

LABOR MARKET STUDY OF GREATER NEW HAVEN AND THE VALLEY

PREPARED FOR THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION *FOR* GREATER NEW HAVEN
AND VALLEY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

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BLAKELY CONSULTING LLC



VALLEY COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION

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We are grateful for everyone who contributed to this report.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the beginning of 2023, The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven and Valley Community Foundation partnered with Blakely Consulting to undertake a study that would advance the Foundations' work in promoting equitable and inclusive economic development in their region. The goal of this project was to understand the need for middle skill jobs in the region, highlight some occupations that provided promising employment opportunities, identify pathways for residents in the area, and meet the needs of local employers. More importantly, we wanted to understand why this problem has not been solved yet. With employers demanding more workers and potential workers sitting out of the labor market, clearly there is more than a skills mismatch at work.

We undertook over 40 listening sessions and interviews with job seekers, employers, job training programs, and intermediaries to understand the problem, to highlight promising solutions, and to identify opportunities for innovation.

We found misunderstandings at every level of the system. Employers are not committed enough to addressing their labor shortages to fully partner with training providers or to fund their own training programs. Training providers bring trainees to the last step but leave them to connect with employment on their own. Racism, gender discrimination, and other forms of bias also play a part. Women of color and English language learners are much more likely to encounter employment barriers.

Systemic barriers such as lack of transportation and lack of care infrastructure (the policies, resources, and services that help families meet their caregiving needs) will require innovative employer commitments. Regarding transportation, for example, employers may consider providing shuttles between offices and central locations. In the long term, public-private partnerships may provide sustainable transportation networks connecting workers to opportunities across the region.

Lack of childcare and other forms of care infrastructures prevent many workers from engaging in the workforce. This is a particular issue for workers with less formal education and especially for women of color. Workers who do not perform a typical 9-5 day face a critical lack of affordable and flexible childcare.

Our recommendations for workforce development practitioners include focus and innovation on marketing and outreach, providing support beyond the first job placement, and developing rigorous internal evaluation processes that allow for adaptation to changing environments. Our recommendations to employers include identifying sources of discrimination in their recruitment, hiring, and retention processes, reinventing their recruitment processes, and updating job characteristics such as work hours and benefits to better meet the needs of today's workers.

Understanding the challenges and opportunities in the Greater New Haven and Valley region required multiple approaches. This project involved examination of data from public sources, both national and local, as well as multiple interviews and focus groups. An outline of the project elements is included.

REPORT OVERVIEW

LITERATURE REVIEW: The Literature Review utilizes national and regional research studies to highlight best practices when connecting workers to middle skill jobs. This document reviews the

landscape, emphasizes the need for middle skill workers and jobs, documents the effects of the pandemic, and highlights the most effective practices in the field.

LABOR MARKET ANALYSIS: The Labor Market Analysis compiles documented population demographics and labor market statistics for the regions of Greater New Haven and The Valley. This report pulls publicly available data from the United States Census and research from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. It analyzes regional demographics, family and household criteria (such as housing and earnings), labor force status and participation, unemployment, employment, and large regional employers. Lastly, it focuses on minority and disadvantaged groups by race/ethnicity and gender where possible. The report highlights data published in the winter of 2023.

INDUSTRY OVERVIEW REPORT: The Industry Overview Report compiles data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The overview describes the contributions of each super sector to the region's economy, based on the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). The industry overview includes an employment data overview of the HealthCare and Social Assistance, Retail Trades, Education Services, and Manufacturing industries in comparison to the United States. It also includes the largest regional employers.

TARGET OCCUPATION STUDY: The Target Occupations Study takes a more granular view of the specific occupations that meet our criteria of:

1. Not requiring a 2- or 4-year degree
2. Paying a living wage

The report focuses on eight occupations and includes Average Salary and Benefits Expectations, Required Qualifications, Training and Career Advancement Opportunities, Relevant Industries/Similar Role Types, and Opportunities for Growth in the occupation.

REGIONAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT REPORT: The Regional Workforce Development Report is a qualitative report examining major workforce development and labor market learnings from workforce development practitioners, job seekers, and employers in the region of interest. Interviews and focus groups were conducted with local workforce practitioners, employers, and job seekers to understand the barriers to employment and opportunities in the field.

This report also includes a subsection on understanding cliff effects/the benefits cliff: the abrupt and significant changes in an individual's public benefits or financial status that occur when they reach certain income thresholds.

CASE STUDIES: The three case studies examine three unique promising practices in the field and how they have effectively addressed barriers to accessing the labor market and building a strong workforce development pool. The three case studies include VCU Health, the Manufacturing and Technical Community Hub (MATCH), and BioLaunch, a program of the Connecticut Center for Arts and Technology (ConnCAT).

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS: The final recommendations are based on our qualitative research as well as labor market research and literature. We provide recommendations for the workforce development ecosystem and employers operating in the system.

APPENDIX A: METRICS FOR LONGTERM TRACKING WORKBOOK: Using our recommended methods, we focus on measures of labor force participation and utilization, especially for minority and female workers.

APPENDIX B: COMMENTS ON METHODOLOGY: The methodology employed for the project involved a clear focus on equitable and inclusive processes. The methodology comments highlight the strategies implemented to center equity and inclusion.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE: PROMISING PRACTICES IN CONNECTING WORKERS TO MIDDLE SKILL JOBS

NEED FOR MIDDLE SKILL JOBS

There is an urgent need to match workers without 2- or 4-year degrees with jobs that allow them to support themselves and their families. While achieving a degree is a path to the middle class for many, it's not feasible for all. Furthermore, increasing the number of workers with degrees does not increase the *demand* for workers with degrees. Upskilling benefits the higher education industry but not the workers or the economy. Employers need skilled workers who can work in technical areas but often do not require degrees. A shortage of these workers is limiting the growth of these businesses.

NEED FOR LIVING WAGE JOBS FOR PEOPLE WITHOUT 4-YEAR DEGREES

Our educational system has recently been focused on higher education as the primary pathway to economic mobility. Increasing the number of workers with college degrees, however, does not increase demand for workers with college degrees. As many graduates are learning, outcomes in the job market do not always justify the expense of attaining a degree.

For some people, obtaining a two- or four-year degree is a viable pathway to higher paying opportunities, but there are several barriers that can prevent individuals from obtaining a 4-year degree. One of the most significant barriers is the cost of tuition and related expenses, which can be prohibitive for many people, especially those from low-income families. Additionally, the time commitment required to earn a degree can be a challenge for those who need to work full-time or those who have family obligations. Inadequate academic preparation, lack of access to resources and support services, and systemic inequalities can also limit opportunities for certain groups such as women and people of color.

Furthermore, many adults without degrees have significant educational deficits which make entering higher education a daunting, lengthy, and expensive proposition. Youth who plan to enter the workforce immediately after high school are disproportionately male, from minority backgrounds, and/or exhibiting lower academic performance than their peers (Fuller Hamilton et al., 2015).

Living wage jobs are essential for people without a four-year degree, as they provide a path to financial stability and upward mobility. Creating pathways to living wage jobs for people without four-year degrees can help to reduce income inequality and promote economic growth.

NEED FOR MIDDLE SKILL WORKERS

The demand for middle skill workers is increasing as the economy continues to evolve, with new jobs emerging that require a mix of technical and soft skills. Industries such as health care, manufacturing, and technology require specialized training and hands-on experience but do not require 4-year degrees. Many companies are finding it difficult to fill these positions, hindering their growth. Millions of job postings go unfilled even as millions of people remain unemployed or underemployed (Burrowes et al., n.d.).

AREAS OF INEQUALITY

Even within the middle-skill space, there are disparities by gender and race/ethnicity to address.

Within the middle skills space, there is significant occupational segregation. Occupations with higher concentrations of women and people of color tend to have lower job quality on average. For example, Black women are overrepresented in low-wage jobs, such as nursing assistants, personal care aides, and retail cashiers. Many of these jobs fall in the caring professions, high need and high skill but low wage. Meanwhile, Latino men are overrepresented in low-wage jobs in construction, delivery driving, and food service (Shakesprere et al., 2021).

Male high school graduates earn more than female high school graduates (Fuller Hamilton et al., 2015) largely due to their overrepresentation in the skilled trades and construction fields. Women are more likely to select lower-paying pathways in health sciences and human services rather than skilled trades and construction (Fuller Hamilton et al., 2015). Within a field such as science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), which includes engineering and environmental science, women are heavily overrepresented among health-related jobs, many of which are low paid direct care jobs, and underrepresented in several other occupational clusters (Rick Fry et al., 2021).

IMMIGRANTS AND MIDDLE SKILL JOBS

Connecting immigrants and refugees with middle skill jobs is essential for both the economy and the immigrants themselves. Immigrants often possess valuable skills and experiences that can contribute to the workforce, yet they may face barriers to accessing middle skill jobs, such as language barriers and a lack of familiarity with the job market. Many immigrants have degrees but hold positions that do not require degrees in the United States. Most service providers offer alternative training and career paths to immigrants and try to place them in entry level jobs rather than attempting to match them with the jobs similar to the ones they held in their home countries (Bernstein & Vilter, 2018). Economic pressure leads immigrants to take “survival jobs” (Bernstein & Vilter, 2018) in which their education and talents are largely wasted.

EFFECT OF THE PANDEMIC

WOMEN, ESPECIALLY WOMEN OF COLOR, DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECTED BY COVID-19

The COVID-19 - pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on women, particularly women of color. Women tend to bear a disproportionate amount of caring responsibility in their families. Women of color are more likely to work in jobs that require physical attendance, such as healthcare, retail, and hospitality. Meanwhile, white women, who are more likely to be highly educated and able to work from home, were able to manage their caring responsibilities more easily.

Women of color are also more likely to hold low-paid jobs in the hospitality sector. These jobs simply disappeared during the pandemic (Goldin, 2022). The hospitality industry and other sectors that are overrepresented by women were severely impacted by the pandemic. Many workers experienced reduced hours and job losses. Furthermore, low-wage and low-hours workers have been the hardest hit by COVID-19, with many unable to work from home and therefore more vulnerable to job loss and exposure to the virus. Addressing these issues will require a comprehensive approach that includes targeted policies and investment in sectors that support women and low-wage workers. It will also require measures to address the childcare staffing crisis and other systemic issues that perpetuate gender and racial inequalities.

