
From: Danielle Chiaraluce <Danielle.Chiaraluce@oicnlc.org>
Sent: Wednesday, February 20, 2013 10:39 AM
To: AppropriationTestimony
Subject: Maintain Full Funding for OIC HB06350-DOL

Importance: High

Dear CT Legislators:

On behalf of OIC of New London County, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Appropriations Subcommittee for their hard work and for this opportunity to voice my concerns over critical budgetary decisions that will affect thousands of unemployed or underemployed Connecticut constituents and the state of our workforce. I am writing to strongly urge the Appropriations Subcommittee to reconsider any reductions to OIC, to the Department of Labor for the purposes of funding OIC's, and to community employment programs set in place by state agencies for which OIC's may be eligible to apply.

We are a part of Connecticut's OIC family that includes New Haven, New Britain, Bridgeport and Waterbury. We have an established history of training and placing individuals on jobs, returning them to school and helping them become self-sufficient. We are unlike other training programs in that we address the holistic needs of the person. OIC of New London has served nearly 30,000 individuals adding to an estimated \$69 million to the community in the value of the agency's services. As individuals leave OIC programs they will possess a credential in industry recognized certifications and career competencies. Further, we address the barriers required to secure employment, such as food, clothing, housing, transportation and employability skills. Last year alone we assisted nearly 125 families with securing energy assistance and transportation resources. 569 adults completed our vocational training programs and/or employability classes and more than 661 clients utilized our services and support within our Project Employment ex-offender program. In certain instances, our services have contributed to successful reductions in recidivism amongst ex-offenders. This is a model program, one that recently faced dramatic reductions from state budget cuts thus requiring us to serve more people with significantly less.

Further budgetary cuts may compromise OIC's ability to secure federal funds that our organizations receive for similar services thus impacting the sustainability of an invaluable community resource in Connecticut. I strongly urge you to fight for our continued funding. We contribute to community development by creating a viable pool of employment ready candidates. Our hope is that we can continue to enhance our programs and also offer others within new career clusters. Being that unemployment and underemployment are not needs that

have decreased, we are also adapting to serving the long-term unemployed. It would seem unwise to decrease programs that are addressing employment issues at a time when our statewide communities require responsive programs and services that address the skills necessary to enter – or reenter – the workforce.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these remarks on behalf of retaining funding for all OIC's in Connecticut. Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions you may have in this regard.

Sincerely,

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