



## ***About the Campaign for a Working Connecticut (CWCT)***

The Campaign for a Working Connecticut is a statewide coalition that promotes the state's economic competitiveness through the development of sustainable, effective workforce solutions to increase low-wage workers' skills and advance all individuals and families to self-sufficiency.

### ***Why do we need the Campaign?***

**To move workers into economic sufficiency.** In 2014, United Way's ALICE Report revealed 38% of Connecticut households could not afford basic needs such as housing, child care, food, health care and transportation; a statistic that includes both households living below the Federal Poverty Level and those living above that level but still struggling to afford basic household needs. Recovery from the Great Recession has been slow and has not reached all of Connecticut workers.

**Middle-skill jobs need qualified workers.** Middle-skill jobs are those that require post-secondary education or training but less than a four-year degree. Middle skill positions in managerial, professional and technical fields are now the backbone of several important industries in our state. In a survey of Connecticut employers, however, 82% of respondents said they have difficulty finding qualified middle-skills workers to fill openings. The Campaign works to address our state's "middle skills" gap by advocating for investments in effective programs, as well as the development of innovative workforce solutions to advance Connecticut citizens to economic self-sufficiency. In the long run, this benefits the state economy.

## **Legislative Goals**

### ***#1: Protect and sustain effective education and training programs to help low-wage workers secure employment with sufficient wages.***

Investment in basic skills training helps under- and unemployed individuals to obtain jobs with sufficient wages to support their families. This, in turn, helps to replace the large number of workers in our state who will retire, especially in health care, manufacturing, and IT professions. The CWCT urges the Connecticut Legislature to appropriate necessary funds for effective education and training programs including: Adult Education, State Colleges and Universities, Jobs First Employment Services (JFES), Summer Youth Employment, Two-Generational Pilot Program, Incumbent Worker Training, Jobs Funnel and Second Chance initiatives.

CWCT also asks the legislature to continue its investment in developmental programs mandated by PA 12-40: *An Act Concerning College Readiness and Completion*. Funding for developmental education programs must be maintained to support community college students as they enroll in and pursue certificates and degrees.

***#2: Implement innovative, low-cost solutions to improve existing programs and enhance coordination of services and systems.***

In a difficult fiscal environment, it's important to examine which programs and services are most effective in helping workers achieve financial success before making rescissions. The CWCT calls on the state and each agency to evaluate and document the impact of a program's potential elimination on Connecticut workers and families. State agencies should also identify ways to coordinate or replace services for the functions of the program to continue after cuts.

The state must develop solutions to enhance service alignment and collaboration between agencies. Coordination between adult education providers, community colleges and workforce investment boards (WIBS) will ensure clients receive necessary services. Specifically, career centers to assist students on Connecticut community college campuses should be explored to better link and collaborate with these systems.

CWCT calls on the state to maximize money and resources from the federal government for education and workforce programs, including SNAP Employment and Training, Apprenticeships and Jobs First Employment Services to help workers gain skills, training and the experience necessary to obtain jobs with good wages and benefits and advancement opportunities.

Additionally, the state should better utilize data gathered by the Preschool through 20 and Workforce Information Network (P20 WIN) to analyze employment outcomes and identify successful programs. This current collaboration between education, higher education and labor agencies can be a valuable resource in future planning.

***#3: Sustain critical wrap-around support services to help workers maintain sufficient employment and lift families out of poverty.***

CWCT calls on Governor Malloy and the state legislature to prevent further cuts to social services and safety net programs vital to the well-being of Connecticut's most vulnerable workers and families. In order for low-income parents to work and support their families, we must eliminate significant barriers that prevent individuals from employment. This includes additional cuts to eligibility to the state's childcare subsidy, Care 4 Kids. The state must also continue its investments in other vital programs, including mental health services and public transportation, that help workers maintain employment.