



Career Ladders

Annual legislative report

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Introduction

Overview of Enabling Legislation

Public Act 03-142, An Act Concerning Career Ladder Programs was enacted in June 2003 establishing a Connecticut Career Ladder Advisory Committee (CCLAC). The Committee was charged with developing a three year plan for the creation or enhancement of career ladder programs for occupations with projected workforce shortages and to report to committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matter related to higher education and employment advancement.

Committee's Membership and Activities

The CCLAC, chaired by the Office for Workforce Competitiveness and the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, is comprised of required members including: the Commissioners of Education, Higher Education, Public Health and Labor or their designees as well as workforce development representatives, including those with expertise on training for women as well as health care, early childhood education and information technology, employer representatives for these industries, and a labor market analyst from the Connecticut Department of Labor. The Committee is staffed by the Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF).

Career Areas Explored

The CCLAC was charged to explore the areas of health care, early childhood education, and information technology. Experts in the fields were called on to make presentations outlining the current shortages in the industries, challenges to recruiting and retaining workers, and possible strategies for creating career ladders in these fields. Presenters drew upon years of experience in analyzing the labor market needs of employers in these areas as well as the education and training needs of possible workers. They offered information on models that have been proposed or implemented in this and other states and the experiences of those initiatives. They provided valuable insights, offered a wealth of information and raised concerns as the CCLAC considered proposals for the three-year plan. In February 2003, the CCLAC presented the plan to the state legislature outlining the challenges to creating and expanding career ladders in these workforce shortages areas and offered potential solutions to address these issues.

Based on those recommended solutions, over the last seven years the CCLAC has granted over \$2 million to support pilot activities with youth and adults to expand awareness of career ladder opportunities in health care, early care and education and technology fields and help to address career advancement challenges for current and future workers in these fields.

These pilot projects have provided valuable lessons on what academic and personal supports youth and adults need to pursue employment and career advancement. They have developed new courses needed by workers and employers; improved workplace culture in long-term care facilities; and helped entry level workers take their first steps toward college degrees. Lessons learned from these pilot initiatives have led to new efforts and leveraged other funding and partnerships. This report provides a summary of projects funded to date and makes recommendations for future career ladder investments and initiatives.

Health Care

Over the past seven years, the Career Ladder Advisory Committee has supported pilot projects designed to address obstacles to creating/pursuing career ladders in the health care field. Projects have focused on the transition to college for entry level health care workers, improving career pathways and articulation between degree programs, expanding career awareness, better preparing current and future nurses for their roles in hospitals and enhancing workplace cultures to support recruitment and retention of health care workers. This report provides information on current grant initiatives as well as brief summaries of those funded in past cycles and highlighted in previous reports.

Current Initiatives

Pilot Initiative: Summer Internship Program

The goal of this pilot was to provide more comprehensive clinical training to advanced nursing students throughout the summer and to better prepare new nurses entering the field. Nurses enter the field and are immediately responsible for acutely ill patients, sometimes having a high number of patients to care for, which increases anxiety. In addition, nurses often wait at least a year before working in a specialty area. This program was developed to help prepare nurses for the work environment they will be entering and provide them with additional clinical experiences.

The career ladder grant provided scholarships for the Eastern Connecticut Health Network (ECHN) Summer Internship Program for third year nursing students. The summer interns spend two weeks of intensive orientation and then begin functioning in their student nurse role in areas such as operating rooms, cardiac units and pediatrics under the supervision of their preceptor. The interns worked 32 hours a week, working 16 hours per week as a student nurse and 16 hours spent as a patient care assistant. While the student role offers opportunities for performing complex nursing functions, the patient care assistant role helps the intern develop time management skills. The interns elect to participate in the summer experience even though it is beyond the requirement for their course of study.

Interns gain valuable in-depth experience in performing nursing skills, including physical assessment, the planning and implementing of nursing care, medication administration, and documentation. The project has met the needs of both students for greater skill building and the hospitals which get their labor as summer employees and the opportunity to recruit them for employment after graduation. With nursing programs teaching a broader range of topics in a condensed time frame, this summer opportunity is a real asset to students. ***It is recommended that this model project be brought to scale offering employers across the state the resources to provide these opportunities to more nursing students.***

Pilot Initiative: RN Refresher Course

Charter Oak State College was given three grants to support their RN Refresher course development. Charter Oak State College, in collaboration with the Connecticut League for

Nursing, has been offering an online RN Refresher course since 2001. The course, initially developed with funding from the Office of Workforce Competitiveness (OWC), has served 25 cohorts of students and brought 265 inactive registered and licensed practical nurses back into the workforce.

These grants supported three initiatives to revise the course. The first supported an extension of the reach of the course to a wider population of inactive nurses by creating a license version that hospitals may use flexibly in their own settings to recruit, refresh, orient and retain inactive nurses within open positions in their institutions to address areas of shortage.

The second initiative focused on a feasibility study for a new model of placing students for the clinical component of the course in hospitals and long-term care facilities. After exploring and eliminating other possibilities for clinical placement models, Charter Oak State College worked with employers and the CT League for Nursing to improve the efficiency of the preceptor model currently in use with students.