Government intervention has focused on traditionally male-dominated employment sectors such as infrastructure, which do not benefit women as much. The National Partnership for Women and Families predicts that of the 800,000 new jobs created by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, women would account for less than 29% of the jobs; Black women will account for less than 4%

of the jobs, and Latinas less than 5%. Investing in care infrastructure, such as early childhood education and home health services, would both yield more jobs and allow many more workers to reenter the workforce (Kashen et al., 2022).

NEW HAVEN AND VALLEY REGION

Connecticut is home to a diverse range of industries, with a particular emphasis on middle skill jobs. In fact, the state has more middle skill jobs than high- or low-skill jobs, making it an ideal location for those seeking employment in this sector. 2009 projections anticipated that 4 out of 10 (40%) job openings in Connecticut would require middle skills, highlighting the importance of this sector for the state's economy (CT-Department of Labor, 2009). By 2020, 48% of jobs in Connecticut were middle skill jobs (*Skills Mismatch: Lack of Access to Skills Training Hurts Connecticut's Workers and Businesses*, n.d.). This is on track with national trends. Nationally, 52% of jobs require some training beyond high school and do not require a 4-year degree (Olugbemiga, 2020).

Many middle skill jobs in Connecticut are found in the healthcare and construction industries. Healthcare is a particularly important sector for the state, as the aging population has increased the demand for healthcare services. Middle skill jobs in healthcare include positions such as nursing assistants, medical assistants, and licensed practical nurses. The construction industry is another important sector, with middle skill jobs in construction including carpenters, electricians, and plumbers.

In order to support the growth of middle skill jobs in Connecticut, it is important to invest in education and training programs that prepare workers for these careers. This includes vocational training programs, apprenticeships, and other hands-on training opportunities that provide workers with the skills they need to succeed in middle skill jobs. Additionally, policies that promote economic growth and job creation in these sectors can help to create a more robust middle class in Connecticut and contribute to the overall health of the state's economy.

PROMISING PRACTICES AND PILOTS

Structured non-credit programs that provide certifications such as commercial drivers' license, nursing assistant or teacher's aide are more accessible and practical for adults who need to access employment quickly in order to support their families. Typically, these programs are funded through local workforce boards (Van Horn et al., 2015).

TECHNOLOGY: AMAZON TECHNICAL APPRENTICESHIP

(*Work-and-Learn Models for Today's Economy*, n.d.)

The Amazon Technology Apprenticeship program is a workforce development initiative designed to provide individuals from diverse backgrounds with the training and experience needed to pursue a career in the technology industry. The program was originally designed to serve veterans and military spouses and has expanded to include other participants. The program is open to individuals with little or no prior experience in technology and provides a pathway into a career as a software engineer, data analyst, or other technology role within Amazon. The program is provided online.

The program is structured as a paid, 12-month apprenticeship, during which participants receive on-the-job training and mentorship from experienced professionals within the company. Apprentices also receive classroom instruction and certification training to build the technical skills needed to succeed in a technology career. In addition to technical training, apprentices receive training in professional skills such as communication, teamwork, and project management.

The program is competency-based – individuals can progress as they demonstrate mastery of the target skills -- meaning that individuals can complete the program faster than 12 months if they are able.

The Amazon Technology Apprenticeship program is designed to be accessible to individuals from diverse backgrounds, including those who may not have had the opportunity to pursue a traditional four-year college degree. The program is open to individuals who are 18 years of age or older and have a high school diploma or equivalent. Amazon also seeks to recruit individuals from underrepresented communities, including women, people of color, and military veterans.

Overall, the Amazon Technology Apprenticeship program is an innovative workforce development initiative that provides individuals from diverse backgrounds with the opportunity to pursue a career in the growing field of technology. By providing on-the-job training, mentorship, and certification training, the program prepares participants for a successful career in the technology industry, while also helping to address the growing demand for skilled technology professionals.

MANUFACTURING: WORKSHOP FOR WARRIORS

(Albert, 23 C.E.)

Workshops for Warriors is a nonprofit organization located in San Diego, California, that provides training in advanced manufacturing for veterans and transitioning service members. Founded in 2008, Workshops for Warriors aims to equip veterans and service members with the skills needed to pursue careers in the growing field of advanced manufacturing, while also addressing the skills gap in the industry.

The training programs offered by Workshops for Warriors are designed to be accessible to individuals from a wide range of backgrounds, including those with little or no prior experience in manufacturing. Programs range in length from 16 weeks to 52 weeks, and include instruction in areas such as welding, machining, and 3D printing. In addition to technical training, Workshops for Warriors also provides instruction in professional skills such as resume writing, interviewing, and job search strategies.

Workshops for Warriors offer stackable credentials as part of its training programs. Students who complete a program in a specific skill, such as welding or machining, can earn industry-recognized credentials that demonstrate their proficiency in that particular area. These credentials can be "stacked" on top of each other as the student progresses through additional training programs and develops new skills.

For example, a student who completes a welding program at Workshops for Warriors may earn a welding certification from the American Welding Society. This certification can be used to demonstrate the student's welding skills to potential employers. If the student then goes on to complete a machining program, they can earn a separate credential, such as a Computer Numerical Control (CNC) programming certificate, which can be added to their welding certification to demonstrate a broader range of skills.

By offering stackable credentials, Workshops for Warriors provide students a flexible pathway to build their skills and advance their careers. The organization partners with a wide range of industry associations and certifying bodies to ensure that its training programs are aligned with industry standards, and that its students have the skills and credentials needed to succeed in the workforce.

Overall, Workshops for Warriors' approach to stackable credentials helps to address the skills gap in the advanced manufacturing industry. They provide students with industry-recognized credentials that demonstrate their proficiency in specific areas of expertise, while also offering a flexible pathway to build their skills and advance their careers.

Workshops for Warriors has been widely recognized for its innovative approach to workforce development. The organization has been awarded numerous grants and accolades, including recognition from the U.S. Department of Labor as a model program for workforce development. In addition, Workshops for Warriors has a strong track record of success, with a 93% job placement rate for graduates of its programs.

Overall, Workshops for Warriors is an important resource for veterans and service members looking to transition into careers in advanced manufacturing. By providing accessible and comprehensive training programs, the organization is helping to address the skills gap in the industry, while also creating a valuable pathway to employment for those who have served our country.

HEALTHCARE: PATHWAYS TO HEALTHCARE, VCU HEALTH

The Pathways to Healthcare program at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) Health is a workforce development initiative designed to provide individuals with the skills and training needed to pursue careers in the healthcare industry. The program is a collaboration between VCU Health and several community partners. The Pathways to Healthcare program recruits high school graduates into entry level positions at VCU Health. The program offers a range of training programs and services, including classroom instruction, hands-on skills training, and job placement assistance.

One of the unique features of the Pathways to Healthcare program is its emphasis on providing students with the support and resources needed to overcome barriers to success. Their staff work with new hires and their managers to ensure that workers can retain their employment for the first year. After one year, workers are actively encouraged to take advantage of VCU Health's tuition reimbursement program in order to advance their careers.

Overall, the VCU Pathways to Healthcare program is an important resource for individuals looking to pursue careers in the healthcare industry. By providing comprehensive training programs, academic support services, and job placement assistance, the program helps both employers and employees. It addresses the workforce needs of the healthcare industry, while also providing valuable career opportunities for individuals in the community.

HEALTHCARE : LEE HEALTH CNA PATHWAY (*WORK AND LEARN MODELS FOR TODAY'S ECONOMY*, N.D.)

The Lee Health CNA (Certified Nursing Assistant) Pathway is a program designed to provide individuals with the skills and training needed to become certified nursing assistants in the healthcare industry. The program is offered by Lee Health, a leading healthcare provider in Southwest Florida, and is open to individuals with little or no healthcare experience.

The CNA Pathway program is a six-week course that includes both classroom instruction and hands-on clinical training. Participants in the program spend 30 hours per week in the classroom and are on the job in their apprenticeships for the rest of the week. Participants in the program learn the basic skills and knowledge needed to provide direct patient care. This includes assisting with daily living activities, taking vital signs, and monitoring patients' health status. Enrollees report that they feel more engaged with the field because they are already on the job while they are training.

One of the unique features of the CNA Pathway program is its focus on career advancement and professional development. Participants who successfully complete the program are eligible to take the Florida Certified Nursing Assistant exam, and those who pass the exam are offered employment opportunities with Lee Health.

In addition to providing job opportunities, the CNA Pathway program also offers a roadmap for participants to continue their education and pursue careers in other healthcare fields. Participants who complete the program are eligible to apply for Lee Health's tuition reimbursement program, which can be used to pursue further education and training in fields such as nursing or healthcare management.

Overall, the Lee Health CNA Pathway program is a valuable resource for individuals looking to start a career in the healthcare industry. By providing comprehensive training, career advancement opportunities, and support for continuing education, the program helps to address the workforce needs of the healthcare industry, while also providing valuable career opportunities for individuals in the community.

INSURANCE: AON

("Case Study: Next Generation Apprenticeships at Aon," n.d.)

Aon is a leading global professional services firm that provides a range of insurance and risk management solutions to clients around the world. The company operates in over 120 countries and has more than 50,000 employees, making it one of the largest and most influential companies in the industry. Aon offers a wide range of services, including risk consulting, insurance brokerage, and employee benefits consulting, among others. The company works with a diverse range of clients, including individuals, small businesses, and large multinational corporations, and is committed to helping them manage risk, protect assets, and achieve their financial goals. The Next Generation Apprenticeship program at Aon is designed to create an alternative pathway to careers at Aon in IT, Human Resources, and Insurance.

The program is a Federal Department of Labor registered apprenticeship model. Participants receive pay while they train and their pay progresses as they advance through the program and into full time positions. The training combines academic learning and on-the-job training. Participants spend 40 hours per week divided between coursework and on-site at Aon. They partner with community colleges to provide the appropriate coursework and Aon pays off the participants' school expenses.

The program also includes supervisors as a cohort. They work together to develop and share best practices in supporting traditionally underserved workers and supporting apprentices through the program.

The program is managed by a program manager rather than Human Resources in order to be able to bring the resources that the program needs to be successful.

BEST PRACTICES

There are several best practices that can help to support workers in obtaining middle skill jobs.

