



OLR RESEARCH REPORT

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COMPARISON OF YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS IN CONNECTICUT AND NEW YORK

By: John Moran, Principal Analyst

You asked for a comparison of New York and Connecticut youth apprenticeship programs that highlights whether on-the-job training is part of the young person's apprenticeship.

SUMMARY

Connecticut and New York both have technical high school systems that help prepare students for various trades, some of which require apprenticeships. The Connecticut Technical High School System (CTHSS) provides on-going opportunities for on-the-job training, known as work-based learning, as part of the technical high school program. CTHSS's work-based learning is an optional component for juniors and seniors that is available in all the technical high schools. Last year 325 students, about 10% of those eligible, participated. Meanwhile, New York does not have paid work as a regular part of its technical high school program. But being a technical high school graduate in New York gives a student certain advantages toward being accepted in an apprenticeship program.

New York's Department of Transportation (DOT) had offered a youth construction employment program that featured on-the-job training in highway construction for high school juniors and seniors. This program was funded through the federal recovery act in recent years, but the program was wound down as New York reprioritizes its transportation construction money.

In both states, other youth employment efforts, either administered by their respective Labor Departments or regional workforce development boards, focus around summer jobs, job training, and career planning, but not on-the-job-training.

OVERVIEW

In Connecticut and New York apprenticeship programs all have an educational component and a paid on-the job training component. In both states, the respective Departments of Labor (DOL) oversee and regulate apprenticeships. They work with the education officials in each state who approve and verify the educational components of the apprenticeships.

In apprenticeship programs for the licensed trades, such as plumber and electrician, the employer agrees to hire an apprentice to work over a set period of years, usually four, with the pay increasing each year as the apprentice's skills advance. The typical apprentice's schedule is divided between (1) on-the-job training under proper supervision and (2) classes required to further develop knowledge and skills. At the end of the apprenticeship, the employee is ready to take the license exam to become a journeyman in the particular trade.

The apprenticeship program in New York requires that the applicant be 18 years old, while in Connecticut an applicant must be at least 16, although in practice most have graduated from high school and are 18.

Labor law generally prohibits those under 18 from participating in hazardous work, which includes construction and other apprentice-able trades. But Connecticut law makes exceptions to this for minors at least 16 years old who are (1) enrolled in bona fide apprenticeship programs, technical high schools, or public schools, (2) graduates of private or public technical high schools, or (3) participating in a manufacturing or mechanical internship ([CGS § 31-23\(c\)](#)).

CONNECTICUT

The primary program in Connecticut for on-the-job training for youth is through CTHSS, which prepares many of its students for apprenticeships in various trades. CTHSS includes a work-based learning component, often called pre-apprentice work, as a standard part of its four-year high school program.

Work-based learning is optional and last year 325 students participated, about 10% of those eligible. Students who take part in work-based learning are paid for performing work related to their study area for an off-site employer. Only juniors and seniors who have an overall GPA of C or better and have a GPA in trade classes of B or better are eligible for work-based learning. (Production work is a different and mandatory component of the technical high school experience that involves working on a project either in the school or at a job site with instructors from the school. It is hands-on experience that is built into the technical high school curriculum and the students participating are not paid.)

Each Connecticut technical high school has a work-based learning coordinator to help find suitable work projects for students and manage other aspects of the program. Transportation to work sites is an obstacle, as students cannot always provide their own transportation to job sites and this can reduce participation in the work-based learning, according to Jon Waleski, apprenticeship supervisor at CTHSS. Also, the job must be something suitable and related to the trade the students are learning.

Employers in the work-based learning program must provide the technical school with a valid insurance certificate and sign an agreement that there will be on-site mentors for each students (in some settings a mentor can have more than one student), according to Heidi Baltz, CTHSS curriculum specialist for the work-based learning program.

In Connecticut, the DOL will count up to 1,500 hours of work-based learning performed during high school toward a graduate's apprenticeship after high school, according to Waleski. The students are paid for the work they do in work-based learning. But after graduation, employers are not required to recognize the hours worked in high school as counting toward the apprenticeship. This means the starting apprentice may have to accept the apprentice job at the starting salary.

On the educational side of the apprenticeship, Waleski said technical high school graduates complete 100% of the state required classwork for the licensed construction trades while in high school. This removes the cost and time commitment to meet this apprenticeship requirement for both the employer and the apprentice.

NEW YORK

Technical High Schools

New York State's technical high school system does not have a feature equivalent to work-based learning. New York officials note that concerns over having youth under age 18 on construction sites or other hazardous work sites has always been a significant concern that has hindered initiatives to include more on-the-job training as part of the technical high school experience.

But, they note, graduating from a technical high school earns the student extra points in a point-based ranking system used to select candidates for apprenticeship programs. In this way, the degree can help a graduate land an apprenticeship, which is on-the-job training.

Youth Construction Initiative Program

For several decades, New York's DOT administered a Youth Construction Initiative Program (YCIP) that featured on-the-job training in highway construction for high school juniors and seniors. In recent years, this program was funded through the federal recovery act, but the program was wound down this past summer as New York reprioritizes its transportation construction money.

The program offered educational and job-training opportunities for vocation-oriented 11th- and 12th-grade students interested in entering an apprenticeship program or obtaining work after graduation in the construction and engineering industry. It was a two-year program that consisted of classroom instruction, job skills (e.g., job search and interview skills), and summer on-the-job training.

The program operated out of eight high schools and technical high school with YCIP coordinator at each site.

New York is currently reprioritizing its transportation construction spending and its efforts to attract and train workers for the highway construction trades may be taking a different form. No announcement has yet been made but Michael Fondacaro of New York DOT's Civil Rights Office, said new request for proposals in this area may be out sometime in the next six months.

JM:ro