Under the third initiative, the grantee conducted a feasibility study to identify models for delivering clinical experiences. The committee determined that the development of a virtual model of delivery was needed. With a final grant, a development team was assembled to review virtual software and books and determine the overall structure for the 17 week 4-module clinical course. The curriculum, once completed, received approval from the State Board of Nurse Examiners and was made available to students in August 2010. ***It is recommended that Charter Oak State College and CT League for Nursing conduct extensive outreach to potential students and employers about the availability of the RN refresher course and the virtual model for clinical experiences.***

Pilot Initiative: CT Career Choices

The purpose of this project is to prepare high school teachers to offer Foundations of Health, Science and Technology (FHST) course. The course is designed as an overview of health care occupations and the skills required for success in the health care industry. Six schools participated in a Summer Institute to prepare for implementation of the course and to learn more about opportunities for students' experiential learning.

School visits and teacher communication with Education Connection, the Regional Education Service Center located in northwestern CT, indicate positive feedback from students enrolled in the course. Teachers will be involved in ongoing professional development and students will take part in site visits, job shadowing and other types of experiential learning. The focus this year has been on the preparation for the *CT Student Innovation Expo* which is the capstone of the course. The challenge this year is to create a 21st Century Green Medical Center. The students come together as a team to develop a medical facility. Each member of the team assumes roles based on the healthcare profession they are researching in the course and will showcase their work at the CT Convention Center in May 2011. ***It is recommended that the State Department of Education identify ways to support implementation of this course statewide recognizing its contribution to student achievement and career awareness.***

Pilot Initiative: LPN to RN Articulation

Charter Oak State College (COSC) in cooperation with the Connecticut League for Nursing was awarded a grant to revise the RN Bridge course to align it with the current LPN and RN programs and current practices in the nursing field. To date, 307 individuals have taken the Bridge course. COSC met with the deans and directors of the state's nursing programs to discuss the course and to get all the colleges on the same page in terms of the use and content of the course. They administered a student survey to gather their feedback on the course. With feedback from the student survey, a number of changes were made to the course. The revised course was shared with key representatives of all public and private associate degree nursing programs. Twenty nine (29) students took the new course in the spring semester of 2010 and 28 passed and are ready for the transition to RN programs in the state. ***Now that this project is complete, Charter Oak State College, the CT League for Nursing and the state's LPN and RN programs should market the availability of this opportunity and track student progress through this articulation.***

Pilot Initiative: Career Pathways in Behavioral Health

Central CT State University (CCSU) Department of Counseling and Family Therapy has undertaken this project in collaboration with the CT Workforce Collaborative on Behavioral Health. The goal of the project is to gather information on existing behavioral health career pathways, both mental health and addictions, with service populations including children, youth and adults. They have identified at least six other models of career pathways from other fields to inform planning for this project. The pathways information on behavioral health in Connecticut will include, though not be limited to, the following elements: educational programs in institutions of higher education; certificates and degrees awarded by those programs; external (non-educational institution-based) certificates; certifications and licenses available to those with the requisite training and experience; and data on the volume of individuals who are traversing these pathways. Three products have been developed as a result of the project: an inventory of behavioral health courses leading to certificates and degrees; a set of career pathways in behavioral health; and vignettes of professionals in the field to share with students. ***It is recommended that the next steps in this analysis take place including data collection on annual job openings in behavioral health fields. In addition, this information should be shared with counselors at the high school and college levels to promote awareness of behavioral health careers. This is also a great career pathway model that could be replicated in other occupational areas.***

Pilot Initiative: Higher Education Health & Education Initiative

The state legislature allocated resources to the Department of Higher Education to support investments in allied health, nursing and education programs in the state's colleges and universities. These resources were combined in a unified Request for Proposals with those allocated to the Department of Public Health and career ladder resources at the Office for Workforce Competitiveness to promote programs that alleviate workforce shortages in these areas.

The CT Women's Education and Legal Fund monitors the grants and provides technical assistance and guidance during project implementation. Grantees include:

Albertus Magnus College	Manchester Community College
Capital Community College/AHEC	Northwestern CT Community College
Central CT State University	Quinnipiac University
Connecticut Community College System/CT League for Nursing	Sacred Heart University
Eastern AHEC	Southern CT State University
Eastern CT Health Network	St. Joseph's College
Eastern CT Workforce Investment Board/Three Rivers Community College	St. Vincent's College
Fairfield University	University of Connecticut
Gateway Community College	University of Connecticut Health Center/AHEC
Goodwin College	University of Hartford
	Waterbury Hospital
	Naugatuck Valley Community College

Lessons learned from these initiatives include the importance of: retention supports for allied health students; work experience in healthcare for youth and adults; academic tutoring and simulation experiences; and targeted tuition assistance in high need areas for certificate, undergraduate, and graduate programs to foster the training of new faculty. ***Continued funding for this Initiative is critical to the state's ability to identify barriers and address allied health workforce preparation through best practices.***

Past Initiatives

Pilot Initiative: Bridges to Health Care Careers Program

The pilot program was designed to provide a 'bridge' for certified nurse aides (CNAs) to prepare them for continued study in a more advanced allied health field. The pilot was guided by an oversight committee comprised of Capital Workforce Partners (CWP), Capital Region Education Council (CREC), the 1199 Training and Upgrading Fund and Capital Community College.

Twenty-eight (28) students were chosen for the first pilot cohort in January 2005. Subsequent pilots served an additional 60 students.

