

February 15, 2012

I want to begin by thanking the Appropriations Committee for this opportunity to present briefly an overview of the important work of the OIC's in the State of Connecticut. My name is Rev. Robert Lampkin. I am the Program Manager at The Greater New Haven O.I.C. (Opportunities Industrialization Center). The late Rev. Dr. Leon Sullivan of Philadelphia, P.A. started the first O.I.C. office in 1964. Since that time the organization has grown to sixty (60) offices around the United States and has offices in Africa, Asia, and Europe. Each office provides skill development training and employment guidance.

There are five (5) O.I.C.'s in Connecticut; New Britain, New London, Waterbury, Bridgeport, and New Haven which was first established in 1967 and reconstituted in 1989. All five O.I.C.s in Connecticut (as across the nation) serve the unemployed, underemployed, and disadvantaged citizens of our communities. Each O.I.C. has unique objectives and training programs which best serve the particular needs of their city. The Greater New Haven O.I.C. currently provides Certified Nurse Assistant Training, EKG/Phlebotomy Training, and Employment Placement Services. In that regard please see enclosed **The Greater New Haven O.I.C. Brief Program Highlights for Fiscal Year 2010-2011** completed on November 1, 2011.

Last year alone, with limited funding, TGNHOIC provided CNA training for fifty (50) and EKG/Phlebotomy training for seven (7). About 85% of those graduates are today certified and employed in the health care field, the fastest growing area of employment in Connecticut and the United States. In addition, fifty two (52) clients at TGNHOIC were placed into various employment positions. Moreover, Evette Gonzalez, one of our CNA graduates four years ago, started her own agency "Beyond Home Health Care" two years ago. Ms. Gonzalez has hired twenty (20) of our CNA graduates the last two years.

For more information on the work, goals, and objectives of the OIC's in Connecticut, please see enclosed our "White Paper", entitled "**Connecticut Opportunities Industrialization Centers The Key to Success- Developing a Work-Ready Workforce for Connecticut: A Work Readiness Project.**"



# THE GREATER NEW HAVEN OIC, INC.

333 Valley Street • New Haven, Connecticut 06515  
Phone: (203) 389-3321 • Fax: (203) 389-3393

November 1, 2011

## **The Greater New Haven OIC, Inc. Brief Program Highlights Fiscal Year 2010-2011**

From July 2010 to June 2011 (TGNHOIC) maintained two (2) contract training programs and continued to provide employment placement services for its clients. This activity was made possible largely by State (Department of Labor) funding and a Federal Grant received (Health and Human Services).

- \*\* A total of fifty (50) clients, who received fully funded training slots paid (by TGNHOIC) completed Certified Nurse Assistant Training. Thirty-five (35) received their training at New Haven Adult Education and fifteen (15) at Newton Foster Inc.
- \*\* Twenty-three (23) of these graduates are today working as licensed Certified Nurse Assistants and eighteen (18) are today working in the health care field as Home Care Assistants and Aides.
- \*\* In addition seven (7) clients of TGNHOIC) who received fully funded training paid slots completed EKG/Phlebotomy Training at the American Red Cross. All are currently employed in health care positions related to their training.
- \*\* In addition a total of fifty-two (52) clients at (TGNHOIC) were placed into various employment positions. The majority received employment in the health care field (as noted above) however, several were placed into the following well-paying positions in private industry; i.e. Covidien (formerly US Steel in North Haven as a Manufacturing Engineer, Accord Day Care (Wallingford) as a Program Instructor, Southern New England Telephone Co., as a Project Developer, and several in retail positions at J.C. Penney.

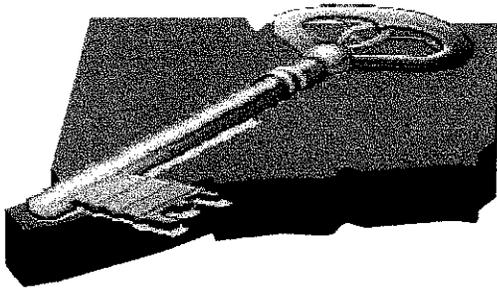
The Greater New Haven Opportunities Industrialization Center Inc.

- \*\*Moreover (TGNHOIC) has provided job referral support, case management services and employment workshops for other client who have been placed into the following positions; New Haven Board of Education in Day Care, Panera Bread Company, a Baker, and sales at Payless Shoe Store.
- \*\*Barbara Gonzalez "Evette", a graduate of (TGNHOIC) who completed CNA Training in 2008 opened her own health care facility "Beyond Home Health Care" in 2009. She has to date hired fifteen (15) clients who have completed training with (TGNHOIC).