EMPLOYER PARTNERSHIPS AND ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

This involves employers working with educational institutions and training providers to develop curricula and training programs that are tailored to the specific needs of their industry. Employers can

also provide input on the skills and competencies that are most important for their workforce, which can help to ensure that training programs are relevant and effective.

Employer engagement is crucial for successful workforce development training for several reasons. Firstly, employers are in the best position to understand the specific skills and knowledge that are needed in their industry. By working closely with employers, training providers can develop training programs that are tailored to the specific needs of the industry. This can help to ensure that workers are prepared for the jobs that are available.

Secondly, employer engagement can help to ensure that training programs are aligned with the needs of the local labor market. Employers can provide insights into the current and future demand for certain skills, which can help to guide the development of training programs that will prepare workers for the jobs that are in highest demand.

Thirdly, employer engagement can help to ensure that training programs are of high quality and relevance. Employers can provide feedback on the effectiveness of training programs, which can help to identify areas where improvements can be made. This can help to ensure that training programs are continually evolving to meet the changing needs of the industry.

Finally, employer engagement can help to create a more seamless transition from training to employment. By working closely with employers, training providers can help to identify job openings and connect graduates with employment opportunities. This can help to ensure that workers are able to find employment quickly and that employers are able to fill open positions with well-trained and qualified candidates.

Overall, employer engagement is crucial for successful workforce development training. By working closely with employers, training providers can develop programs that are tailored to the specific needs of the industry, that are aligned with the needs of the local labor market, and that provide graduates with a seamless transition into employment.

PAID TRAINING

Paid training is another best practice that can help to support workers in obtaining middle skill jobs. By providing financial support for training, employers can help to remove financial barriers that may prevent workers from pursuing training opportunities.

Secondly, paid training can increase the overall quality of the workforce. Workers who receive paid training are more likely to be highly motivated and committed to their careers. They are also more likely to have a sense of loyalty and commitment to their employer, as they recognize the investment that the employer has made in their development. Paid training programs also provide the opportunity for trainees to get hands-on experience with the workplace before they complete training. This contributes to a workforce that is better prepared and more committed to the field.

Finally, paid training can address skill gaps in the workforce. Many middle skill jobs require specialized skills and knowledge that may not be readily available in the labor market. By providing paid training opportunities, employers can help to develop a pipeline of workers with the skills and competencies needed to succeed in their industry.

Overall, paid training is an important investment in the workforce. It can help to create a more skilled, motivated, and loyal workforce while also addressing skill gaps and increasing the overall competitiveness of businesses in a rapidly changing economy.

STACKABLE CREDENTIALS

Stackable credentials are another best practice that can help workers to advance in their careers and obtain higher-paying middle skill jobs.

The term stackable credentials refers to the practice of earning multiple certifications or credentials over time, with each credential building on the knowledge and skills acquired in previous training programs. The goal of stackable credentials is to create a pathway for workers to advance in their careers and obtain higher-paying jobs. For example, a worker might begin by earning a certification in a specific technical skill, such as welding or computer programming. With that certification in hand, they could then pursue additional training to earn a more advanced certification in the same skill, or a related skill that complements their existing knowledge. Over time, they might continue to add new certifications and credentials to their portfolio, allowing them to demonstrate a wide range of skills and competencies.

By stacking credentials in this way, workers can demonstrate to employers that they have the knowledge, skills, and experience needed to succeed in a particular field. This can help them to advance in their careers and take on more challenging roles, while also increasing their earning potential and overall job satisfaction.

Stackable credentials are becoming increasingly important in today's rapidly changing economy, as workers need to be able to adapt to new technologies and job requirements. By continuously building on their existing skills and knowledge, workers can stay competitive in the job market and continue to advance in their careers.

LABOR MARKET ANALYSIS

In January of 2022, the *Community Foundation for Greater New Haven* and *Valley Community Foundation* engaged Blakely Consulting to conduct a labor market analysis. The purpose was to inform the work of the Foundations in developing a talent pipeline to connect Greater New Haven and Valley residents with living wage jobs that do not require a post-secondary degree.

As part of this project, Blakely Consulting documented the population demographics and labor market of Greater New Haven and The Valley. The following document summarizes that research.

What we see is a labor market with significant disparities. White residents of the region tend to be more highly educated and to have higher household earnings. Individuals with lower education levels tend to have lower labor force participation rates and lower employment. Black and Latino residents have lower education levels and lower earnings than White residents do.

While women of color have the highest labor force participation rate in the region, women with preschool aged children have the lowest rate of labor force participation, highlighting the effect of the childcare crisis on employment.

Women of color earn less than other groups when they are working. Black women with college degrees, for example, earn roughly the same income as White men with high school diplomas. This may reflect the tendency for men to enter well-paid trades.

DEMOGRAPHICS

SOURCES

Most demographic information is gathered from the American Community Survey (ACS), an annual survey conducted by the US Census. Unlike the decennial Census, which aims to count every person living in the United States, the ACS collects data from a smaller but statistically significant sample of households throughout the year. Data is released as one-year or five-year estimates.

The ACS (and the US Census) recognizes the following racial and ethnic groups:⁶

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Some other race
- Two or more races

Survey respondents can only select from one of the groups above. Individuals may also self-identify as Latino, separate from their racial background.

The ACS provides margins of error with their datasets. These are represented in graphs by error bars—a graphical representation used to indicate the variability or uncertainty associated with data points and visualize the level of precision or confidence. Longer bars indicate greater variability; shorter bars indicate higher precision.

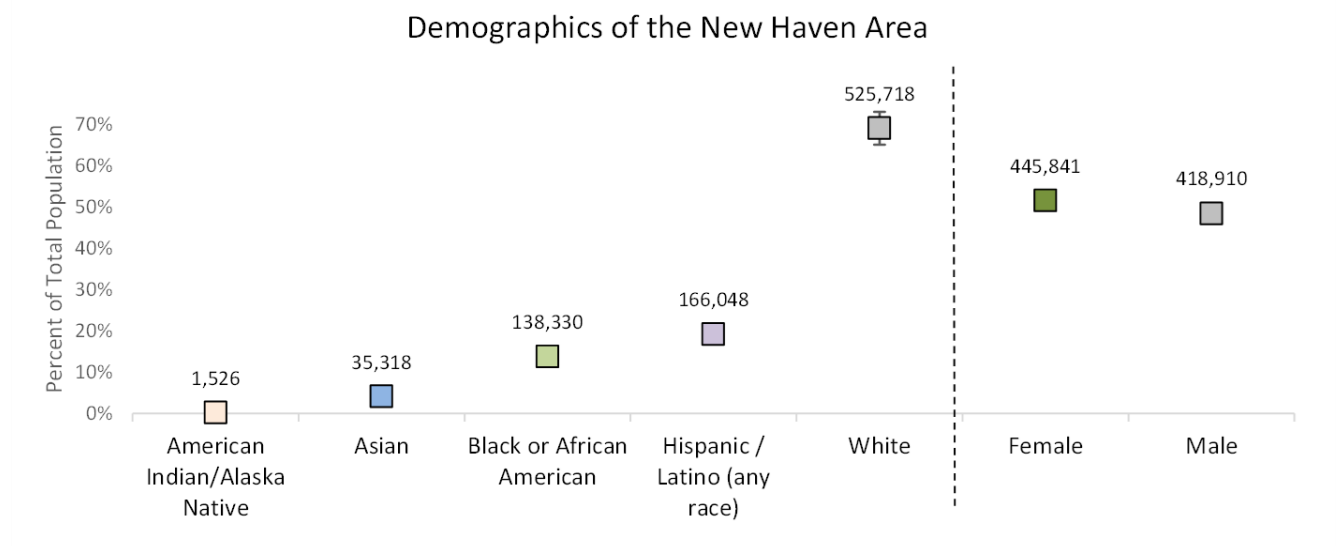
GEOGRAPHY

Maps of all geographic areas discussed in this report can be found in Appendix A.

Unless otherwise noted, demographic information is for the New Haven-Milford Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). An MSA is a defined geographic area used by the US census and other federal agencies in collecting, tabulating, and publishing statistics. The New-Haven-Milford MSA consists of 28 cities and towns and has a population of 861,113 people (Appendix A). All of Greater New Haven, as defined by The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, is within the New Haven-Milford MSA.

The Valley is a geographic area located around the confluence of the southern parts of the Housatonic and Naugatuck Rivers. It consists of seven towns (Ansonia, Beacon Falls, Derby, Naugatuck, Oxford, Seymour, and Shelton) and has a total population of 139,085. Shelton, the largest city in The Valley and home to 47,474 people, is part of the Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk MSA. Therefore, the demographics of Shelton are not included in our analysis of the New Haven-Milford MSA.

RACIAL/ETHNIC MAKEUP OF THE NEW HAVEN-MILFORD MSA



Almost 70 percent of the New Haven-Milford MSA population identify as White.¹ Twenty percent identify as Latino of any race, and almost 14 percent identify as Black or African American. There are slightly more women than men. 330 individuals identify as Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander and are not included in the graph above.