Intensive case management enabled the students to expand their interests and possible career advancement in health care careers. Students needed assistance in managing school, work and family obligations. The case manager worked with the students to provide counseling, direction and tracking and continued for an additional year once students have completed the pilot.

Through meetings with the College President and senior staff officials, the Academic Dean agreed to accept the third cohort of Bridges students into the college as a Learning Community, which, as seen in the literature - fosters a greater sense of community among

learners, promotes greater retention and achievement for students, and revitalizes the teaching experience for faculty members. Since these are the qualities attributed to the Bridges program, it was agreed that this was a welcomed and appropriate decision. This decision to move the program to the academic side of the college enabled the students to become eligible for Pell grants, which satisfied the cost of their courses and books. A final year of career ladder grant funding was made available to retain the case manager and college staff was urged to find resources to sustain the position.

Overall, the students in all four cohorts were motivated to advance in their careers and dedicated themselves to their coursework. They were challenged by the pressures to support their families, often working more than 40 hours per week, and to complete their education. With support from the project, they learned a variety of techniques to balance their time and resources which will support them throughout their academic and personal lives.

Capital Workforce Partners (CWP) used the experience from the Bridges Program to leverage nearly \$1 million in federal grants to develop an employer-based education program for nurse aides. CWP developed a healthcare focused partnership with CREC, Vernon Adult Education, 1199 Training & Upgrading Fund, long term care associations, and community colleges in their region to provide CNAs with career advancement and basic skills education. The purpose is to engage long-term care employers in establishing educational plans from a menu of services they have identified with their front line employees to better prepare them for potential higher level health career opportunities. A total of 12 employers and 326 employees have been engaged in the project over the last three years. CWP is sponsoring the delivery of onsite adult basic education programs for employees' interested in future advanced careers in the health professions. Through a U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) High Growth Job Training Initiative grant, CWP provides adult education instruction to long-term care sites and includes leadership/clinical specialization career tracks through instruction provided by the community colleges in the region.

CWP was also awarded a Robert Wood Johnson/Jobs to Careers grant that allows for expansion of the USDOL grant to include additional work sites during the 3 year grant period, culture change activities, and work-based learning. The program provides an on-site, incumbent worker training program targeted at CNAs, and incorporates work-based learning within clinical specialty tracks offered by area community colleges. The program also assists participating sites to create a framework for organizational change and institutionalization of work-based learning through culture change activities.

Pilot Initiative: Culture Change in Long-term Care

In an effort to improve the workplace environment for those in health care professions, the CCLAC contracted with B&F Consulting, national experts in culture change, to facilitate two initiatives with long-term care facilities.

The first project involved working closely with two long-term care facilities; one union and one non-union home. The goal of the project was to improve: the workplace culture so that each home is a better place to work; the care-giving culture so that each home is a better place to live; and opportunity for front-line staff at each home by instituting a career ladder opportunity with additional responsibility, expertise and higher wages.

The consultants worked with Mansfield Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Mansfield, and St. Camillus Home in Stamford. The pervasive nursing home culture puts institutional rhythms and efficiencies over individual patient preferences, and puts hierarchical decision-making over participatory processes. As the consultants worked with the upper management at each home, they took them through a change in culture and a change in perspective.

The second phase of the project involved creating internal career ladders for entry-level employees. At Mansfield, the existing career ladder process within the building was a team leader program. This program existed on paper but hadn't been examined, updated or supported for a long time. The consultants met with the current team leaders and management to examine the program and provide training for team leaders that Mansfield could use in the future.

At St. Camillus, there was recognition that English language skills were critical to the success of their entry-level employees. Management staff at St. Camillus estimated about 70 individuals were non-native English speakers. When given information about ESL classes, 55 employees expressed interest in the program. Forty-one (41) students had their high school diploma or GED but only 16 were from the United States and six (6) have college degrees from their home countries. ESL classes were held two days a week for two hours on site at the facility. This class was free for students and the arrangements and funding for the class was covered by the 1199 Training & Upgrading Fund, with help from the local Workforce Investment Board (The Workplace, Inc.) and Norwalk Community College. St. Camillus paid its employees for one hour of the two they spent in class. Thirty-three (33) workers completed the ESL training.

Staff at both nursing homes reported to evaluators that they now have better places to work, and that the atmosphere at each home is more respectful and inclusive. Managers reported to evaluators that the lessons they have learned about being leaders are lasting lessons and have changed the way they manage.

Based on the positive experiences at the two initial pilot sites, the CCLAC provided a second contract to B&F Consulting and partnered with 1199 Training & Upgrading Fund to work with a collaborative of nursing homes to promote culture change and career ladders. Three unionized homes were chosen to participate in the pilot (Alexandria Manor in Hartford, Trinity Hill in Hartford and Jewish Home for the Aged in New Haven).

The project's goals were to improve the workplace culture and create a climate that will support a career advancement opportunity within each home. The objectives were to increase management's capacity to create a better workplace environment in which staff feel and are respected and included, to build the capacity of each site's labor-management team to work well together, and to build the capacity of the sites to have workplace education for its low-wage workforce.

Each of the homes that participated in the project noted a growing sense of harmony in the workplace. Staff appeared to be appreciative of each other and the needs and concerns of front-line workers were being addressed as the homes sought to make significant changes in patient care.