Rev. Robert Lampkin  
Program Manager (TGNHOIC)

Connecticut  
Opportunities Industrialization Centers  
*"The Key to Success"*



Developing a Work-Ready  
Workforce for Connecticut

*"Work Readiness Project"*  
(WRP)

**CONNECTICUT OICS**

*Helping People Help Themselves*

## CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Identified Need	3
Proposed Response to Identified Need	5
Implementation	7
Summary	8

### **Prepared By:**

Reginald Beamon

*Executive Director, OIC of Waterbury*

Elizabeth Binger

*Executive Director, OIC of New London County*

Deborah Caviness

*Executive Director, The Greater Bridgeport OIC*

Paulette Fox

*Executive Director, OIC of New Britain*

Rev. Robert Lampkin

*Program Manager, Greater New Haven OIC*

## INTRODUCTION

The first Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC) in the United States opened its doors in 1964 in an abandoned jail house in Philadelphia PA, responding to the recognized need for concrete vocational and employability skills training of the inner-city residents of this community. The founder of OIC, Reverend Leon Sullivan said, "I believe it's not enough just to talk about freedom and justice and opportunity. I got to do something to make it reality."

Reverend Sullivan built OIC on the principle of "self-help", providing people with the tools to assist themselves in overcoming barriers of poverty and oppression. Sullivan realized that simply making jobs available was not enough. He said, "I found that we needed training. Integration without preparation equals frustration."

In 1965, Reverend Sullivan encouraged each state to develop OICs to carry his message of "helping people help themselves." Connecticut answered the call in 1968, when The Greater New Haven OIC opened its doors. In 1970, the communities of New London and New Britain followed their lead. Soon the communities of Bridgeport and Waterbury followed suit. Over the ensuing 40+ years, the five Connecticut OICs collectively have served more than 70,000 people.

As the five OICs in Connecticut continue to provide critically needed services to the residents of our state, our collective goal is to look to the future and to provide our communities with a work-ready workforce that is prepared to move our state forward in this millennia. This paper provides information and background on our collaborative Work Readiness Project (WRP), a comprehensive training program that incorporates the US Chamber of Commerce-sponsored Work Readiness Credential and the Career Competency System, developed by the Capitol Workforce Partners.

## IDENTIFIED NEED

As a result of the current challenging economic situation, in Connecticut, the United States and across the world, a number of "quiet" issues have been recognized.

1. The nature of work has changed, requiring new and higher level skills
  - a. A move from the Frederick Taylor model focusing on standardization and efficiencies to a team-based/cross functional model with an emphasis on collaboration
  - b. Complexity of jobs has increased
  - c. Increased focus on "lean" manufacturing
  - d. Job skills and technology have changed rapidly, leading to a greater number of obsolete jobs
  - e. Speed and growth of communication outlets, such as social media
2. Increased global competition – the need to make things faster, better, at lower costs and with higher quality means tomorrow's workers must master cultural and communication skills to be effective members of the workforce. Additionally change is happening in terms of where we work, how we work, how we communicate and the cultural implications of our work.

3. The rapid pace of changing technologies – nanotechnologies, fuel cells, computing, etc. – all of which demand a higher level of knowledge, skills and abilities. This has led to an expanded definition of “basic skills” to include critical thinking, problem-solving, sophisticated interpersonal skills, and a commitment to life-long learning at all levels of work from the entry-level position to the highest management levels.

Today’s changing demographics compound the challenges:

1. Connecticut’s population is aging more rapidly than most other states
2. Connecticut has more people over the age of 62 than teenagers
3. In 2003, Connecticut’s median age was 38.7 – the 7<sup>th</sup> oldest in the United States
4. Average age of aerospace engineer is 54; nurse is 46; skilled machinist is 54
5. Forty percent of Connecticut’s workforce is living in our cities. Many of them live in poverty and have the least access to education and experience the greatest achievement gaps
6. Connecticut has the largest achievement gap in the nation
7. Connecticut is 45<sup>th</sup> in the nation in overall population growth since 2001

In short, Connecticut’s shrinking workforce is older than average, with the largest gap between our skilled workers and our unskilled workers in the country.

According to results released by the US Department of Education in early 2010, Connecticut once again ranked worst in the nation for the average achievement gap between poor and non-poor students across eighth and fourth grade reading levels. In looking at the two grades tested, 8<sup>th</sup> grade Connecticut students ranked 50 out of 50, our fourth grade ranked 46 out of 50. The average gap between poor and non-poor students for both the eighth and fourth grade reading tests is 2.97 grade levels. The gap between poor and non-poor students on the fourth grade reading test is 3.05 grade levels. The gap between poor and non-poor students on the eighth grade reading test is 2.89 grade levels.

