

HELP WANTED

Serving Connecticut's Neediest Citizens through Job Training

How may Connecticut's disadvantaged citizens benefit more from taxpayers' generosity?

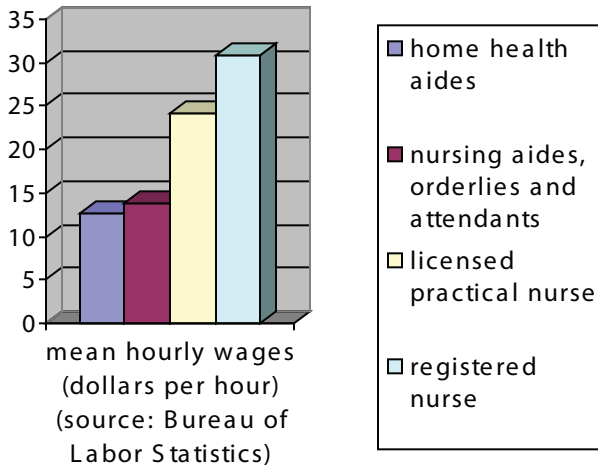
Connecticut spends more than five billion dollars per year on social services, and yet poverty, unemployment and underemployment persist, particularly within immigrant and urban minority populations. In addition, many of the state's disadvantaged citizens lack the support they need to lead healthy, independent lives.

Through demand-driven job training programs, Connecticut's neediest citizens and taxpayers may receive maximum value from each dollar spent on social services.

Investing in job training is worthwhile because when one individual attains financial independence through employment, family, community and state feel the benefits. In high-demand fields such as nursing, advanced certifications through training programs can significantly increase potential earnings.

"Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime."

Chinese Proverb



The health of a state's workforce is a core determinant of the quality of life experienced by all its residents. Young adults will raise their families and cultivate financial futures where job opportunities abound, while older citizens' health care depends on the contributions of the workforce. However, according to the Connecticut Economic Resource Center, young workers are not replacing the state's aging population, and without a change of direction, Connecticut will become even less competitive in the future.¹

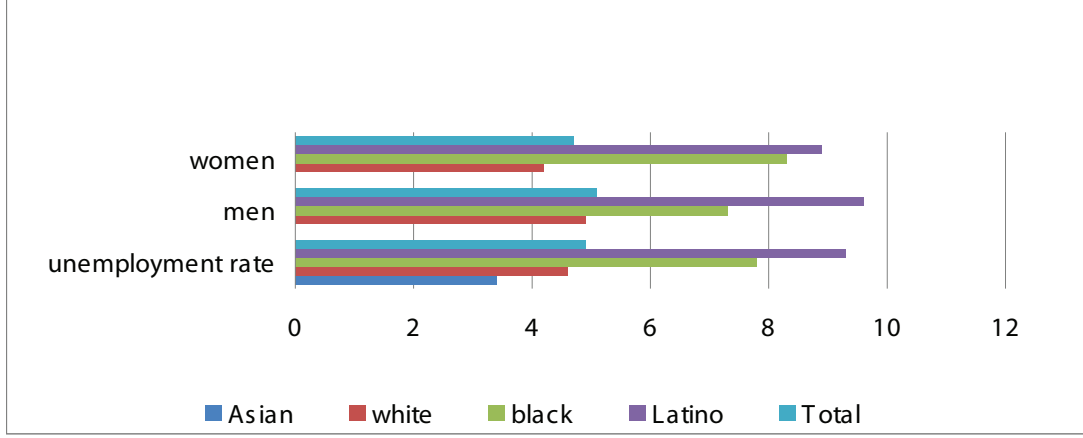
While tax and education reforms remain sluggish at best, job training presents an opportunity to improve the lives of our neediest citizens and bolster Connecticut's economy from the ground up.

Workforce development has never been more important for the following reasons:

- Connecticut has had near zero job growth in recent years.
- The state's exceptionally high tax burden discourages new businesses.
- Our population is aging. Young college graduates are moving elsewhere to start families, careers and businesses.
- Connecticut's greatest population growth is attributable to minorities and immigrants, who experience the highest unemployment levels. These growing populations are concentrated in our poorest cities, where economic development, employment opportunities and other quality of life factors are grim.

Average Unemployment By Demographic in Connecticut, 2004

(source: Bureau of Labor Statistics)



Connecticut’s future depends upon the health of its work force. Successful job training programs offer a win-win solution for taxpayers and disadvantaged citizens alike. Most importantly, these programs provide a pathway to self-sufficiency and independence to those citizens who need our help most. An example is James Butler who,

when struggling to find work after being released from jail, sought help at Clothes Make the Man, an interview-preparation organization. Says James, “Job preparation and training are very important because they teach you how to assimilate and interact in order to secure employment. Plus, having the right clothes for a job interview helps boost your confidence.”

Where a skilled workforce exists, new businesses will follow. Taxpayers also benefit because an employed individual contributes to, rather than takes from, the public trough. If we view unemployed citizens as a valuable untapped resource and demand for labor as an opportunity, we can use job training to merge these two interests and benefit Connecticut as a whole.

For the full study, visit www.yankeeinstitute.org or email info@yankeeinstitute.org.

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Clothes Make the Man former client, James Butler shares with Yankee’s social services analyst, Natalie Kindred his personal journey to improve self sufficiency, earning potential, and quality of life after being released from jail.

(Endnotes)

¹ “Benchmarking Connecticut 2006: Determinants of Economic Growth,” Connecticut Economic Resource Center, Inc., available online at http://www.cerc.com/pdfs/Benchmarking06_fullreport.pdf