (Capital Workforce Partners, EWIB, and The WorkPlace) would provide programs for enhanced employment and training services for dislocated workers. As of June 30, 2016, dislocated workers were receiving intensive re-employment services, occupational skills training, and on-the-job training. In addition, in an effort to expand OJT and Registered Apprenticeship programs, CTDOL's Office of Apprenticeship Training provided informational workshops to approximately 120 *American Job Center* users and economic development partners about these programs.
- CTDOL's *Office of Research* continues its work to coordinate CTDOL's workforce training. Under a three-year USDOL Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) awarded in June 2014. The \$823,791 grant is being used to place Jobs First Employment Services, unemployment insurance benefits, unemployment insurance wages and related databases into a unified system that can link with the education database system. The goal is to better utilize the links between Connecticut's education system, workforce training system, and successes in the labor market.

Web-Based Services

- From July 2015 to June 2016, the agency's website had four million unique visits. Approximately 1.5 million of these visits were for information related to unemployment insurance benefits. A total of 103,727 people accessed information pertaining to youth employment, 439,024 made inquiries on wages and workplace standards; and 213,512 obtained information on job seeking skills. Additionally, 12,298 were interested in veterans' services and 9,481 sought employer recruitment information.

The unemployment insurance web page, redesigned and streamlined in December 2015, experienced an immediate increase in traffic, increasing views 60% during January- June over the previous July-December.

- FileCTUI.com now allows claimants to file a first time (initial) or re-opened claim by using the web. Prior to this improvement, claimants had to use wait on the phone and speak to a

Customer Service Representative to complete a new claim. Approximately 55% of claimants are now using the web each week to file for benefits.

- The *Connecticut Job & Career ConneCTion (JCC)* received 66,543 visitors from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016. The 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.
- A total of 29,441 visitors used the agency's *Connecticut Education & Training ConneCTion* over the past year. It serves as a leading online source of information on education and training in the state that provides access to thousands of training programs and courses.

Outreach/Public Education Services

- The agency's *web and social media presence* continues to expand through its Facebook and Twitter sites. Efforts to increase social media awareness include web banners, daily tweets and re-tweets, and inviting state policymakers to visit CTDOL's Facebook page. The agency expanded its outreach and education efforts through electronic flyers, newsletters, publications and websites.
- The agency's *Speaker's Bureau* includes 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, hot jobs, résumé writing, job interview tips and techniques, workforce development, and unemployment insurance. Approximately 250 speaking [requests](#) are handled each year by a CTDOL's subject matter experts.
- CONN-OSHA's monthly *Employer Roundtable Discussion series* featuring guest speakers, panel discussions and an overview of state and federal safety and health regulations for the workplace continue to grow in popularity. The no-cost discussion series is held on the third Tuesday of every month and continues to grow, with participation averaging 40 attendees per event. This year, the CT Television Network has covered several roundtables for statewide broadcast.
- The 21th *Connecticut Learns and Works* consortium, an annual education and workforce development [conference](#), was attended by over 250 participants. The goal is to showcase innovative ideas and practices that can be used in the classroom, in training venues, and to promote cutting-edge technology. The conference is geared for counselors, educators, case managers, employment and training professionals, job developers, recruiters and private sector business. The event is a joint effort of the agency's Employee and Organizational Development Unit, Communications, Office of Research, and the Office for Workforce Competiveness.