Connecticut’s racial and ethnic gaps also remained close to the bottom, including the worst 8th grade achievement gap between African-American and white students in the nation and the second worst achievement gap between fourth grade Hispanic and white students, after Minnesota. Connecticut’s African-American eighth grade students scored nearly 3.5 grade levels behind their white peers, the biggest gap in the nation. African-American fourth grade students scored nearly 3 grade levels behind their white peers. Hispanic fourth grade students scored more than 3 grade levels behind their white peers, while Connecticut’s Hispanic eighth grade students scored nearly 3 grade levels behind their white peers.

In recent years, the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut has conducted an annual survey of the region’s employers. The results consistently identify one of the top challenges faced by businesses across southeastern Connecticut as being the difficulty in finding qualified employees – people who are ready to go to work and who have the skills and understanding of what it takes to be successful at work. Other Chambers of Commerce across the state have reported similar knowledge and experience gaps.

In January 2010, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) identified the top ten jobs for the coming decade where the greatest growth in job numbers will occur. Of those ten jobs, six were jobs for which the Connecticut OICs conduct their specific training programs: home health aides, customer service representatives, food preparation and serving workers, personal care aides, office clerks, and nursing aides, orderlies and attendants. This report went on to state that training and education programs need to change the way in which they are preparing people for work by focusing on different skills, such as problem-solving, interpersonal relations, and teamwork.

### **PROPOSED RESPONSE TO ADDRESS THE IDENTIFIED NEED**

To address the need identified above while also paying heed to the report from BLS, the CT OICs propose the implementation of a coordinated "Work Readiness Project" (WRP), a statewide initiative that incorporates the **Career Competency System (CCS)** adopted by the Capital Workforce Partners, Inc. the workforce board in the greater Hartford area that covers 37 Connecticut towns with the US Chamber of Commerce sponsored **Work Readiness Credential** to present a fully-developed, valid and credible employment training and preparation program for our state's low-income and low-skilled population.

#### **Career Competency System (CCS)**

The CCS consists of a curriculum that addresses a series of critical skill areas including: Basic Skills, Customer Service, Computer Literacy, Problem Solving, Decision Making, Interpersonal Communications, Personal Qualities and Job-Seeking Skills. This system has been in place in central Connecticut for the past six years, assisting clients to move through three tiers of training to arrive at a place where they can demonstrate their readiness to go to work.

The three tiers of the CCS each address commensurately higher levels of skills, beginning with Tier I: Basic Skills (reading, math, writing and communication); Problem Solving and Decision Making; Interpersonal Skills; and Personal Qualities. Tier II builds upon the above skills by adding: Job Seeking Skills; Customer Service Skills; and Computer Literacy. Tier III focuses on all of the above skills with a deeper and more intense approach to ensure the students' mastery of each component.

The OIC of New Britain has been successful with its implementation of the CCS, working with the youth and adults of their community. During the 2010 Summer Youth Program, youth who had moved through the CCS and completed Tier II had a 95% retention rate on the job. Youth who had completed all three tiers had a 100% retention rate and employers reported being impressed by the performance of all the young adult participants. During this eight-week program, those students who did not participate in the CCS curriculum experienced a retention rate of only 50%, with the majority of them being terminated for poor performance. OIC of New Britain has seen the success of the CCS system and recognizes the impact it can have on our future workforce.

#### **Work Readiness Credential (WRC)**

The Work Readiness Credential was established for use as a nationally recognized benchmark for core skill possession by entry-level job seekers. The assessment has been validated using scientific methods by the EEOC, the Civil Service Commission and the US

Labor and Justice departments. This team of experts was able to validate the credential as an accurate indicator of worker competency and establish it as a national benchmark for job readiness.

The WRC, developed by the National Institute for Literacy is an assessment tool that defines, measures, and certifies that individuals have the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to succeed in entry-level work in the workplace of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Based on the *Equipped for the Future* (EFF) Adult Learning Standards and on employer consensus of what "work readiness" means, the WRC is a research-based, portable certificate of work readiness.

Business and industry associations from across the United States support the WRC as a cross-industry standard that is a starting place for a range of career pathways. This standard is the result of extensive research asking businesses from health care, manufacturing, telecommunications, finance, retail-wholesale trade, hospitality and other sectors what they need in entry-level workers today. Because the credential is based on a national standard, employers across the country can count on its quality for their locations from New York to Seattle. Moreover, jobseekers well know that the credential they earn at one of Connecticut's OICs will enable them to qualify for work throughout the country.

The WRC is accessible: it is an efficient, computer-delivered assessment that takes 2 ½ hours to administer. It is also legally defensible; this product is reliable, field-tested, validated and has withstood legal challenges and tests.

Because the credential assesses a broad spectrum of EFF applied skills and abilities that employers care about, it not only identifies the best candidates for entry-level jobs, it also assures that they have the capabilities required in today's workforce to be valuable, high-performing workers and to progress in a company or career.

