



**Connecticut Community Providers Association**  
*a unified voice for community human service providers*

February 21, 2007

To: GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

Re: H.B. 7147 – *AN ACT CONCERNING COMPREHENSIVE REFORM OF THE STATE CONTRACTING PROCESS*

My name is Kirk Springsted and I am the Vice President of Administration for the Connecticut Community Providers Association. Since 1979, CCPA has helped administer a Preferred Purchasing Program (C.G.S. 17b-656) to create training and work opportunities for people with disabilities through work on government contracts. I have directed this program for CCPA since 1992.

During that time, the program has created a wide range of job opportunities for people with disabilities in community based employment through community rehabilitation providers. In FY06 the program provided 872 jobs for people with disabilities and almost \$2.5 M in wages. Since 1995 individuals with disabilities have earned over \$18.5 M through the program. Job opportunities include janitorial services, manufacturing, lawn services, laundry related services and temporary office services. Over the years the program has improved steadily the amount of wages per hour as well as the total amount of wages. Twenty contracts are standard wage contracts.

The program has not only increased the variety of work opportunities, but the level of integration into the workforce. And the program allows people with the most significant work obstacles to be able to benefit. Given the complexity and cost for getting and keeping jobs for people with disabilities, the program and the public policy that created it over thirty years ago has been extraordinarily successful in its mission.

*I am speaking with you today to express concern about a proposed modification in the Preferred Purchasing Program for People with Disabilities that is included in the text of H.B. 7147 An Act Concerning Comprehensive Reform of the State Contracting Process. Section 4 of the bill (lines 60 to 93) seeks to remove CCPA from its role in administering the program. The proposed transfer of*

the responsibility for creating “a list describing styles, designs, sizes and varieties of all such articles made by persons with disabilities and describing all available services provided by such persons” from CCPA to the DSS Bureau of Rehabilitation Services would dramatically reshape the program.

The Preferred Purchasing Program has had its share of legislative scrutiny in the past two years. I served as a member of the legislatively commissioned Disabled and Disadvantaged Employment Security Policy Group that succeeded in the 2006 session in recommending a “win-win” solution for people with disabilities and individuals with economic challenges. P.A. 06-129 creates an expansion of the program to allow proportionate numbers of people with disabilities and those with economic disadvantages to have an opportunity to participate in large state janitorial contracts without segregating large groups of people with disabilities in a single work setting or displacing existing workers from their current jobs. One of the key recommendations of the policy group was to keep the underlying Preferred Purchasing Program as is. The recommendation to keep the basic program intact was unanimous.

The proposed legislation, while appearing to make a simple change in responsibility, undermines the entire program. While much of the focus of the Policy Group negotiations was on large janitorial contracts, many of the jobs that disabled workers perform through the program are not large contracts. They are small contracts that assist people with significant challenges to attain training, work skills and a pay check.

I urge you to recognize the bi-partisan support from both chambers and the good will that came about as we negotiated the provisions of the enabling legislation to let the Preferred Purchasing Program continue in its successes in supporting people with disabilities in the work place. And give us the opportunity to provide work opportunities for those with those with economic challenges through the program as well.

Thank you for your consideration.

---

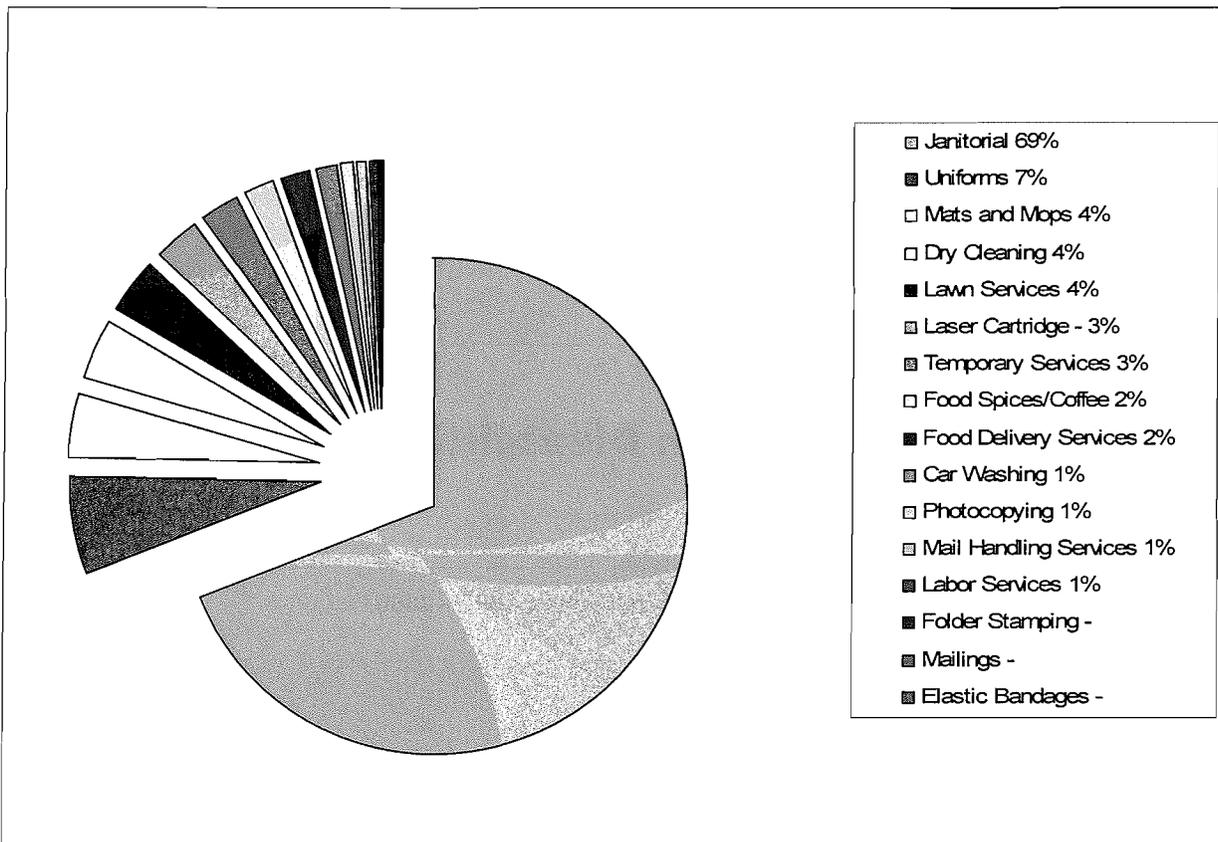
## **CCPA Preferred Purchasing Program: Public Policy That Puts People with Disabilities to Work**