FAMILIES AND HOUSEHOLDS

The terms "family" and "household" are often used interchangeably in everyday language, but they have specific meanings in the context of the US Census.⁶

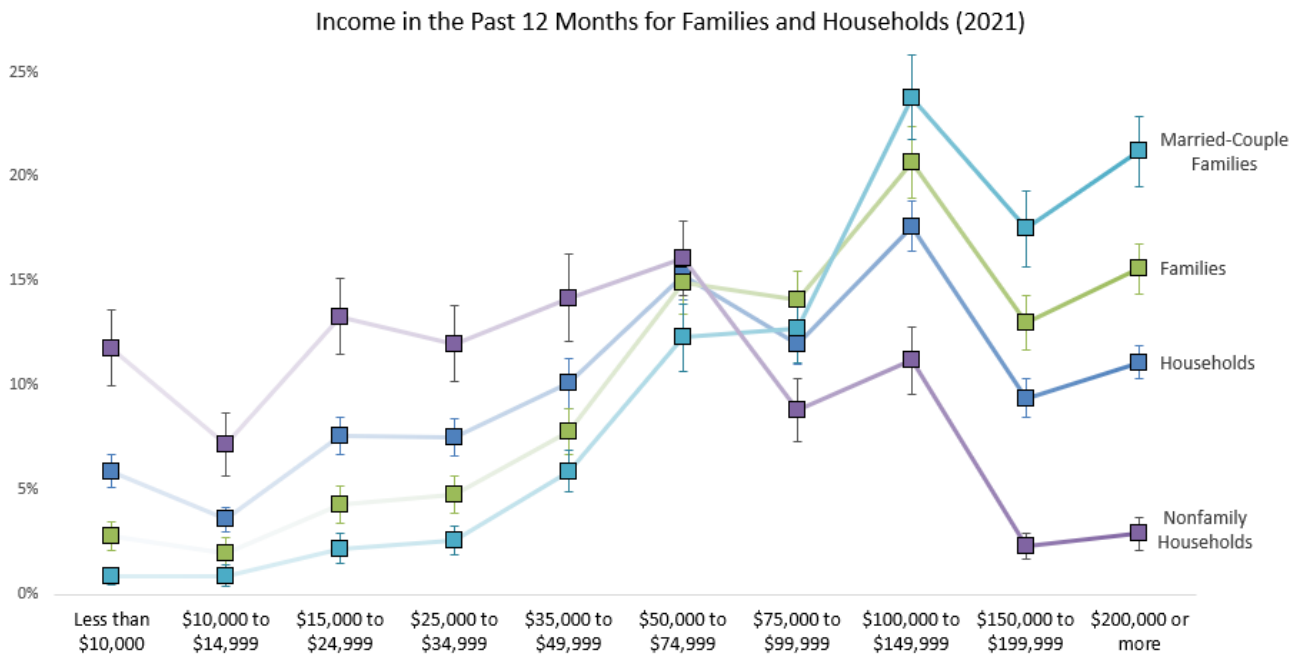
- A family is a group of two or more people who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption and who live together. As of 2020, this includes same-sex marriages.

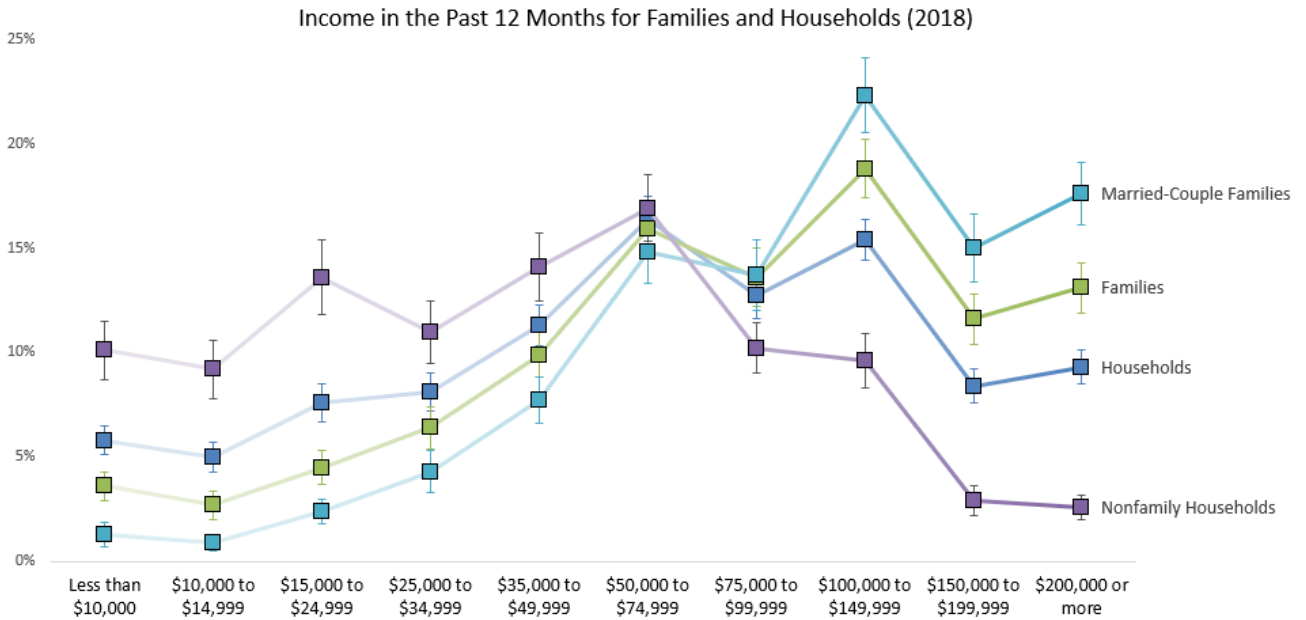


- A household is a person or a group of people who occupy a housing unit (such as a house, apartment, or mobile home) as their usual place of residence. A household may contain one or more families, or it may consist of a person living alone or with nonrelatives.
- A nonfamily household is a household where the householder lives alone or with nonrelatives only. A nonfamily household may consist of a single person living alone, or it may include unrelated people who live together.
- The householder is the person in whose name the housing unit is owned or rented.

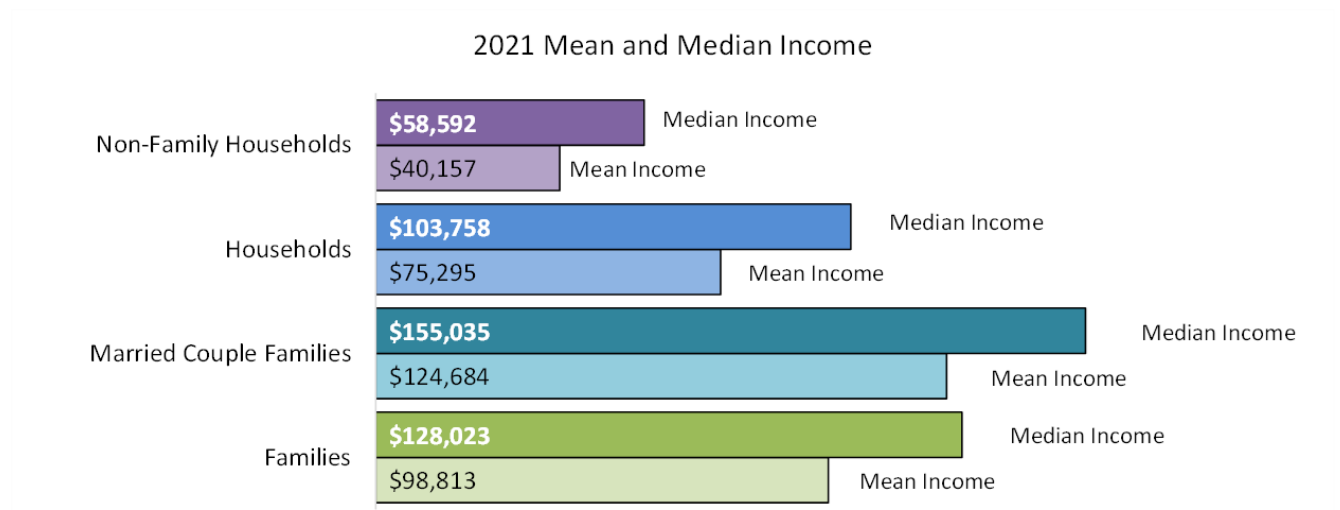
EARNINGS

Married-couple families tend to have high incomes – 75 percent have earnings over \$75,000 a year.⁵ 63 percent of families earned \$75,000 or more per year, where half of all households earned \$75,000 or more. Nonfamily households have the poorest incomes, with almost 60 percent earning less than \$50,000 a year.





Means and medians are different ways to measure and describe the center of a dataset. The mean (also known as the average) is calculated by adding all values and then dividing by the total number of values. The median is the central data point when the values are arranged in ascending order. The mean can be influenced by extreme values, also known as outliers. The median is not as sensitive to outliers as the mean.

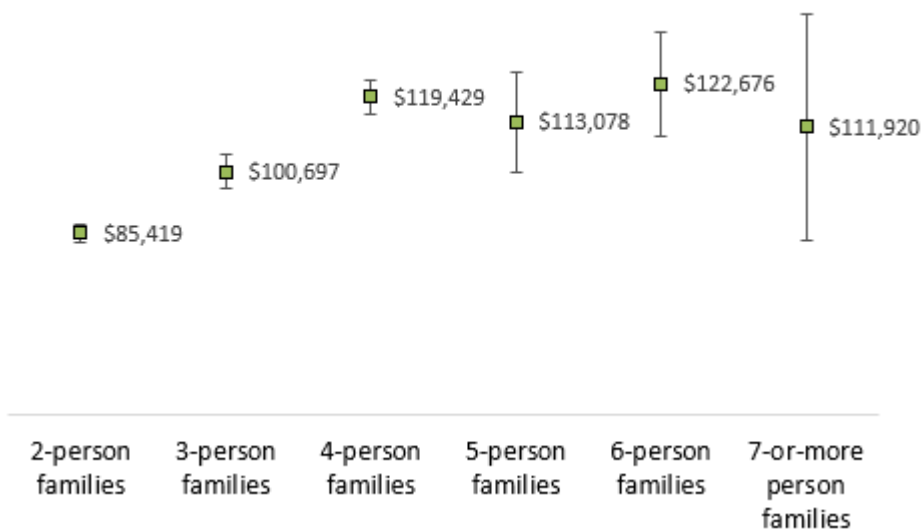


In the above graph,⁵ mean earnings are sometimes substantially less than the median. For example, there is a \$27,324 difference between median and mean earnings for households. Mean income is the sum of all the incomes in the dataset divided by the total number of incomes. Median is the middle number in the dataset. When the mean is smaller than the median, this indicates that a few households are outliers that earn a much smaller annual income compared to other households. Because of the large number of outliers, the median is considered a better measure of the central tendency in annual incomes.