Partners who support the WRC include: the National Association of Manufacturers; the National Retail Federation; the US Chamber of Commerce; the Institute for Educational Leadership; the National Skills Standards Board Institute; the National Governors' Association; Workforce Florida, Inc.; New Jersey Department of Labor (in conjunction with the New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission); the New York State Workforce Investment Board (in conjunction with the New York State Department of Labor and the New York State Education Department); and the Washington State Workforce Training, Education and Coordinating Board.

The standards and field research process conducted by the WRC partners, were critical to the development of the credential by helping to:

- Define the skills, knowledge, tasks, and behaviors integral to most types of entry-level work across a variety of industries
- Create a rubric for assessing competency levels, thus ensuring entry-level job readiness in line with business standards.
- Substantiate test results and the measurement strategies used to achieve them
- Provide ongoing analysis of research findings.

Two and one-half hours, four modules, eight skills and infinite benefits for workers and employers alike – that is the Work Readiness Credential. The WRC is an invaluable tool in both preparing job seekers for entry-level work, and providing employers with a more competent and skilled workforce with which to meet their basic business needs.

Labor experts have narrowed down eight basic skills considered essential for on-the-job efficiency and success, all based on the EFF standards. In just two and one-half hours, the assessment, divided into four modules, measures a candidate's ability to:

- Listen actively
- Solve problems and make decisions
- Cooperate with others
- Resolve conflicts and negotiate
- Observe critically
- Take responsibility for learning
- Read with understanding
- Solve problems using math

Achievement of the WRC enhances the marketability of entry-level job seekers, helps pinpoint areas needing improvement, and develops their potential for future advancement. For employers this translates into more compliant, driven, qualified, and cooperative candidates. **Efficiency, responsibility, and competency among job seekers are the characteristics that open doors for on-the-job success.**

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

OIC of New London is currently an approved WRC site and the other four OICs are in the process of achieving that status. OIC of New Britain is developing a "Train the Trainer" curriculum for the other four Connecticut OICs to ensure consistency of implementation and approach to the CCS.

The five OICs have met regularly to share their resources and expertise and to identify the areas in which each individual organization will focus, based on their community's needs and the specific nature of their target populations.

It is anticipated that the necessary training and approval processes will be completed by the end of July 2011, with the WRP ready to be fully implemented at all five sites beginning in August 2011.

### **SUMMARY**

The five Connecticut OICs have a 40+ year history as established non-profit job training organizations with demonstrated successful track records of providing core and intensive workforce development and pre-employment services. Currently the five OICs provide specific and concrete training in a number of vocational areas including Office/Computer Skills; Culinary Arts; Certified Nursing Assistants; Customer Service; Utility Labor; and

more. The implementation of the Work Readiness Project, which incorporates the Career Competency System and the Work Readiness Credential, brings the OIC services full circle to a wide audience of low-educated, low-skilled individuals. The CT OICs work to serve the "whole person" striving to assist our clients to develop the image of themselves as successful and competent. CT OICs have trusted reputations within their communities and possess the expertise, knowledge and staff resources to fully implement the WRP project. The CT OICs continue to work extensively with the "hard to serve" consumers who require comprehensive case management and support services to successfully enter and/or re-enter the workplace.

CT OICs each have successful partnerships with public and private sectors and as well as the network of human/social service agencies within their communities and are experienced in implementing high quality, professional workforce development systems. These partnerships embrace the concept of universality and have demonstrated expertise in serving a wide cross-section of the population, including employers, dislocated workers, youth, the elderly, recipients of public assistance, and incumbent workers.

As well, the CT OICs are well versed in implementing the principles of consumer choice and integration of services, and have developed and implemented successful workforce development systems under performance-based contractors with complex reporting systems that demand accountability. All five CT OICs have strong leadership, highly experienced professional management teams, are consumer-focused with deep roots within the communities they serve and possess the ability to cope with an ever-changing workforce while meeting the needs and challenges of today's workforce.

The CT OICs' collective mission is to develop a well-educated, well trained and self-sufficient workforce that can compete in the changing global marketplace. Essential to this mission is the creation of a seamless, coordinated system of education, job training and job placement, case management and appropriate referrals that:

- are consumer focused and easily accessible
- meets the needs of employers, skilled workers and persons who face barriers to employment
- has a high level of commitment and collaboration from business, education, government and community agencies

As evidence of the Connecticut OICs' experience and impact, during the most recent fiscal year (July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010), the five agencies combined to serve nearly 4,000 individuals, administered operating budgets nearing \$2 million with a combined staff of less than 50 individuals. These organizations are efficient and effective, making the most of every dollar they have and returning an average of \$2.00 for every \$1.00 spent.