

**Testimony of William P. Villano  
Executive Director, Workforce Alliance  
May 4, 2009**

On behalf of Workforce Alliance, I am pleased to offer these comments in support of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Weatherization Assistance Program Draft Connecticut Plan set forth by the Connecticut Department of Social Services. Workforce Alliance is one of five Workforce Investment Boards in Connecticut, providing education, employment and training services to businesses and employers in thirty cities and towns in the south central part of the state. We are located in New Haven, and our four One-stop Career Centers are located in New Haven, Hamden, Meriden and Middletown. Because of the economic downturn, when compared to last year, these centers are seeing an increase of over 40% of customers looking for work.

Based on our conversations with DSS and other partners, the ARRA funding is meant to stimulate the economy by creating new weatherization training programs and projects that will lead to new and sustainable jobs. Connecticut anticipates weatherizing approximately 7,500 units. For the South Central region, this presents a tremendous opportunity to put people back to work in auditing the homes as well as in performing the actual weatherization work.

We are pleased that the plan recognizes that training of subcontractors and their staff will need to be greatly augmented due to the volume and type of work to be

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performed. Contractors will need to hire additional workers, and those workers will need to be trained. The plan specifically names the Workforce Investment Boards as a proposed program training and recruitment partner. The Workforce Investment Boards are well-suited to coordinate the training and supportive services for these new workers. Our one-stop service delivery system has the infrastructure in place to proactively recruit individuals who are interested in weatherization jobs, screen them according to employer-established standards, assess their readiness for skills or hands-on training and, where necessary, provide remedial skills prior to training. We also have extensive experience in partnering with and coordinating with the educational entities described in the plan. In addition, we are able to provide ongoing supportive services to the individuals while they are in training, and ongoing support and follow-up after they become employed.

The jobs that will be created through this effort are very attractive to the workforce investment system because they are available, they are attainable, and they will produce living wages. In addition, the highly marketable skills that the workers will receive that will be portable in their future career plans after the life of this project.

We are pleased to support this plan and we look forward to working with DSS and all the partners in this effort to insure good jobs and a better quality of life for all that will participate in the South Central Region. Thank you.