Pilot Initiative: Online Perioperative Nursing Course

In the summer of 2004, CCLAC members held a focus group discussion with human resource staff from hospitals across the state. The representatives identified the need for training of operating room/perioperative nurses. Although the current vacancy rates for these nurses are low, they are expected to rise as the workforce retires. Associate and Bachelor's degree programs do not provide enough training in this area to prepare new nurses for these experiences. In addition, because hospitals often only have a few potential students, colleges have been unable to address their training needs because of the small class enrollment size.

In order to maintain a pool of qualified operating room nurses to address the future critical nursing shortage, Charter Oak State College (COSC) in collaboration with the Connecticut League for Nursing (CLN) and the Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA) developed an online perioperative nursing course for nurses who want to move into this field.

The online course is much less expensive than the on ground course (\$900 compared to \$2000) and provides continuity to the training statewide, yet allows the individual hospitals some flexibility in the onsite training component. Hospitals cover the cost of tuition for this program as well as selecting their participating nurses. There have been 104 graduates of the training program.

This project highlighted the ability and willingness of higher education to solicit and meet the workforce needs of employers and employees. This modest investment now provides hospitals and nurses statewide with online training in perioperative nursing to meet future labor market demands.

Pilot Initiative: Next Generation Careers Project

The goal of this project was to provide professional development exposure to educators that will enhance their capacity to guide students' career preparation efforts. This project was supported by the Office for Workforce Competitiveness (OWC) and the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) and coordinated by the Regional Education Service Centers (RESCs). The CCLAC contracted with the Northwestern Allied Health Education Center (AHEC) to provide resources specific to health care to this effort. In particular, AHEC was responsible for participating in project planning and implementation with the RESCs, guidance counselor training in each RESC area and dissemination of their Hot Jobs Guide to training participants and interested parties.

AHEC developed five lesson plans for health careers awareness and exploration. The lesson plans are at grade level 9-12. Twelve schools participated in the project and sent a team of five to the trainings including an administrator, guidance counselor, career specialist and two teachers. The inclusion of the health care component enabled educators to deliver health care career information to students as an integrated part of their learning.

Pilot Initiative: Licensed Practical Nurse and Nurse Aide Curriculum Review

Charter Oak State College was given a career ladder grant to: 1) review Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) programs offered through Connecticut's Technical High School System (CTHSS) to determine if general education college credit can be awarded for part of the curriculum and if there is a need for additional college level courses to assist their graduates in transitioning to RN degree programs; and 2) review the current Certified Nurse Aide (CNA) programs offered in the state.

LPN Review

At the time of review, the LPN program offered by Connecticut's Technical High School system to adult students was available in two formats, as a three-semester day program and a two-year part-time evening program. Charter Oak conducted an evaluation of the LPN program to determine if additional credits could be recommended in the behavioral sciences and in the sciences.

The final report was presented to the Connecticut Technical High School System Superintendent and her staff. The findings and recommendations included adjusting the LPN curriculum to correlate with the National Council of State Boards of Nursing Licensing Exam for Practical Nurses (NCLEX-LPN); reviewing the curriculum to correlate with the LPN scope of practice; requiring intermediate algebra, English composition, and psychology credit level courses either online or in the classroom and increasing the content in life span development so it is equivalent to college credit.

The Connecticut Technical High School System and Charter Oak State College worked together to implement these changes before the next round of students was enrolled in the fall of 2008. A total of 409 students were admitted into the program in August 2008 and 375 graduated in January 2010.

Governor Rell's mitigation plan in November 24, 2009, suspended of all LPN programs at the Connecticut Technical High Schools. The legislators in May 2010, passed a law to restart the LPN programs in six locations distributed geographically across the state. The programs will re-open in January 2011 with approximately 250 students enrolled. The cost of the tuition is now \$10,200.00 for the three semester program.

CNA Review

At the time of review, there were approximately 165 State of Connecticut approved nurse aide programs. These programs are offered by community colleges, health centers, and training centers. The training programs follow the guidelines spelled out in Public Health Code 19-13D—100 hours of training, 75 of which are in nursing areas and 25 in physical, psychiatric, psychosocial, and cognitive disorders.

In order to investigate nurse aide programs, Charter Oak State College appointed an advisory committee to determine which programs should be studied and to frame a set of objectives to guide the study. In addition, Charter Oak reviewed the current CNA programs offered in the state to develop a three-tiered system that builds from the current program offerings/requirements to include two additional levels with added skills in key substantive

areas (dementia, phlebotomy, etc.) and in college readiness (developmental/academic preparation). These levels were designed in conjunction with Capital Workforce Partners (CWP) and the CT Community College System both of which have USDOL projects related to nurse aide training.

Pilot Initiative: Building Health Career Pathways for High School Students

There is an ongoing concern that high school students are unaware of career pathways in health care and that their high school course taking doesn't align with college programs of study. The goal of this project was to develop a high school advising and course-taking sequence that leads seamlessly to the CT Community College System's Health Career Pathways Certificate Program.

In order to promote this seamless transition, Charter Oak State College (COSC) was given a grant in the fall of 2008 to undertake a curriculum alignment initiative with partners from the state's comprehensive high schools, technical high schools, community colleges and other educational and technical assistance organizations. COSC worked with these partners to align high school courses with the CT Community College "Investigation in Health Careers" course. After completion of the review, the CT Career Choices Foundations in Health Careers course and the CT Technical High School System's Health Technology program were approved for community college credit.

