



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee  
Testimony of Maureen Wagner, Education Consultant  
Connecticut State Department of Education  
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Thank you Chairman Kissel and Chairwoman Mushinsky. My name is Maureen Wagner. I am an adult education consultant with the Connecticut State Department of Education. I am pleased to have the opportunity to provide information about adult education instructional services in Connecticut and how those services offer opportunities to Connecticut residents for basic skills enhancement, high school completion or English proficiency attainment.

Adult Education services are mandated by Connecticut Statute and require local school districts to provide instruction in four areas: citizenship, adult basic education, English as a second language and high school completion to those individuals 17 and older who are officially withdrawn from school. In adult education, we serve individuals who range in age from 17 to over 60-years-old.

State dollars are granted to local school districts for instructional services, the amount of which is determined by the wealth ranking of each city or town. Local dollars are then matched with state grant dollars to support adult education programming. Additional federal resources support instruction in a number of special priority areas. These areas include: family literacy; transition to post-secondary education and training; preparing the twenty-first century workforce; integrated basic education and skill training; non-traditional adult education instruction and services; expansion of the National External Diploma Program (NEDP); and English Literacy and Civics Education.

On an annual basis, adult education providers serve approximately 26,000 adults at 328 locations in the state. Of that total, 10,700 are immigrants seeking citizenship or improvement of their English proficiency; more than 9,500 are employed; 10,000 are unemployed and seeking employment; nearly 5,700 are unemployed and not seeking employment and approximately 2,100 are receiving public assistance.

Beyond the mandated instruction that adult education providers offer, many work closely with their workforce investment boards to offer services to youth, dislocated workers, incumbent workers and older workers to raise their skill levels and to assist them with English language acquisition and high school diploma attainment. Many adult education providers are in the workplace retooling employees' skills; some are involved in integrated education and skills training projects (I-BEST) in collaboration with workforce investment boards that provide basic skills and technical training to Connecticut residents needing these services; and others are working in partnership with their local community college to provide transition support and post-secondary readiness skills.

Adult education has worked with the Connecticut Department of Labor's Rapid Response Team to provide the necessary services to those individuals who are about to be displaced from their jobs. Many of these individuals, often older workers, have found themselves lacking the necessary skills to meet the demands of the existing workforce and seek resources and support from adult education providers and their local One-Stop Centers.

The CSDE recognizes that adult education services are an integral part of the workforce development continuum. To that end, CSDE adult education consultants serve as active members of the five workforce investment boards in Connecticut; we have worked with community colleges both locally and at the system-level to connect adult education and community college initiatives; and we provide support to the Connecticut Department of Labor on specific projects with respect to employment and training. Additionally, the Commissioner of Education, Stefan Pryor, serves on the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission (CETC), the Governor's workforce development policy board. An adult education consultant is an active member of the CETC's Career Advancement Committee, whose mission is to identify the support needed to enhance the career advancement of low-skilled, low-wage workers.

Employment outcomes achieved by adult education learners are reported alongside those from higher education and employment and training programs in the State's annual Legislative Report Card, thus providing greater visibility regarding the impact of adult education in Connecticut. The adult education system has and will continue to be available as a resource for the reemployment of older workers. As a system, we recognize the power of lifelong learning and provide the supports to our citizens to be successful members of their communities, role models for their families, and contributing members of the workforce.

Thank you.