



2011 Jobs Session Platform

Connecticut's economic and unemployment crisis is now structural, not cyclical, and demands bold action to create jobs, staunch the unemployment crisis and stimulate the economy with immediate consumer spending.

Even while we help the "99ers," who have exhausted 99 weeks of unemployment, we can't forget that Connecticut has long been a state of dramatic inequalities – which persist and must be addressed if we are to build an economy and workforce to create long-term and shared prosperity.

Many of the goals below can be reached with little or no budget impact by fully utilizing and realigning existing resources, prioritizing high-need areas and residents, and setting a framework for business, education, government and non-profits to work together to articulate and work towards shared goals. A focus on high-need and urban areas, where much of Connecticut's future workforce will come from, will also improve the quality of life and economic prospects for the state as a whole.

Consider the entire workforce in establishing workforce development policy.

- Strengthen **developmental education** for workers who have not graduated from high school, or who are out of the K-12 system yet lack skills to enter postsecondary education. Integrate adult education with community colleges and the higher education and workforce development systems.
- Create **pathways to sustaining careers** that begin pre-GED with adult education and K-12 systems and continue to postsecondary education and credentialing programs. Require all systems to communicate, articulate shared definitions and goals, and results.
- Use strategies that use **contextualized learning**, such as the iBest model, and training that links directly to jobs, such as the WorkKeys/National Career Readiness Certificate, to improve skills for low-wage workers.

Create jobs and other opportunities.

- Establish a **state infrastructure bank** to fund major projects.
- Improve infrastructure such as roads and railroads, communications networks, schools and public buildings with new bonding.
- Provide cities with bonding or other financing to use on projects they select that **create permanent jobs**.
- Where jobs cannot be created, offer long-term unemployed, including 99ers, meaningful opportunities to use and preserve their skills in **meaningful volunteer public service opportunities**. These projects should NOT compete with business, but be designed to keep people energized and maintain skills.

Use DOL's "Jobs Funnels" to train under-educated and un- and under-employed workers in urban centers.

- Use **Jobs Funnels** to provide needed training to workers and connect with publicly-funded jobs.
- Build on known best practices to create or refine a **consistent menu of services** in each city Jobs Funnel, ensuring support and training tailored for both jobseekers and for employers.
- Expand Jobs Funnels to train and place workers in **health care, manufacturing and other growth industries**.

Leverage public investment to improve conditions for all workers.

- Adopt standards to recognize and encourage employers that provide good wages, benefits and working conditions. Engage business, labor, nonprofits and government to explore and report on **"Responsible Employment Practices"** which provide living wages and good benefits and working conditions.
- Create **Small Business Incubators** in each large city to encourage small business growth and success.
- Require a significant proportion of workers for state-funded infrastructure projects be residents of **urban centers or regions with unemployment at least 20% higher than the state average**.

The Connecticut Association for Human Services (CAHS) works to end poverty and advocates for policies that promote income equality and economic self-sufficiency for all residents. *For more information, contact Liz Dupont-Diehl, (860) 951-2212, ext 253, ldupont-diehl@cahs.org, or Jim Horan, (860) 951-2212, ext 235, jhoran@cahs.org.*