Family Median Income by Number of Earners

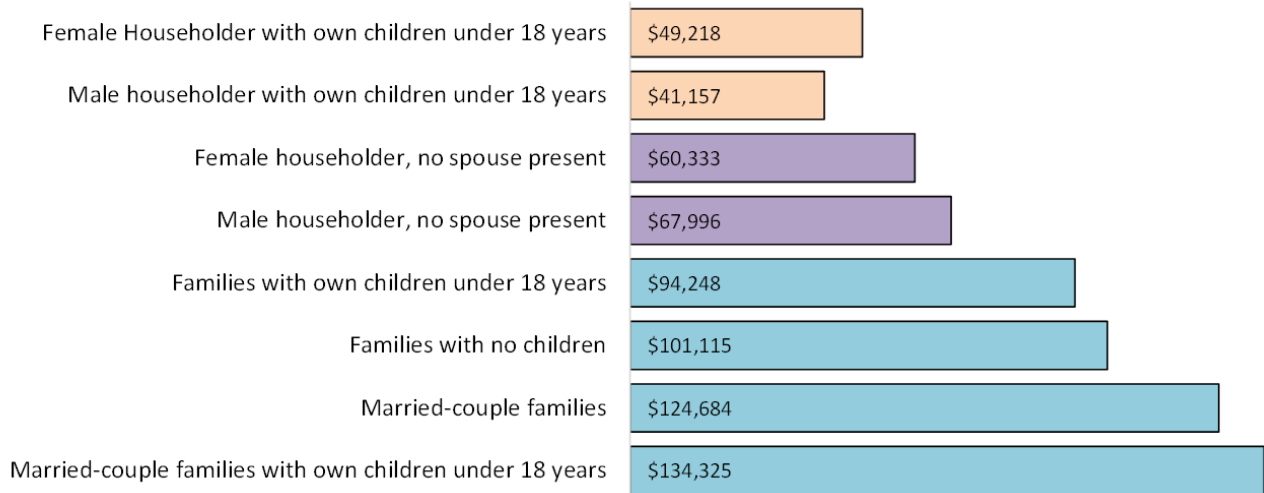


Family Median Income by Family Size



Family median income rises with the number of earners.¹ Family median income does not rise with the number of individuals in the family, but the margin of error increases significantly, suggesting there are outliers making significantly more and less than other families.

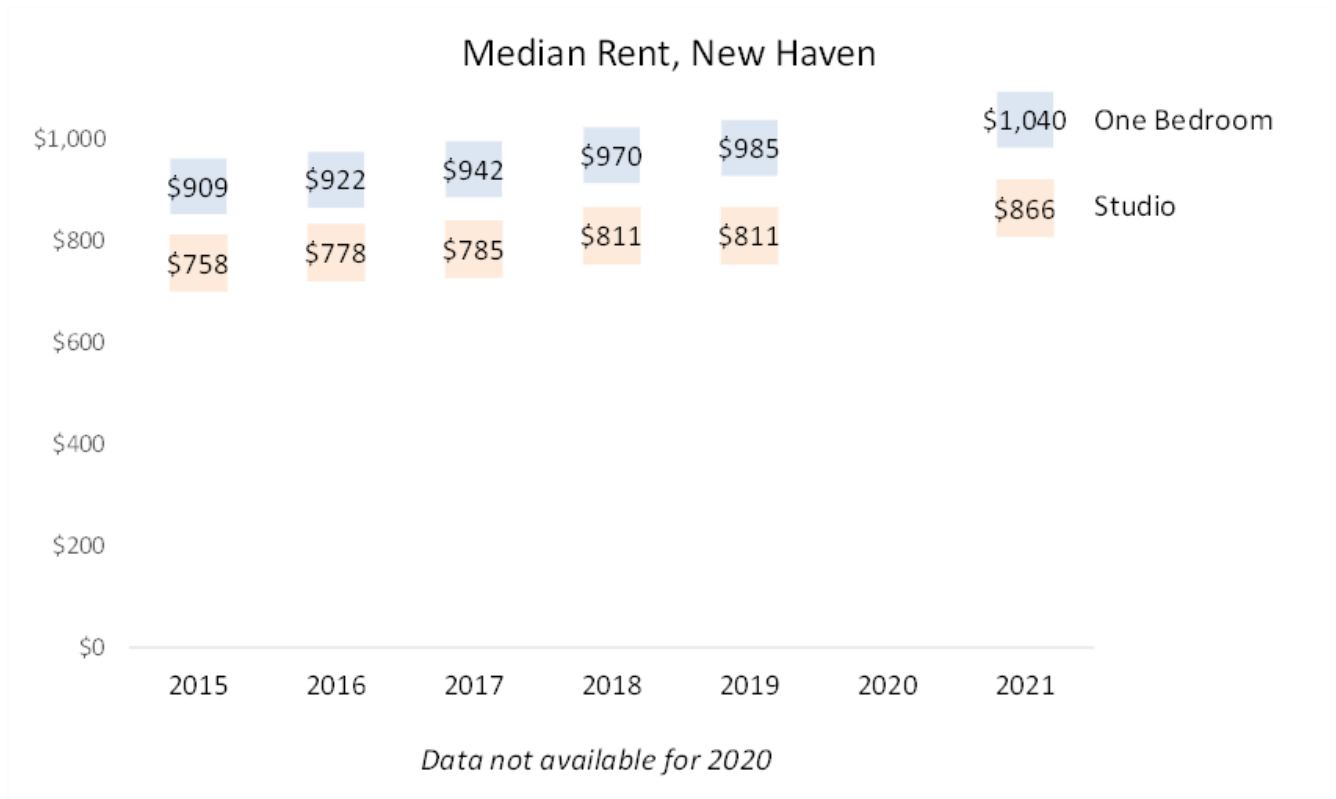
Family Median Income



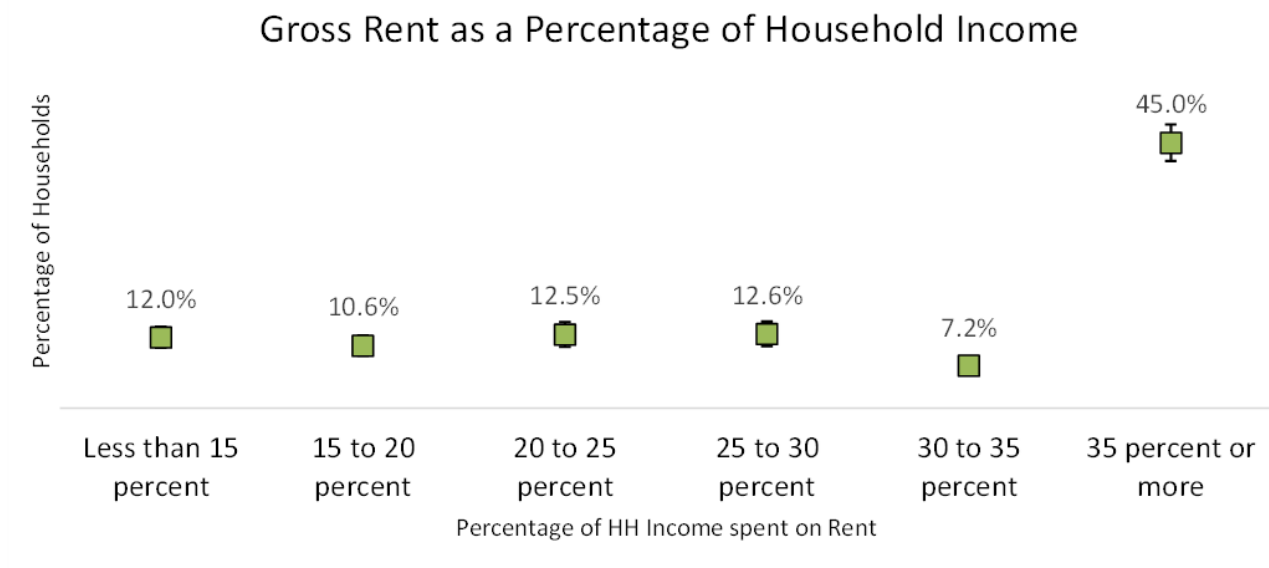
Income can vary widely depending on the family type.⁵ Householders with children under 18 earn less than unmarried householders, with women earning approximately \$8,000 more than men. Unmarried male householders without children earn almost \$8,000 more than unmarried female householders without children. Married couples, with and without children, earn more than other family types.

HOUSING

Median rent for a one-bedroom apartment in the New Haven-Milford MSA has increased by 29 percent between 2015-2021.⁵



Approximately 45 percent of households pay 35 percent or more of household income on rent.¹



76 percent of Whites own their home, compared to 57 percent of Asians, 40 percent of Native Americans, 39 percent of Blacks and 34 percent of Latinos.¹

A 2021 study indicates that low-income (31 to 50 percent of median income) and very low-income (30 percent or less of median income) workers in Connecticut struggle to find affordable housing.¹⁰ There are 86,068 more households in the very low-income category than there are housing units that they can afford.

LABOR FORCE STATUS

Briefly stated, the labor force consists of individuals who are available to work, whether they are employed or not.⁶ Individuals who meet any of the criteria below are not considered members of the labor force:

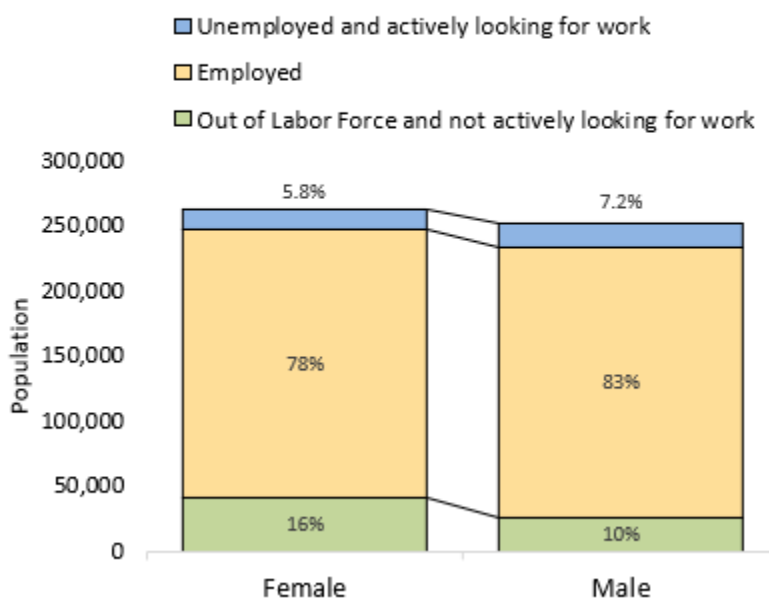
- Unemployed and have not actively looked for work in four or more weeks.
- Members of the armed forces.
- Individuals confined to prisons, jails, or other correctional institutions and detention centers.
- Individuals living in residential care facilities, such as skilled nursing homes.

Individuals who do not have a job but have been actively looking for work in the past four weeks are considered unemployed.