Pilot Initiative: Collegiate Health Service Corp

This project was designed to increase enrollment, retention and success in the allied health and nursing professions by targeting students early in their educational careers to participate in a Collegiate Health Service Corps (CHSC). The CHSC is an extension from the Area Health Education Center's (AHEC's) high school program Youth Health Service Corps (YHSC).

A pilot of the CHSC was conducted in 2007 on the UConn campus. The purpose of this grant was to expand this program to Western Connecticut State University (WCSU) and Eastern Connecticut State University (ECSU). CHSC's goal is to enhance commitment to students' choice of health career, increase graduation rates from health profession training programs and to encourage eventual practice in underserved communities. These programs combine teaching students about health information and requiring students to perform community service. This project was fully implemented in 2009 with ongoing student training and service learning opportunities in both campus communities. Through the *Higher Education Health and Education Initiative*, AHEC received a second grant to expand the Collegiate Health Service Corp to all 4 of the CT State Universities and to the University of Connecticut engaging over 200 students in public health activities.

Early Care and Education (ECE)

Since 2003, a great deal of emphasis has been concentrated on early childhood education. One major challenge in the original career ladder planning was the lack of a standardized, comprehensive method for estimating the size and qualifications of the childcare workforce. Though the number of licensed facilities was known, the actual number of employees was not. Further, the state did not have a comprehensive picture of the level of education and training of these current workers.

In order to address the lack of data on which to build a workforce strategy, the CCLAC contracted with the Center for Survey Research & Analysis (CSRA) at the University of Connecticut and the Child Health and Development Institute (CHDI) to conduct a workforce survey of school-based, community-based and family day care centers. The survey, administered to over 600 total centers by telephone, gathered information about employees on an aggregate level in three main areas: qualifications, compensation and turnover.

Key findings of the report included:

- More than half of center directors (57%) and teachers (68%) had at least 12 credits in early childhood education. However, this is true for only 14% of family child care providers.
- The study reports that 77% of center directors and 43% of full-time teachers had baccalaureate or master's degrees.
- Median income for full-time teachers, regardless of setting, was \$24,000 and for assistant teachers/aides, it was \$17,000.
- Full-time teachers in school-based programs (license-exempt programs) were much better compensated than those in licensed centers, with median annual incomes of \$40,000 for teachers and \$22,000 for assistants/aides.

The research report was issued in November 2005 and disseminated to committees of cognizance in the state legislature, the members of the CT Employment and Training Commission, the Higher Education Early Care and Education Task Force, the Governor's Early Care and Education Cabinet and the Governor's Jobs Cabinet.

Through CT Charts-a-Course the state has developed an Early Childhood Education (ECE) workforce registry to record information on individual staff working in childcare centers. Information is collected on their qualifications and compensation. To date, over 7900 teachers, assistant teachers, and program directors have entered information into the registry. Of the over 3400 teachers included, 35% have a bachelor's degree or more and at least 12 credits in early childhood education; 22% have an associate's degree and 12 credits and 28% have a CDA and 12 credits. Among the over 3000 assistant teachers in the registry, 8% have a bachelor's degree; 9% an associate's degree and 37% have a CDA and 12 credits in early childhood education. Of the 871 program directors, 56% have a bachelor's degree or more and 12 credits in early childhood education.

ECE Workforce Subcommittee

The Office of Workforce Competitiveness and the Department of Higher Education chaired the Governor's Early Childhood Research and Policy Council ECE Workforce Subcommittee.

The charge to the Workforce Subcommittee was to develop a plan to increase the number and qualifications of the workforce in publicly funded school and center-based early childhood education (ECE) programs for 3- and 4-year-old children. This includes public preschools, Head Start and School Readiness programs, and Department of Social Service child care centers. The objectives for this plan were outlined in the Research and Policy Council's Investment Plan (fall 2006) which made specific recommendations for increasing the minimum requirements for the staff in publicly-funded ECE programs and for expanding the number of children served by these programs. The subcommittee was charged with recommending strategies that would:

1. Increase the qualifications of the staff at all levels (administrators, teachers and assistant teachers) to meet the new requirements.
2. Increase the number of qualified staff so as to meet the projected expansion.
3. Develop the infrastructure needed to support these changes in a coordinated manner.

In order to gather information from stakeholders across the state, the consultant and staff conducted 38 interviews, held 3 focus groups, and conducted a poll of the members. Using data from interviews, focus groups, and poll the subcommittee identified goals, objectives, and action steps for a workforce plan. However, in December 2007 the sub-committee was unable to support the plan because of concerns over the standard for teachers. The ECE Workforce Subcommittee came to the decision that the state law requiring 100% of teachers to have a bachelor's degree by 2015 was unrealistic and an analysis of the capacity of the higher education system confirmed that judgment. The Subcommittee developed an Alternative ECE Workforce Proposal that calls for 50% of teachers to have a bachelor's degree and the remaining to have an associate's degree by 2015. In addition, all teachers will be required to have a new ECE teaching credential by 2015. The alternative proposal and a draft workforce plan were submitted to the ECE Cabinet for consideration by the Governor and legislature. To date, legislation has been raised in committee but has not passed.

