

The WorkPlace
Southwestern Connecticut's Regional Workforce Development Board
Board of Directors Meeting
September 16, 2022

MEMBERS PRESENT

Acosta Yesenia, CT Dept. of Social Services
Bentley Larry, Consultant
Burgard Mary, Vocational Rehabilitation
Coley Thomas, CSCU
Colon Pablo, Avangrid Foundation
DeMarco Julie, Bigelow Ctr for Sr Activities
Falcon Clodomiro, The Falcon Vargas Group
Gill Fred, Gateway Community College
Gold Lindy-Lee, DECD
Holcomb Doug, Greater Bridgeport Transit
LaBella Michael, TD Bank
Loeser John, CVS Health

Morgan David, Team Inc.
Oddo Jim, Exec. Search Professionals
Proto Mike, Prestige Industrial Finishing
Rafael Cindy, BRS
Richards Loni, Service After Service
Russo Nicole, Microboard
Smith Dwayne, Housatonic Community College
Sportini Thomas, IBEW Local 488 JATC
Sheahan Margaret, Mitchell & Sheahan
Truini Brian, UFCW 371

OTHERS PRESENT:

Acevedo Elizabeth, The WorkPlace
Alcantara Cristina, The WorkPlace
Allen Danee, The WorkPlace
Amaechi Nneanata, The WorkPlace
Artis Michelle, The WorkPlace
Barton Beth, The WorkPlace
Battle Stewart, The WorkPlace
Bethea James, The WorkPlace
Bissell Benjamin, The WorkPlace
Brady Janet, The WorkPlace
Breeden Paula, The WorkPlace
Brewster Nicole, The WorkPlace
Brooks Lorenzo, The WorkPlace
Andrea Butler, The WorkPlace
Carbone Joseph, The WorkPlace
Cruz Michelle, The WorkPlace
Timothy DeMarco, The WorkPlace
D. Furness William, The WorkPlace
DeMattia Donna, The WorkPlace
Douglas Maurice, The WorkPlace
Edelstein Jane, The WorkPlace
Falkowski Gloria, The WorkPlace
Galassi Jason, The WorkPlace
Garcia Jessica, The WorkPlace
Garcia Judelca, The WorkPlace
Garcia Yvette, The WorkPlace
Gerena Hailey, The WorkPlace
Giacobbe, Marilia
Glazier Calvin, The WorkPlace

Gomez Joan, The WorkPlace
Gopian AI, The WorkPlace
Greene Dustin, The WorkPlace
Hailey Gloria, The WorkPlace
Hare Kimberly, The WorkPlace
Harris Elra, The WorkPlace
Hawkins, Janene
Hernandez Maria, The WorkPlace
Hodge Ray, The WorkPlace
Hull Suzette, The WorkPlace
Jackson Angela, The WorkPlace
Johnson Arnold, The WorkPlace
Johnson Libby, The WorkPlace
Johnson Tiffany, The WorkPlace
Keel Debra, The WorkPlace
Khan, Juliette
Klarides-Ditria Rep. Nicole
Krueger Katherine, The WorkPlace
Langston Alexandra, The WorkPlace
LaRoche Maria, The WorkPlace
Lary Wanda, Career Resources
Laryea Kenneth, The WorkPlace
Latham-Magee Stephanie, The WorkPlace
Llanos Angie, The WorkPlace
Long Tom, The WorkPlace
Lopez Brandon, The WorkPlace
Lawrence, Lyn, CT DOL
Maloney Lisa, The WorkPlace
Mari Barbara, The WorkPlace

Marquez Marilyn, The WorkPlace
Matarazzo Maria, The WorkPlace
Mazzonna Barbara
McCarthy Michael, The WorkPlace
McGinnis Monica, The WorkPlace
McKeithen Carrie, The WorkPlace
Medina Victoria, The WorkPlace
Michel David
Miniman Jennifer, The WorkPlace
Morgan Michael, The WorkPlace
Mountain John, The WorkPlace
Munn Todd, The WorkPlace
Nieves Carmen, The WorkPlace
Parkmond Adrienne, The WorkPlace
Perez Alvin, The WorkPlace
Perez Gloria, The WorkPlace
Perez Joselito, The WorkPlace
Pressat Mirlande, The WorkPlace
Robinson-Patton Cathy, The WorkPlace
Robinson Donald, The WorkPlace
Romano Fran, The WorkPlace
Rule Shannon, The WorkPlace