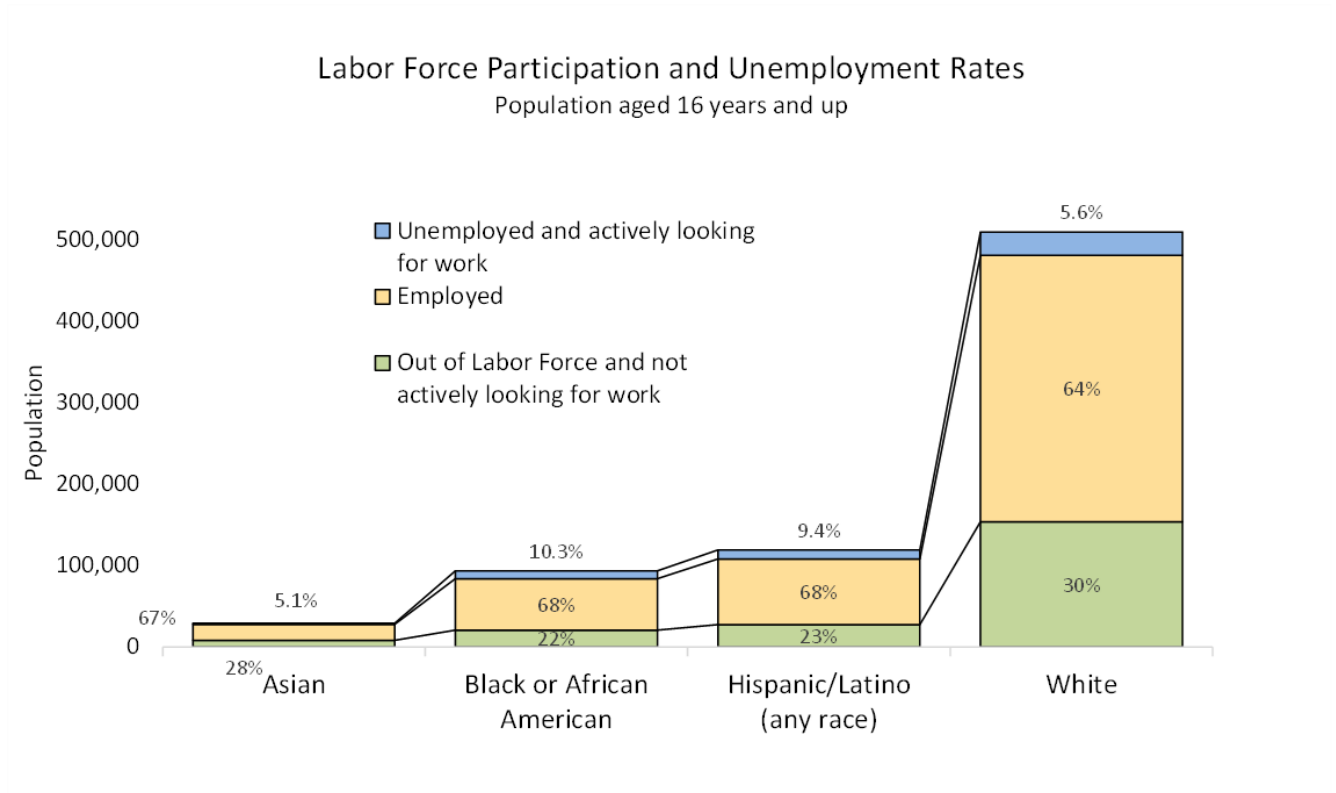
LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE

According to 2021 five-year ACS estimates, the New Haven-Milford MSA has a Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) of 65.2 percent, consisting of 464,000 individuals.¹ This is a higher rate than Connecticut (64.2 percent)² and the nation (62.5 percent).⁸ Individuals can be out of the labor force for both positive (such as retirement) and negative reasons (such as not being healthy enough to seek work).

Labor Force Participation and Unemployment Rates
Population aged 20-64 years



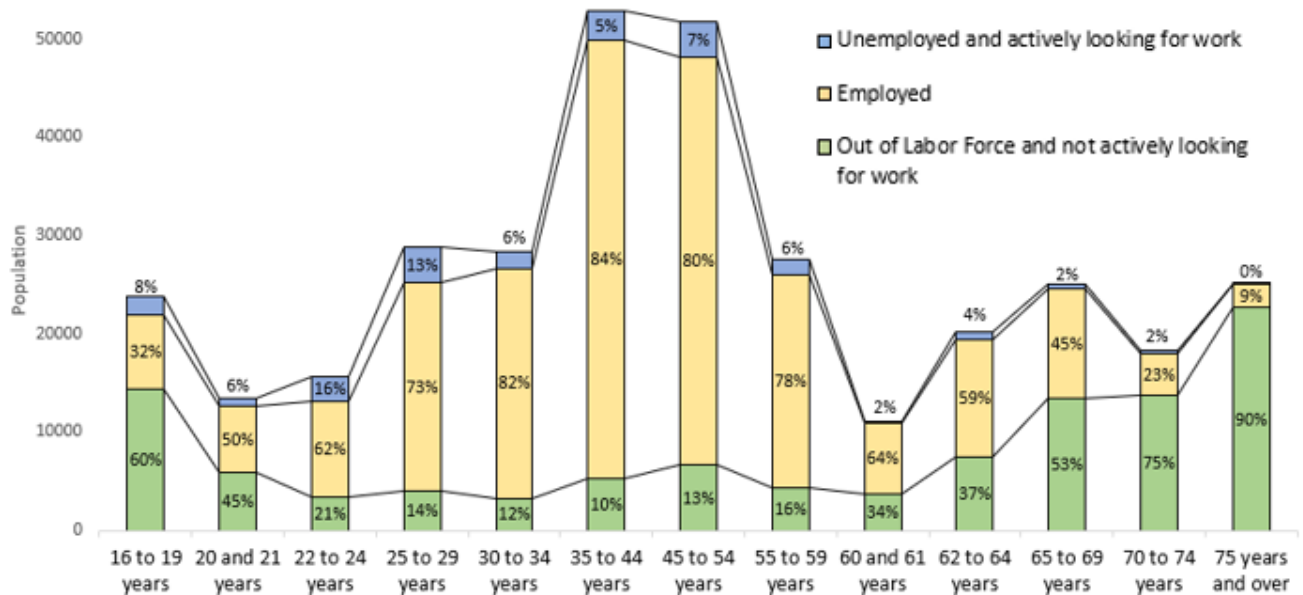
Women are more likely than men to be out of the labor force altogether. A higher percentage of women than men are out of the labor force between the ages of 25 and 60.⁵



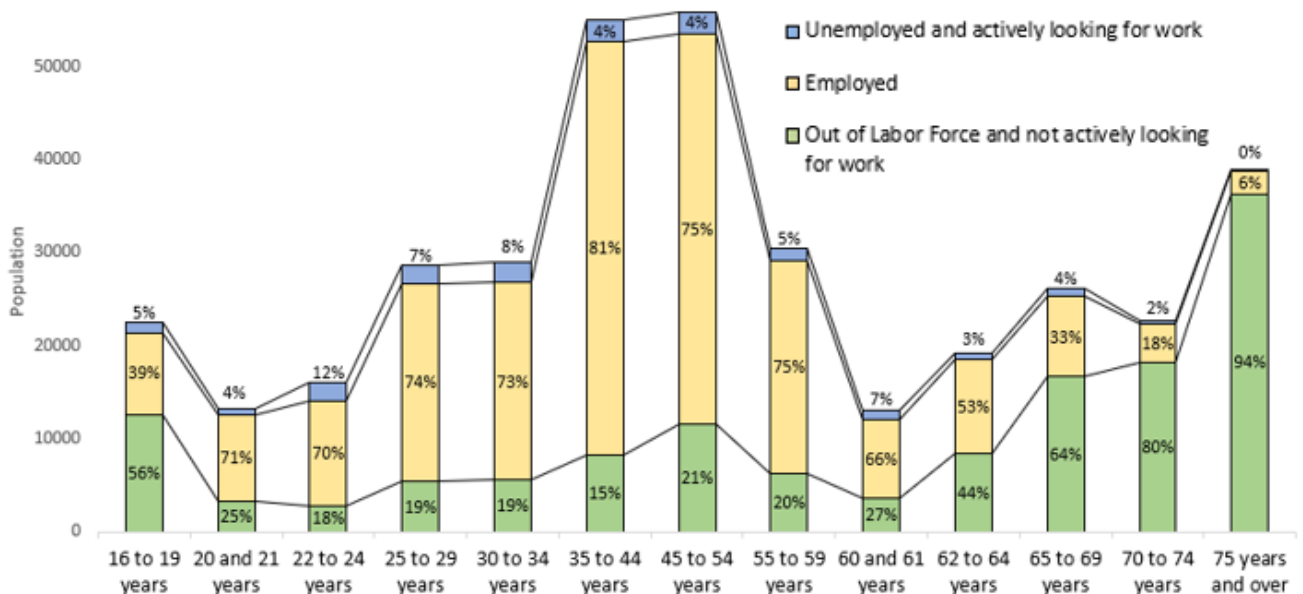
30 percent of the White population are out of the labor force, compared to 22 percent of the Black population and 23 percent of the Latino population.⁵ Unemployment is higher among Black and African Americans and Latinos versus the White population.



Age and Labor Force Status for Men



Age and Labor Force Status for Women

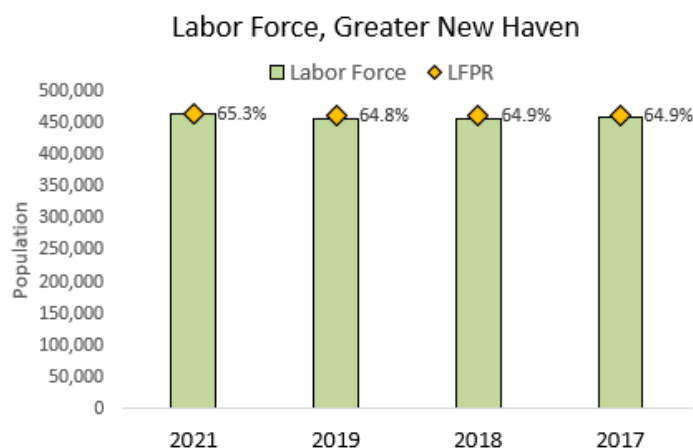


Until the age of 24, a higher percentage of women are employed than men. After the age of 30 and before the age of 60, more men make up the LFPR, and more women are out of the labor force. This may reflect women's larger burden of caring responsibilities.