Current Initiatives

Pilot Initiative: NAEYC Associate Degree Accreditation

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has developed a system to accredit associate degree early childhood education programs. NAEYC's Governing Board has given its support to the development of associate degree program accreditation and has authorized the use of significant Association funds to help launch the system.

The Council of Early Childhood Coordinators of CT Community Colleges (7C's) consists of all two year faculty from the twelve community colleges. They each represent their respective early childhood education associate degree programs. The 7C's work collaboratively to ensure consistency among the quality of programs for their students and to maintain open and strong

communication channels with the state's public and private four year institutions that offer early childhood education programs at the baccalaureate degree level. The CCC early childhood education programs are the largest and fastest growing career programs at the colleges. Currently they enroll approximately 2500 students per year.

Many early childhood practitioners come to the field with little or no experience or post-secondary education. Practitioners who wish to attain credentials and/or degrees are most likely to be attracted to community college early childhood programs to begin their collegiate program. When a student chooses to persist to a four-year program, the associate degree should be viewed with "quality assurance" by the transferring college. It is therefore incumbent upon the community colleges to assure that their academic programs meet the criteria and standards established by the field for associate degree accreditation in early childhood education.

This project seeks to work with 3 cohorts of 4 early childhood education programs each from the Connecticut Community Colleges (CCC), who wish to engage in the NAEYC Associate Degree Accreditation process. The target programs in the first two cohorts would be those college serving teachers who work in school readiness communities and/or priority school districts. Career ladder funds are used for release time for faculty working on the accreditation process as well as to pay the NAEYC review fee. The Community College System hired two consultants to coordinate the multi-year process.

To date, all 12 community colleges have filed their applications with NAEYC. One college has been accredited, another has submitted their self-study as part of the process and an additional school has participated in a site visit from NAEYC. The remaining colleges are starting the accreditation process with support from the consultants. ***The community colleges must see this accreditation process through and to educate counselors at the state's high schools and colleges about the rigor of these courses and the opportunities for advancement in the field.***

Past Initiatives

Pilot Initiative: ECE Leadership Training & Capacity Building

The Connecticut Association for the Education of Young Children (CAEYC) in collaboration with CT Charts-a-Course (CCAC) plays a key role in supporting leadership development in the early care and education field. Through this career ladder initiative the Accreditation Facilitation Project (AFP) offered courses to child care center directors who must complete the Connecticut Director's Credential (CDC) to meet the new NAEYC Accreditation program administrator's training requirements.

Research has shown that early childhood administrators play a pivotal role in attracting and retaining qualified teachers that promote children's development and learning. In addition, the director's level of education has been found to be a strong predictor of whether or not a program pursues accreditation status. There have been 227 individuals who were awarded a CDC since inception.

The CDC provides individuals with a voluntary system of credentialing. The credential, offered at four levels of proficiency and issued by Charter Oak State College, is earned by successfully meeting the training requirements and proving leadership capabilities necessary to run a high quality child

care center. The Connecticut Director's Credential is a collaboration between Charter Oak State College, Connecticut Charts-A-Course, the Department of Social Services and the Hartford Area Child Care Collaborative.

To improve the level of director qualifications and provide entry to the CDC Career Ladder, CCAC/AFP offers *ECE 206 Administration and Supervision in the Early Childhood Program* (the required survey course for the CDC) on a regular basis. Over the past eight years a total of 889 individuals have attended CCAC/AFP sponsored coursework. There are 755 individuals on a waiting list for future offerings of the introductory Administration and Supervision course (as well as other courses for which the intro is a CCAC/AFP prerequisite), and for the other CDC competency area classes.

In the first round of career ladder grant funding, AFP offered a one-week course, *ECE 206, Administration and Supervision in the Early Childhood Program*. In addition, they were able to develop and implement *ECE 212 Administrative Leadership in Early Childhood Programs* with funding from the Career Ladder Initiative and the Department of Social Services and in collaboration with Gateway Community College.

A second grant was awarded in 2007 to establish a CT Director Leadership Training Institute to advance individuals on the CDC Career Ladder. The full week Institute included two sections of the survey course, *Administration and Supervision*, and one section each of *Early Childhood Finance* and *Administrative Leadership*. Additionally, CCAC/AFP offered the leadership and finance courses in the 3-weekend format.

In October 2008, a final year of funding was given to CCAC/AFP for two initiatives to support program administrators who wish to improve their credentials within the CDC competency areas.

1. Development of CDC competency area courses at the upper baccalaureate level through Charter Oak State College. The administration and supervision course was approved for credit which will benefit those taking the course, 45% of which have a bachelors degree and can now earn credit at that level.
2. Sponsored coursework to advance administrators' credentials relative to the Connecticut Director Credential and/or NAEYC program administrator criteria through a Program Administrator Leadership Institute. This grant supported a fall 2008 Connecticut Program Administrator Leadership Institute to advance individuals on the CDC Career Ladder and to assist in the achievement of NAEYC's Program Administrator requirements.

Pilot Initiative: Early Language and Literacy Pathways Exam

Charter Oak State College (COSC) has developed three exams identified by Connecticut Chart-A-Course to enable individuals working in the field of ECE to earn college credit for knowledge acquired outside the college classroom. The main objective of these is to convert the Training Program in Child Development into college credit for those individuals who have completed all four

of the modules. In addition, anyone who has knowledge equivalent to what is learned in a full semester course on the exam topics, but does not have college credit in these areas, may consider taking exams. These exams are:

- Introduction to Early Childhood Education,
- Child Developmental Psychology, and
- Infant/Toddler Development.