Sampson Tracy, The WorkPlace
Santos Samantha, The WorkPlace
Santilli Vincent, Homes for the Brave
Sarro Mario, The WorkPlace
Savage Nordia, The WorkPlace
Schuster Henry, The WorkPlace
Seitzinger Todd, The WorkPlace
Shirvell James, The WorkPlace
Steffen Sheila, The WorkPlace
Stokes Michael, The WorkPlace
Szymanski John, The WorkPlace
Torres Ilissa, The WorkPlace
Troutman Randy, The WorkPlace
Jonathan Vazcones, The WorkPlace
Venditti Debbie, The WorkPlace
Wiggins-Blathers Sheila, The WorkPlace
Williams Janet, The WorkPlace
Williams Pandora, The WorkPlace
White Marlon, The WorkPlace
White Maurice, The WorkPlace
Wynter Nigel, The WorkPlace

Ms. Sheahan, Vice Chair called the Board of Directors meeting to order.

Ms. Sheahan introduced guest speaker Jonathan Vazcones of M&T Bank. Mr. Vazcones manages the M&T grant to nonprofits in low-income cities for Long Island and NY. He delivers workshops on leadership development, social change, and success to students across New York City. Mr. Vazcones has a BA in Economics and Philosophy and serves on the Board of Futures Ignite. He is also a 1st generation college student from Ecuadorian native parents.

GUEST SPEAKER:

Mr. Vazcones gave the history of M&T Bank. M&T was founded in 1956 in Buffalo, New York. They are a community bank serving New York, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Connecticut, Virginia, West Virginia, Washington, D.C, Florida and now New England. They are headquartered in Buffalo, New York and are organized around 26 community bank regions led by local regional presidents. The M&T customers bank with them at nearly 1,500 locations across fourteen states along the East Coast.

M&T Purpose and Values:

M&T wants their communities to understand they can rely on them to get involved and help them grow even stronger. They take an active role in the communities they serve. M&T has given \$34.9 million in grants to more than 2,800 nonprofit organizations across eight states and the District of Columbia that support and revitalize communities, help charitable organizations, and grow local economies in 2020. Volunteerism is very much at the heart of the M&T mission. They provide their team with the opportunities to drive positive change and make a difference.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

Mr. Carbone noted that we are facing a protracted period with shortage of workers. Companies need to make a bigger effort to find and hire workers with the relevant skills. CNBC ranked Connecticut's cost of living eighth highest in the country and its cost of doing business sixth highest, with both scores unchanged from last year.

CONNECTICUT LABOR MARKET:

Mr. Carbone spoke about the labor market numbers. The labor force sums up the number of people that are employed and the number of people that are seeking employment. This will tell a business that is interested in investing in CT whether or not they will be faced with a potential talent. We are starting to move in the right direction but the market is still challenged by the lack of people with critical thinking skills.

Labor Market Data						
		Feb 20	May 22	June 22	Jul 22	% Change
SW CT	Labor Force	407,159	409,220	413,221	417,982	2.66%
	Unemployed	18,470	16,985	17,740	18,857	
	Unemployment Rate	4.6%	4.2%	4.3%	4.5%	
CONN.	Labor Force	1,950,800	1,895,100	1,901,300	1,899,200	-2.64%
	Unemployed	66,800	78,700	76,000	70,400	
	Unemployment Rate	3.4%	4.2%	4.0%	3.7%	
U.S.	Labor Force	164,546,000	164,376,000	164,023,000	163,960,000	-0.36%
	Unemployed	5,787,000	5,950,000	5,912,000	5,567,000	
	Unemployment Rate	3.4%	3.6%	3.6%	3.5%	

Sector Indicators			
	July 22'	Change vs. Jan. 21'	% Change vs. July. 21'
Retail	44,400	800	1.8%
Education Services	11,400	400	3.6%
Health Care & Social Assistance	63,900	1,600	2.6%
Financial Activities	36,200	300	0.8%
Manufacturing	29,800	1,500	5.3%
Leisure & Hospitality	47,700	4,100	9.4%
Professional & Business Services	65,300	-200	-0.3%
Construction	13,200	-600	-4.3%
Information	11,600	-500	-4.1%
Government	40,100	300	0.8%
Total Non-Farm Employment	402,200	8,700	2.2%

The Healthcare sector has the most growth. The most disappointing part of the graph is the financial activities. The rate of compensation is less than what it used to be. Manufacturing has a 5.3% healthy gain. It is growing and thriving! Hospitality is making a slow comeback, but we are getting there.