Labor Force Participation by Race/Ethnicity and Gender

	Asian Male	Asian Female	Black Male	Black Female	Hispanic Male	Hispanic Female	White Male	White Female	Total Males	Total Females
16 to 19 years	44%	53%	44%	35%	36%	43%	41%	50%	40%	44%
20 to 24 years	51%	65%	73%	89%	81%	88%	64%	73%	68%	79%
25 to 54 years	91%	77%	83%	86%	84%	77%	90%	83%	88%	82%
55 to 64 years	82%	59%	59%	67%	66%	57%	77%	74%	73%	71%
65 to 69 years	73%	63%	52%	51%	14%	20%	47%	34%	47%	36%
70 years and over	0%	0%	17%	16%	12%	10%	17%	12%	16%	11%

The labor force participation rate (LFPR) differs by age and race/ethnicity.⁵ LFPR is high for Black and Latino populations ages 20 to 24 (dark green shading indicates higher than average LFPR). At age 25, LFRP increases sharply for Asian men and White men and women. Black women and Latino men and women have high LFPR between the ages of 20 and 54.



The labor force decreased slightly from 2017-2019, then rose by 9,151 people (or 0.5 percentage points) in 2021.¹ Statistically, there is not a significant difference in the labor force before and after the acute phase of the COVID pandemic. The ACS was not conducted in 2020.

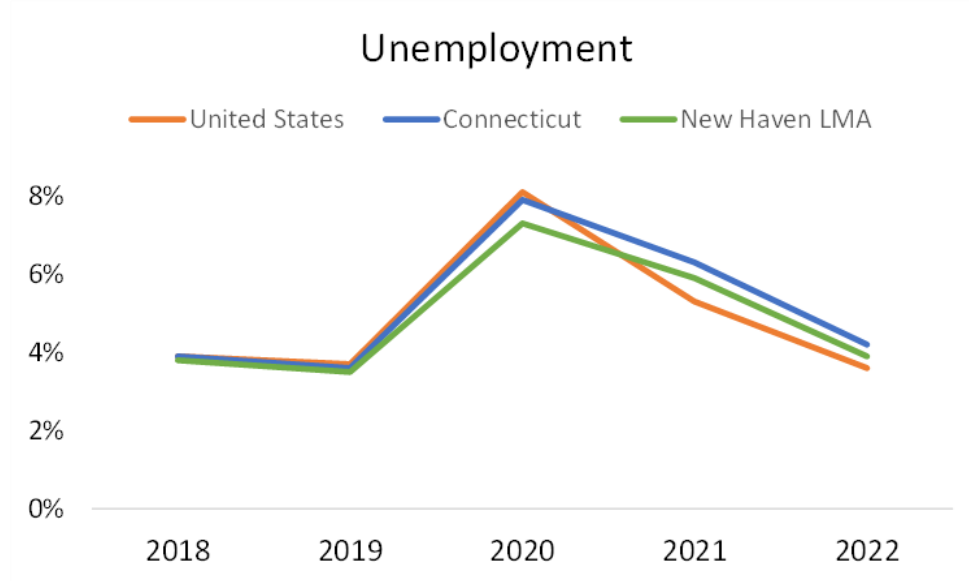
UNEMPLOYMENT

For a comprehensive look at unemployment in the New Haven area, we use two sources of data: the ACS and Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS). LAUS datasets, administered by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), are the product of federal-state cooperative efforts that produce monthly estimates for states, labor market areas, and towns. The LAUS program uses a combination of administrative records and statistical models based on payroll surveys and unemployment claims to estimate employment and unemployment at the local level.

Unemployment rates from the ACS, reported in LFPR graphs, tend to be higher than unemployment rates given by LAUS. There are a few reasons for this. As the unemployed are considered part of the labor market, the ACS surveys populations 16 years old and greater about their employment status, and their estimates are not seasonally adjusted. ACS data are also self-reported. LAUS uses data from payroll reports and unemployment claims, which are mostly utilized by older individuals who have already had a job. It is important to note that the margins of error in ACS datasets can be significant enough to slightly overlap LAUS numbers.

While monthly unemployment numbers can provide a more up-to-date and granular picture of the labor market situation, annual data provides a more comprehensive and stable picture. Annual data can help identify trends and patterns that may be obscured by monthly fluctuations and provide a more accurate measure of the overall employment situation.

As mentioned earlier, the LAUS calculates unemployment statistics for specific geographic regions. We examine data for the New Haven Labor Market Area (LMA) (Appendix A), also known as the New Haven NECTA (New England City/Town Area). An LMA is a geographical region that encompasses a group of counties or local areas with interconnected labor markets. It is defined by economic and commuting patterns, where workers regularly commute to work across county or local boundaries within the designated area. While some towns in the New Haven LMA fall outside the New Haven-Milford MSA, much of the population of the MSA work in towns that belong to the LMA.



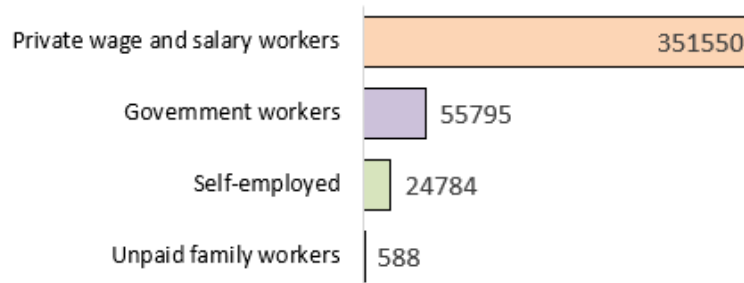
Unemployment rates are very similar for the US, Connecticut, and New Haven until 2019. In 2021 and 2022, New Haven's unemployment rate is a few points below Connecticut. The national unemployment rate is always a few percentage points less than New Haven and Connecticut.

Later in this report, we will examine unemployment rates by educational attainment, race/ethnicity, and sex.

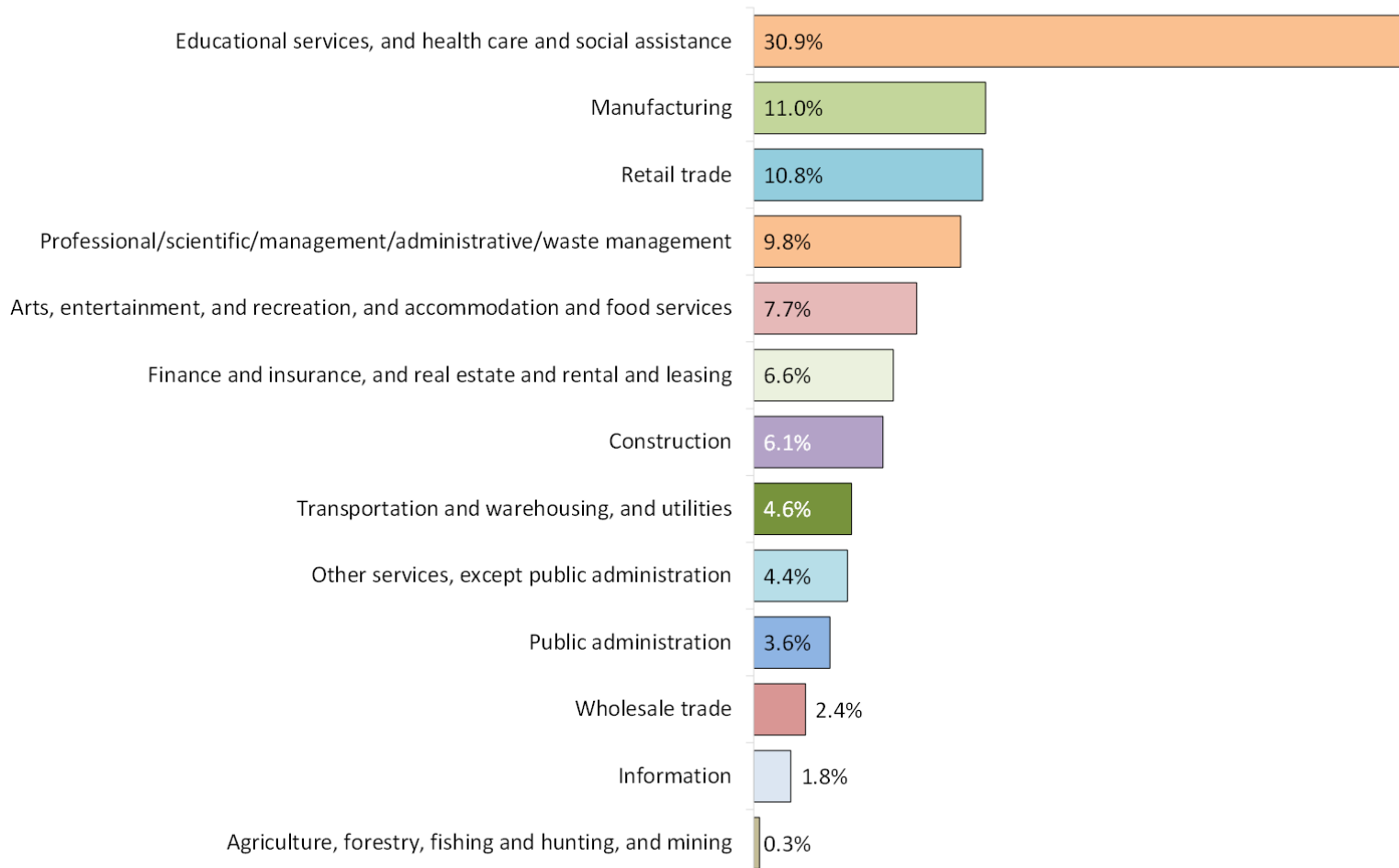
EMPLOYMENT

The majority of those employed work in the private sector.¹

Employment Type



Percentage of Total Employed by Industry in the Greater New Haven Area



Of those in the public sector, the majority work in Educational Services, Healthcare, and Social Assistance.¹

BIGGEST EMPLOYERS IN NEW HAVEN LABOR MARKET

Employer	Industry	Employed
Yale New Haven Health System	Health Care Management	5,000 - 9,999 employees
Bozzuto's Inc	Distribution Centers (Wholesale)	1,000 - 4,999 employees
LATICRETE International Inc	Manufacturing (Tile/Ceramics)	1,000 - 4,999 employees
Masonicare Health Ctr	Health Care Management	1,000 - 4,999 employees
Medtronic Inc	Retail (Wholesale)	1,000 - 4,999 employees
VA Connecticut Healthcare System	Health Care Management	1,000 - 4,999 employees

UNDEREMPLOYMENT

Underemployed workers are employed but in a position that is below their skill level, education level, or experience, and not fully utilizing their potential. Some underemployed individuals are "involuntarily part-time" — employed on a part-time basis when full-time work is desired. Underemployment can be a difficult status to measure. Like unemployment, we will examine different sources and geographic areas to measure underemployment.