Improvements/Achievements FY 2015-2016

- The new *FileCTUI.com* site now allows claimants to file a first time (initial) or re-opened claim by using the web. Prior to this improvement, claimants had to use wait on the phone and speak to a Customer Service Representative to complete a new claim. Approximately 55% of claimants are now using the web each week to file for benefits. The site also provides “Quick Links” for those seeking answers and assistance with commonly-asked unemployment insurance issues, such as updating a mailing address, resetting security PIN or changing methods of benefits payment. Customers avoid the wait times with a quick click of a mouse and have a response within 24 hours.
- *Unemployment Insurance Tax Registration and Filing*: New employers are now registering online and all employers are using the online system to pay unemployment insurance taxes. This is saving the agency more than \$200,000 annually on data entry costs. Employers can visit a variety of links for information on web services available to them:
 - General information: <http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/uitax/defaulttax.htm>
 - To file/pay UI taxes online: <https://wage.ctdol.state.ct.us/CTERS/index.aspx>
 - To file employment taxes with CTDOL and DRS: <http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/uitax/FSET2.htm>
 - To file UI tax/wage reports and make UI payments
<https://sso.ctdol.state.ct.us/English/CommonLogin/CommonLogin.aspx>
- *Credit Card/ACH Repayment program*: This new program, initiated in November 2015, allows individuals with an UI overpayment to repay these owed benefits by using their credit card or ACH / Bank Account. More than 3,000 individuals have made use of the service, which has resulted in the recovery of more than \$750,000.
- *Separation and Information Data Exchange System (SIDES)*: In 2014 CTDOL was awarded approximately \$1 million in federal funds to install this web system to expedite the process of verifying employer separation information. Project implementation is scheduled for fall 2016. SIDES will enable electronic communication and transmission of unemployment insurance (UI) separation information between UI agencies and large multi-state employers or third party administrators. A new employer website will provide separation and wage information electronically for small- to medium-size employers who do not exchange information with the SIDES web services. Benefits include operational, postage and handling cost savings; standardized questions will result in improved quality of adjudications reports and decisions; and expedited data exchange gives employers the ability to protest or appeal cases more quickly.
- *Integrity*: In 2016, CTDOL successfully automated a system that prevents improper UI benefit payments using a cross match of the National Directory of New Hires and current Connecticut claimants filing for benefits. The project was made possible when CTDOL received \$115,254 in federal funds from USDOL. On average, the system prevents an estimated loss of \$12.5 million to the unemployment trust fund and improves the integrity of the UI payment process.

- *Fraud Prevention:* Federal funding allowed the Unemployment Compensation Fraud Prosecution Unit, which first started in 2014, to continue its work in 2016 to fight UI fraud. As of June 2016, the unit has made 169 arrests for unemployment insurance fraud with more than \$1.4 million recouped for the state's UI trust fund. The Unemployment Compensation Fraud Prosecution Unit, a partnership that combines the resources of the Connecticut Department of Labor and Chief State's Attorney's Office, identifies, investigates, and prosecutes offenders for collecting unemployment compensation state's Division of Criminal Justice.
- *CTDOL's paperless payment* system for unemployment insurance benefits is currently saving approximately \$81,000 per month. CTDOL currently issues about 42,885 benefit payments weekly, and providing payment via direct deposit or debit card saves on printing, mailing and re-issuing lost checks.
- *Social Security Verification:* An automated process that verifies every Social Security number through the Social Security Administration database has now prevented an estimated \$11.5 million in improper UI payments.
- *Monetary Penalty:* Unemployment insurance integrity laws required by federal mandate were enacted in 2013 to change administrative penalty weeks to a monetary penalty when an individual fraudulently claims UI benefits. Under this new penalty system, fraud investigators/auditors have completed over 62,000 cases, identifying more than \$71 million in overpaid UI benefits for recoupment action.
- *Return-to-Work Crossmatch:* Utilizing employer-submitted "New Hire or Rehire" information, hundreds of cases are reviewed each week for fraudulent activity. This prevention program diminishes opportunities to fraud the unemployment insurance program and prevents approximately \$5 million in improper payments in FY 2015-2016.
- *Treasury Offset Program (TOP):* Working in collaboration with the Internal Revenue Service and USDOL more than \$15 million has been recovered since March 2012. The program identifies individuals with a fraud overpayment that have not responded to agency requests for repayment. Their information is provided to the IRS for recovery via federal income tax refund interceptions or garnishment of federal wages.

Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity

The agency is firmly committed to the principles and objectives of equal employment opportunity for all individuals and is an Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity employer. The agency ensures compliance with the state's Affirmative Action regulations and Contract Compliance laws, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Fair Employment Practices Act, Title, VII of the Civil Rights Act, and other applicable laws. The agency's Office of Diversity and Equity coordinates and monitors programs and has undertaken numerous steps this past year to further equal opportunity in its hiring, promotions, training and other employment-related duties.

Details can be found in the agency's Affirmative Action Plan, which approved November 18, 2015 by the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities.

For fiscal year 2015-2016, demographic information is as follows: 58% of the agency's employees were female and 42% were male. For racial makeup, 63% were White; 19% were Black; 12 % were Hispanic, and 6% were Asian/Native American/Other.