This grant allowed COSC to develop a fourth exam in the series, *Early Language and Literacy Development in Young Children*. A Standard Settings Committee of 8-10 faculty or others who have appropriate content knowledge were engaged to work with the consultant on the project. A detailed study guide was developed by the faculty developers and includes: a) a general description of the exam; b) a detailed description of the content and the percentage of exam questions assigned to each topic; c) the cognitive levels assessed and the percentage of questions assigned to each; d) sample questions; e) recommended study resources; and f) information on the passing score.

Pilot Initiative: ECE Youth Pipeline

The purpose of this project was to expand awareness of early childhood education careers among Eastern CT youth and to improve the pipeline of students entering the field. By offering upfront training and summer internships for high school students at participating childcare sites, the Eastern Workforce Investment Board (EWIB) provided a bridge between the K-16 educational system and employers.

Participating students took part in a one week customized program including 20 hours of online learning in workplace readiness, an overview of the ECE field as well as college information such as financial aid and academic assessment. Upon completion of the training activities, students participated in a 5 week paid internship at participating childcare facilities. The project had hoped to serve 30 students this summer but only 13 youth enrolled because of new eligibility rules which precluded some students.

Pilot Initiative: ECE Career Ladder Initiative

The pilot program was developed by Connecticut Charts-A-Course to meet specific goals. The first was to ensure ongoing training and professional development opportunities for child care professionals including providing subsidies to centers to offset tuition costs for college credit-bearing courses. The second goal was to enhance opportunities for basic skills training so that child care workers could enhance their skills and ease the transition to higher education programs.

Some of the main components of the program were to offer scholarships, tuition, and payments for books and/or assessment fees. Participants were required to complete a certain amount of coursework during a prescribed contract period and after completing educational benchmarks, participants were eligible for increased compensation in the form of educational bonuses. To participate in the program, participants honor their commitment to stay at their child care program or the field for at least 6 months.

Three pilot sites were chosen to participate in this initiative; Mt. Olive Childcare Center in Hartford, West Haven Child Development Center in West Haven and Thames Valley Council for Community Action in Norwich. A total of 47 students were selected from these three sites to continue their studies.

Individual education plans were designed for each student and continually revised and discussed to ensure they remained focused on their goals. Some students had difficulties in making the transition from their entry level training to college courses and many were required to take developmental courses before they could enroll in credit courses. Tutors were hired to work with students and support them in their educational endeavors.

The pilot program ended in June 2007. Of the 45 students who completed the project: 12 students received their CDA and were earning college credits toward a certificate or degree, 20 completed the one year certificate program and were earning credits toward their associates degree, 7 students completed their associate's degree and 1 finished their bachelor's degree and started on their master's degree. The remaining 5 students left the field for a variety of reasons.

Pilot Initiative: Achieving Latina/o Academic Success (ALAS)

The goal of this initiative, funded in February 2008, was to develop an education and training model that provides Latina early childhood professionals with knowledge and skills to enable Spanish-speaking children to reach school success.

The Hartford Child Care Collaborative, which led the project, convened a diverse group of stakeholders to address the issues related to developing a successful Latina early childhood workforce. They formed a committee of a broad range of stakeholders; researched various college models, including interviewing people at out-of-state colleges to explore their models; interviewed national consultants on national and regional initiatives; developed an initial structure of pathways and supports; and conducted focus groups.

This project goal was to increase the numbers of teachers who are proficient in English and Spanish to effectively work with English Language Learners and their families. In addition, the hope was to provide early childhood programs within the college systems with a tool to help counsel students and determine appropriate placement on an early childhood career path.

Technology

The CCLAC made a decision early in its tenure that a variety of technology related initiatives were taking place and that their resources were best spent on health care and early care and education. However, the Committee did identify a need to pilot educational strategies with out of school youth and disadvantaged adults who lack career ladder opportunities.

Current Initiatives

Pilot Initiative: Re-Entry & Advanced Re-Entry Program

The Re-Entry Program has been developed by Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce support individuals lacking modern office skills. The objective is to train participants to return to the workforce with new skills which are marketable in today's labor market, with the program's main component training in office technology.

The Re-Entry Program planned to have one cycle of class and a total of 25 participants in the program, with a goal to place 19 in full-time employment. In fact, 31 students were engaged and 25 completed. The Advanced Re-Entry Program which is opening enrollment now will be one semester with a total of 25 participants, with a goal to place 18 in full-time employment.

Participants must complete the entire course in order to receive a certificate. Upon completion of the program, each participant will have created a resume and been trained in interviewing and techniques.