---

Since 1979 CCPA has administered the state preferred purchasing program created by Public Act 77-405 and amended in PA 06-129. Through the program community providers supply state agencies with products and services made by people with disabilities while creating much needed employment, employment training, work hours and wages for people with disabilities in a variety of work settings.

---

### **CCPA Preferred Purchasing Program Products and Services FY06**



Connecticut Community Providers Association

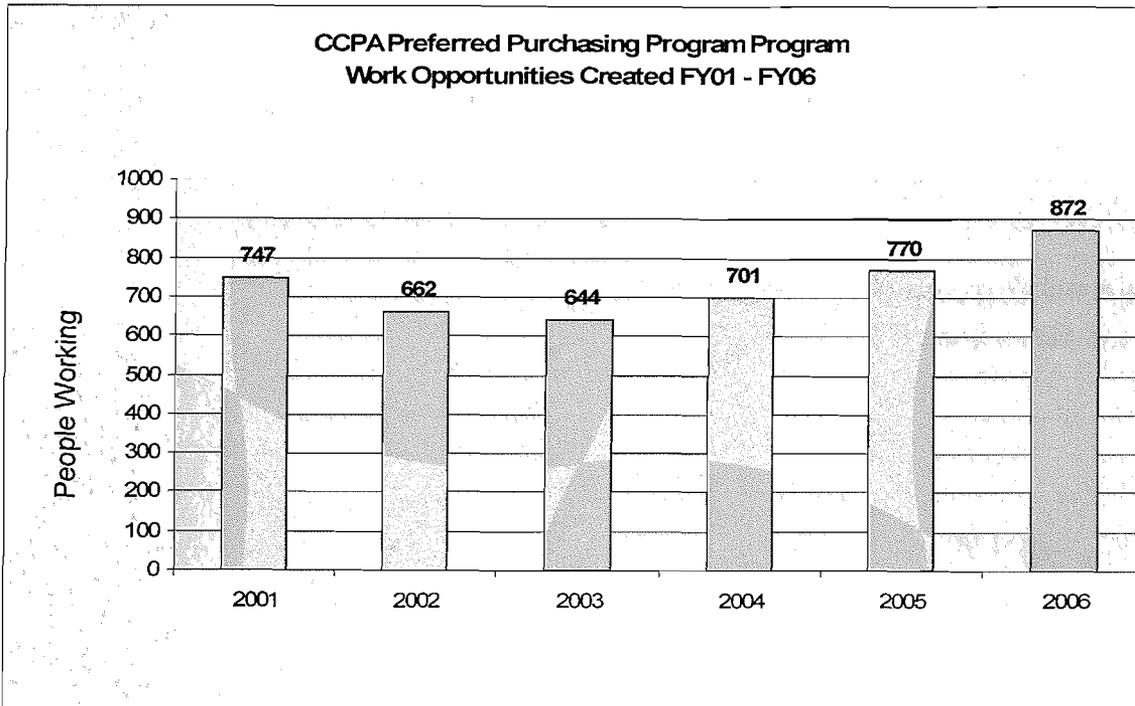
35 Cold Springs Road, Suite 522, Rocky Hill, CT 06067 •Tel. (860) 257-7909 •Fax (860)257-7909

---

# CCPA Preferred Purchasing Program

C.G.S. Sec. 17b-656.

## Jobs: 872 People Working in 2006



## Total Wages for People with Disabilities

1995—2006: \$18.5 million