Information Reported as Required by State Statute

Wage and Workplace Standards Violations

Labor Department investigators recovered a total of \$7,147,775.07 in legally due wages for employees during the past fiscal year. This included \$1,789,819.54 recovered by wage enforcement staff responding to 2,022 complaints that owed wages had not been paid. Wage and Workplace Standards staff also returned \$1,141,431.20 to 1,845 workers who were not paid for overtime work or who were paid less than minimum wage and recovered \$2,572,098.52 by enforcing the state's prevailing wage laws. An additional \$65,496.82 was recouped in back pay owed to 67 service workers hired by private contractors.

Violations of prevailing wage laws were determined after investigators conducted 49 payroll audits and made 27 site inspections. A total of 467 employees received owed wages as a result of non-payment of prevailing wage rates.

Violations were found in 180 additional cases concerning employment of minors in the workplace (hours of labor, night work of minors, prohibited employment of minors, working papers/certificates of age), meal/rest periods, personnel files, and drug testing issues.

A total of 226 Stop Work orders were issued to employers that did not comply with Workers' Compensation requirements. Following on-site investigations, these companies were required to cease work on a construction project until certain workplace regulations were met. In some cases, it was determined that employers misrepresented employees as independent contractors, a practice that causes an economic disadvantage to companies following the law and to those workers that are misclassified.

Unemployment Compensation

- Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits paid to unemployed workers totaled \$670 million. Of that amount, \$620 million was paid to claimants formerly employed by employers paying quarterly UI taxes under the regular UI benefits program, and \$50 million was provided to claimants formerly employed by non-taxable employers and/or under other programs. Total taxes paid by more than 100,000 employers whose employees were covered by Unemployment Insurance totaled \$815 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.

Occupational Analysis Products and Publications

- *2015 Information for Workforce Investment Planning (annual)* contains a variety of data on Connecticut and each of the state's five Workforce Investment Areas including population and population density, labor force, employment and wages by industry sector, and new housing permits. In addition, detailed information on residents in need of workforce investment services such as high school dropouts, Medicaid recipients, adult probationers, Temporary Family Assistance recipients, and other residents with barriers to employment is included. Also incorporated is information on commuting patterns, long-term unemployment insurance claimants, a work area profile for each Workforce Investment Area as well as appendix tables and historical data on the aforementioned topics for comparisons and trends analysis. This Year we moved the IWIP regional program entirely electronic with an enhanced regional Labor Market Information module on our website
- *Connecticut Career Paths* is a planning guide developed for mainly high school students and those making or guiding career choices. Nearly 500 occupations are profiled, along with their employment levels, growth potential, expected earnings, skills requirements, and education paths. A new Connecticut Career Paths edition was published this year and distributed to schools, colleges, libraries and job centers throughout the state.
- *Connecticut's Reemployment Portal* displays occupations with similar characteristics such as knowledge areas, tools and technology, and general work activities of selected occupations to connect jobseekers with helpful information and current job openings.
- *Training and Education Planning System (TEPS)* 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. The program is intended primarily for educational administrators and workforce development training providers that are considering whether or not to develop a new program, expand or contract an existing one, or drop an existing program, by showing where there may be a need for trained workers.
- *Economic Indicator Scorecards* are monthly updated economic indicators that present an overall picture of the current conditions in the Connecticut labor market, business climate, consumer sector and the current/future overall. These include charts, trends, year-to-year changes and data for 24 economic indicators.

CONN-OSHA

- *Report on inspections:* The Occupational Safety and Health Division conducted safety and/or health compliance inspections at 307 public worksites, affecting workplace

conditions of 22,049 state and municipal employees. Violations were documented in 191 of those inspections, with citations resulting in for 820 hazards identified as follows: 355 “serious” violations; 451 “other than serious” violations; seven “willful” violation, and seven “repeat” violation.

- *Report on consultations, training and clinics:* CONN-OSHA provided safety and health consultations to 505 private-sector businesses that collectively employ 27,009 workers; during these consultations 1,260 hazards were identified. CONN-OSHA conducted 129 consultations at public sector workplaces with a total of 8,362 employees; during these consultations 305 hazards were identified. Additionally, safety training programs and outreach were provided to 15,069 employees.

Mediation and Arbitration

- During the year, 561 grievances were filed for arbitration and 956 formal grievance arbitration hearings were scheduled, resulting in 643 cases being successfully closed and 93 awards issued. Expiration notices on 120 private sector contracts were received. In compliance with Federal/State Statutes, the Board of Mediation and Arbitration imposed binding arbitration on 332 municipal contracts and 4 state contracts. Mediators responded to a total of 787 requests for grievance/contract mediation.