A Job Coach will be provided for participants to provide case management services to employees who are at high risk, are experiencing hardships, or have been discharged from employment due to social problems. Specific activities shall include recruiting clients, monthly meetings with clients to assist with basic skills including, but not limited to, budgeting, healthcare, housing and interviewing, referring clients to other services, tracking employment retention and enrollment in education or support programs for clients. ***It is recommended that the promising practices from this project be shared with other training providers and that the Workforce Investment Boards identify federal, state and private resources to support future training.***

Pilot Initiative: Jobs Funnel Analysis

Over the past decade, the Office for Workforce Competitiveness on behalf of the State has taken the lead (supported by numerous public, private, and non-profit partners) to develop, fund and support implementation of the Jobs Funnel program model to recruit, prepare, place and retain hundreds of qualified Connecticut jobseekers in employment leading to careers, primarily in the construction industry. Jobs Funnels currently operate in Hartford, New Haven, Waterbury and Bridgeport. A key component of the 2009-2011 budget plan for the Governor's 15% ARRA/WIA Reserve Funds envisions expanded implementation of jobs funnel initiatives in each of the state's workforce regions in pursuit of strategic objectives:

- **System:** To develop, implement and test the Jobs Funnel program model as a vehicle to enhance the capacity of the One-Stop Career System to improve job placement, job retention and wage progression results in targeted industry sectors.

- Jobs Creation/Retention: To use the Jobs Funnel program model to achieve significant job placement and career advancement outcomes that directly support the state's ARRA-driven efforts to create, retain and sustain jobs.
- Economic Growth: To use the Jobs Funnel program model as a vehicle to produce qualified candidates for jobs leading to careers in targeted industry sectors and occupations contributing to statewide economic growth, i.e., health care and green.

An in-depth analysis was conducted by Redstone Research which suggests that the model has proven to be more effective in increasing wages and career opportunities for low-wage, low-skilled workers than other workforce training programs targeted to the same population. In addition, the evaluation indicates that this model may prove effective with training in other industries.

Before investing in expanded jobs funnel activities, additional analysis was essential to ensure that proposed initiatives are well-designed, strategically focused, and capable of achieving desired results. A consultant was hired to conduct the analysis and develop a specific work plan in consultation with the Office for Workforce Competitiveness (OWC) for the implementation of the project. ***This initiative should be replicated statewide. In addition, the model should also be expanded to focus on training in other high growth industries.***

Past Initiative

Pilot Initiative: Street Smart Ventures

In order to improve outcomes for youth who are involved in the juvenile justice system, in crisis or expelled from high school, Street Smart Ventures implemented a Work and Learn model program with New Haven Adult Education (NHAE). The goal of this project was to give high school students an opportunity to build academic and occupational skills in technology, particularly construction-related fields.

The Work and Learn model integrates learning, mentoring and work experience and creates a portfolio of work opportunities for youth. The heart of the model is the team of adult and older youth role models who support the youth. In this project, the New Haven Adult Education team expanded to include entrepreneurs and work site supervisors from the local community. The project used work experience, adult and youth mentoring and the prospect of full-time employment after graduation to motivate youth to stay in school and earn their diploma. In addition to high school graduation, project goals included increasing students' social and workplace skills, self-esteem and successful completion of work experiences leading to full-time employment after graduation.

This project was completed in the fall of 2007 with continuation funding for activities coming from the State Department of Education and NHAE. According to the NHAE staff, the program motivated students to re-engage in education while getting on-the-job experience and job coaching. For those with little or no experience in the workforce, the one-on-one coaching and case management provided a safe and protective entry to employment. The program staff agreed that this program helped them find better ways to engage students so they value education. It also provided opportunities to promote employment and career education and enabled NHAE to look for new

ways to incorporate employment readiness within their facility and also to leverage community resources to enhance the educational experience.

Lessons learned from this project were shared with the state's Workforce Investment Boards and the State Department of Education to connect these efforts to those of the youth and adult initiatives taking place statewide. This project demonstrated the types of activities that can be developed to promote high school completion and labor market attachment for at risk young adults. Hands on work activities serve as a motivator for youth who struggle with educational goals. This model inspires and connects youth to the education and workforce pipeline and their communities.

Recommendations

It is clear from the pilot projects initiated over the last seven years that health care, early care and education and technology programs are most successful when they include opportunities for acquisition of foundational skills in writing and math, career awareness and counseling, case management support and employer engagement.

Based on these experiences, we recommend replication of past initiatives to additional sites and students. With continued Career Ladder funding, the Advisory Committee will work with state agency and community partners to support the following initiatives:

1. Most individuals who participated in Career Ladder Initiatives are already working in the health care and early childhood education fields and need the support of their employer to increase their skills. It is recommended that \$500,000 in incumbent worker training funds continue to be available through the Department of Labor and Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) to help employers actively engage in the career advancement of their employees. This investment, which is matched by employer partners, would allow the WIBs to serve individuals interested in career ladders in health care and early childhood education.
2. The Community Colleges have demonstrated the effectiveness of Learning Communities on their campuses. This model should be scaled up to provide all students, particularly those needing developmental education, with the holistic academic and support services including case management necessary to be successful.
3. It is also recommended that the legislature authorize the use of state financial aid provided to the state's public and private colleges and universities for students who are pursuing non-credit certificate programs in our state's training programs. Currently, none of the \$53 million in state financial aid is available for training in these short-term occupational areas that support the state's health care infrastructure.

Conclusion

The Career Ladder Advisory Committee has worked diligently to identify and support model programs that assist individuals in gaining the skills they need to advance in their careers. These models are ready to be shared and replicated statewide with ongoing support from the Committee and the pilot project partners that have been forged over the past six years. We encourage the legislature's renewed funding of the Career Ladder Initiative and the Committee's identification and support of pilot projects and continued investment in their replication and evaluation.