

---

**From:** Carol Labore <calucinda@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 18, 2013 8:53 PM  
**To:** AppropriationTestimony  
**Cc:** THarp@hillhealthcenter.com; Rep. Walker, Toni  
**Subject:** Request for reconsideration of funding - STRIVE Organizations in Connecticut

February 18, 2013

Appropriations Committee Testimony  
Legislative Office Building, Room 2702  
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

To whom it may concern;

On behalf of the **STRIVE** organizations working in Connecticut to improve successful employment opportunities for the most economically disadvantaged individuals in our State, I would like to thank the Appropriations Subcommittee for their deliberative efforts and for their consideration of my opinion. I believe the budgetary decision which cuts funding for this program will affect thousands of Connecticut constituents and businesses, and further drain budgetary resources to provide other State services, both in the near and the long term. I'm a representative of the United Illuminating Company serving as a board member to Career Resources, which operates the STRIVE organizations in Bridgeport, Hartford and New Haven. Having been involved with STRIVE for the last five years, I've seen people become productive workers and make positive changes in their lives, most coming from a background of joblessness, poverty or crime. I implore the Appropriations Subcommittee to fund the highly successful STRIVE programs operating in our most challenged urban areas.

Here are some facts:

STRIVE has provided a 400% return on investment for Connecticut taxpayers with over 300 graduates placed into full-time employment. They have an 80% placement record with nearly 90% of our clients keeping their jobs after 2 years! STRIVE, meaning, "Support and Training Result In Valuable Employees" is not a traditional occupational skills training or academic enrichment classroom program. It is an "in-your-face", attitudinal adjustment, experiential learning program that confronts and addresses individual behaviors that block success in the workplace. The majority of the clients are ex-offenders who have few options for training and placement. The program operates within the greater Hartford, Bridgeport and New Haven urban areas, and many businesses in those urban areas have come to hire STRIVE graduates based upon the success of previous graduates.

STRIVE recognizes that many people have never gained the foundational "soft skills" to succeed at the first jobs that lead to greater growth. Inability to work cooperatively, handle criticism, or successfully navigate the myriad of spoken and unspoken expectations in any workplace—these deficits often meant people lose job after job without understanding what they did, or how to change their behavior.

STRIVE therefore delivers a personalized and practical introduction to the world of work itself. Serving any Connecticut resident who chooses to participate, regardless of skill level, or previous history, inclusive of incarceration, STRIVE continues to show outstanding results compared to other employment and training programs. It operates at a fraction of the cost of traditional approaches, and reaps high returns for the initial investment-- more strikingly so when compared to the cost of additional unemployment, supportive social services, crime and re-incarceration costs.

With an extremely lean budget, and a proven track record of success, it would be foolish to cut a program that yields such high results. I understand that many tough decisions need to be made, and I do not envy your position. With a low cost, high impact program such as STRIVE, I believe it would be extremely unwise to cut their funding. Additionally, any cut to STRIVE may affect the federal awards that the program receives to provide complimentary services. Therefore, I strongly encourage you to fight to keep STRIVE in the budget. Thank you for your time and consideration. My contact information is below with any questions or concerns you might have.

Sincerely,

Carol Labore

852 Quinnipiac Avenue

New Haven, CT 06513

Tel: 203-926-4656