Workforce Trends:

Connecticut has the sixth oldest population in the nation. At 41.5 years, the state's median age is exceeded only the three other New England States, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, along with West Virginia and Florida. Thousands of people are expected to retire in the coming years, increasing demand for age-related services and decreasing the number of available, skilled workers. Between 2010 and 2040, Connecticut's population over 65 years is on pace to increase by 57%. However, its population between the ages of 20 to 64 is projected to grow less than 2% and the population age 18 and under is projected to decline by 7%.

In many CT towns there is a substantial gap between available housing and the housing needs of broader constituency of potential residents. While not every worker seeks to live in the town where they work, driving communities include homes that are affordable to local workers living where you work. Living where you work provides a host of quality-of-life benefits including reduced community cost/time, which translates to more time for family and other pursuits.

Next Steps:

Connecticut needs to increase the population of young, trained workers with critical thinking skills. The attention needs to be made to retaining mature workers and incentivizing these individuals including part-time, shared work and flexible work schedules.

Employers need incentives to invest more in technology and incumbent worker training. A greater investment is needed and quality of life matters, especially in urban districts.

CT needs greater implementation of remote work for broader more diverse workforce. Government dollars has a huge role to investment in the upgrade to their technology.

Remote/Virtual Employment Opportunity - Is a response to the labor market challenges. Remote work expands the talent pool for employees to reach the top talent across the country. It can also improve a business's brand and make an employer more attractive to applicants. It improves employee retention and companies that offer remote work experienced a 25% lower turnover rate.

CareerConnectCT:

Office of the Workforce Strategy awarded \$669,000 over 2 years to develop a remote program to prepare people for remote work. This program certifies participants to ensure they have the technology skills, and the ability to work independently in a remote setting. Customer service skills is a huge focus needed for remote work. Trainees receive mentoring, career coaching, workforce readiness training and occupational skills training. All participants that complete the training will receive a Home Office start up kit.

Healthcare Career:

The Office of the Workforce Strategy awarded The Workplace \$7,500,000 over 2 years to scale our Healthcare Academy statewide to train 760 individuals in the healthcare field. This program will continue to grow in the healthcare workforce in CT. The WorkPlace has a track record of our success and the success continue to grow.

- Training offered in the following occupations: CNA: Home Health Aide; Phlebotomist; EKG Technician; Emergency Medical Technician; Pharmacy Tech; Community Health Worker; Central Sterile Processing Technician and Dental Assistant.

Apprenticeships:

Mr. Carbone stated that we hired a new director for ApprenticeshipWorks, Louie Reyes.

- We partnered with Bigelow Tea to add a new apprentice position- Tea Mixer/ Metal handler.
- The WorkPlace is also working with SW CT Manufacturing Regional Sector Partnership on comprehensive skills standards manual for the top 10 shared critical occupations.
- New business partnerships with Router Aerospace in Bridgeport and Stratford Industries on their Registered Apprenticeship Program implementation.
- 10 participants completed summer "Manufacturing Workforce Readiness Bootcamp" at Derby High School.
- This fall 17 participants started CNC one training at Platt Tech High School.

The participation for this program has been excellent. Every month we can say there are several people that have become employed as a result of their training.

Building Better Futures Connecticut:

The WorkPlace received 1.5 million funding from the state of Connecticut over two years to leverage our YouthBuild and Reentry programming and create a statewide holistic approach to support justice involved youth between the ages of 16 to 24. This grant will provide access to occupational skills training and hands on work experience in the Construction, Energy, Manufacturing and Culinary sectors. Additionally, participants receive GED, preparation, life skills and job readiness training, leadership skills development and support such as transportation assistance. This will be an opportunity to grow a new program and engage in community partners.

Mr. Carbone gave a huge thank you to everyone at The WorkPlace for making this happen.

BOARD BUSINESS:

Minutes: On a motion made and seconded the Board of Directors accepted the minutes of the June 17, 2022, Board of Directors meeting.

AJOURNMENT: There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 9:32 a.m. The next Board of Directors meeting will be held on December 16, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,
Michelle Artis, Operations Coordinator