12 to 23 percent of working adults in select communities in the New Haven area self-report as being underemployed, according to the 2021 DataHaven Community Well-Being Survey.³ As a reminder, the Valley consists of Ansonia, Beacon Falls, Derby, Naugatuck, Oxford, Seymour, and Shelton (Appendix A).

Community	Underemployed
Hamden	23%
Milford	12%
New Haven	16%
Waterbury	19%
West Haven	21%
The Valley	16%

The U.S. Census Bureau also collects employment data through a monthly survey of households known as the Current Population Survey (CPS). The CPS is a survey of about 60,000 households, selected to be representative of the U.S. population. Each month, individuals in these households are asked, among other questions, about their employment status during the previous week.

In 2022, the CPS estimated 2.8 percent of the population of Connecticut to be involuntarily part-time workers.⁷ This is slightly higher than the nationwide rate of 2.4 percent. California had the largest gap (3.4 percent), followed by Hawaii (3.1 percent) and Colorado and New York (3.0 percent).

Internally, the BLS calculates a 12-month moving average of CPS data using statistical modeling. These unofficial datasets are called the Demecon.¹⁴ These unpublished datasets can provide a better understanding of current CPS estimates and are useful to gain insights in demographic groups that may be experiencing changes that contribute to variations in CPS estimates. It must be noted these datasets generally do not meet the BLS standards for accuracy and reliability and contain large error margins. Unlike the ACS, individuals can have more than one racial or ethnic identity.

According to Demecon datasets, almost one percent of workers in Connecticut who usually work full-time are currently involuntarily employed part time. Twelve percent of workers who usually work part-time are involuntarily part-time and desire full-time employment.

DISCOURAGED WORKERS

Discouraged workers are individuals who want to and are available for work and have looked for jobs sometime in the prior 12 months, but not in the preceding four weeks.⁶ They are not considered part of the labor force as they are not actively looking for work. Like underemployment, this can be a difficult status to measure.

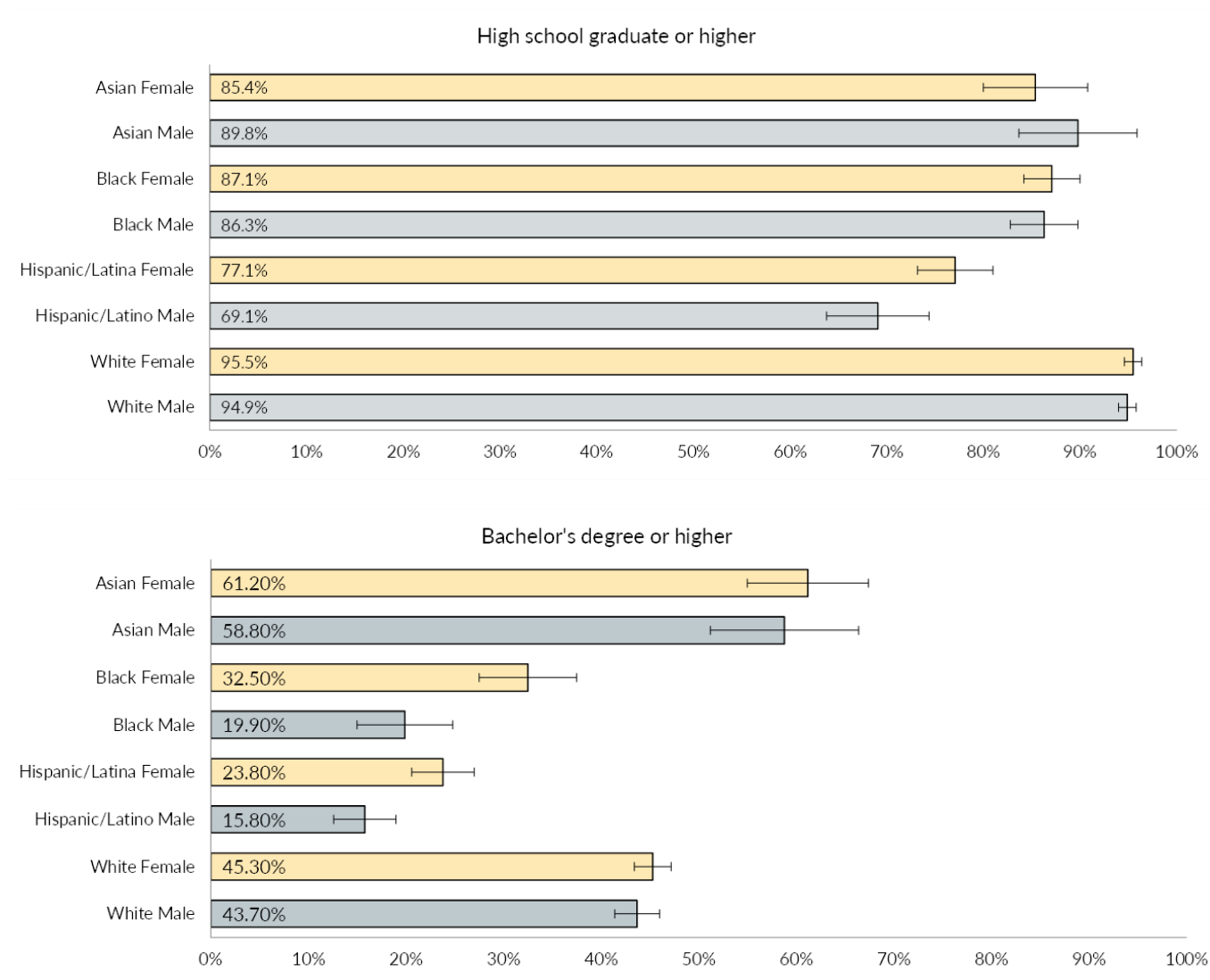
There are three main reasons these individuals are not actively looking for work.

- Discouraged workers may believe there are no jobs available, or no jobs available for which they are qualified.
- Some are not actively looking because they believe they will be discriminated against because of age, race, ethnicity, or other reasons. They may have been discriminated against in the past.
- Others have a lack of transportation or family responsibilities, including childcare.

In Connecticut, 0.3 percent of the population of Connecticut (approximately 11,000 people) were considered discouraged workers by the BLS.⁷ This is slightly higher than the nationwide rate of 0.2 percent. Louisiana and New York had the highest rates of discouraged workers (0.5 percent).

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Educational Attainment is the measure of the highest level of education an individual has completed.



EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Almost 95 percent of White men and women are high school graduates.⁵ Latino men have the lowest high school graduation rates (69 percent) but with a wide range of uncertainty. The uncertainty, represented by error bars, may be due to both a smaller population and underrepresentation due to language barriers, cultural differences, or lower response rates. More Asian men and women have a bachelor's degree (or higher) than other groups. Black women are 13 percentage points more likely to have a bachelor's degree (or higher) than Black men. Latino women are more likely to have a higher degree than Latino men by eight percentage points.

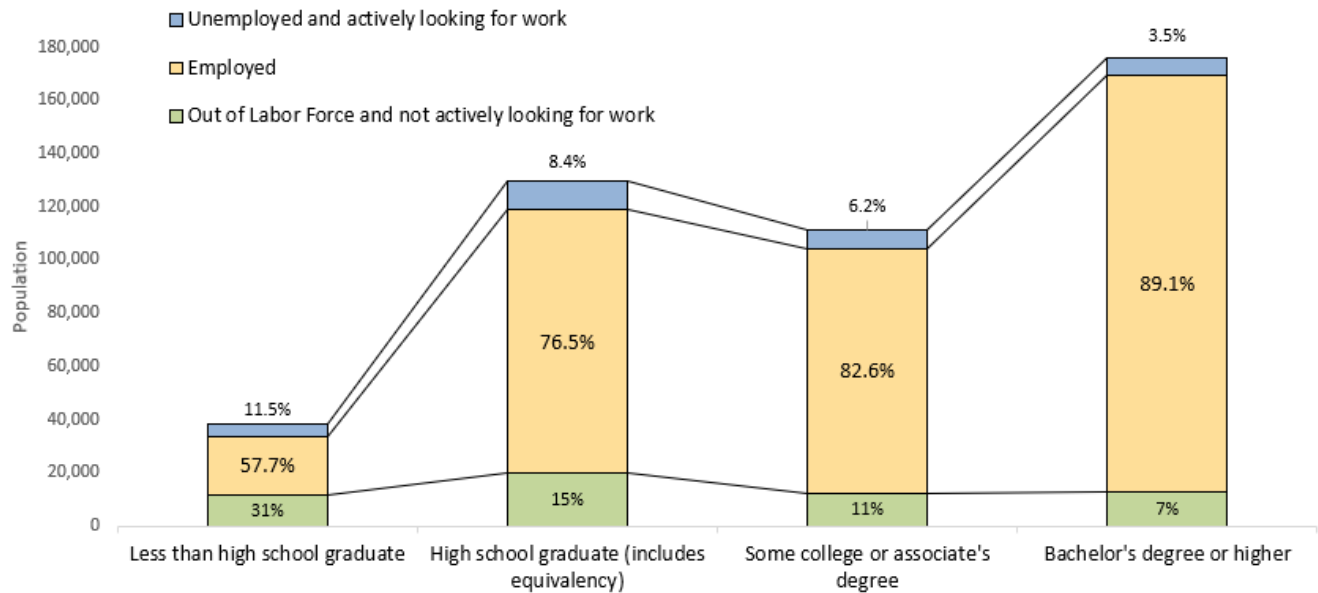
EDUCATION AND LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

LFPR increases with educational attainment.⁵ Individuals who did not graduate from high school have the highest rates of unemployment and are more likely to be out of the labor force. Those with a

bachelor's degree or higher have the lowest rates of unemployment and the highest rates of employment.



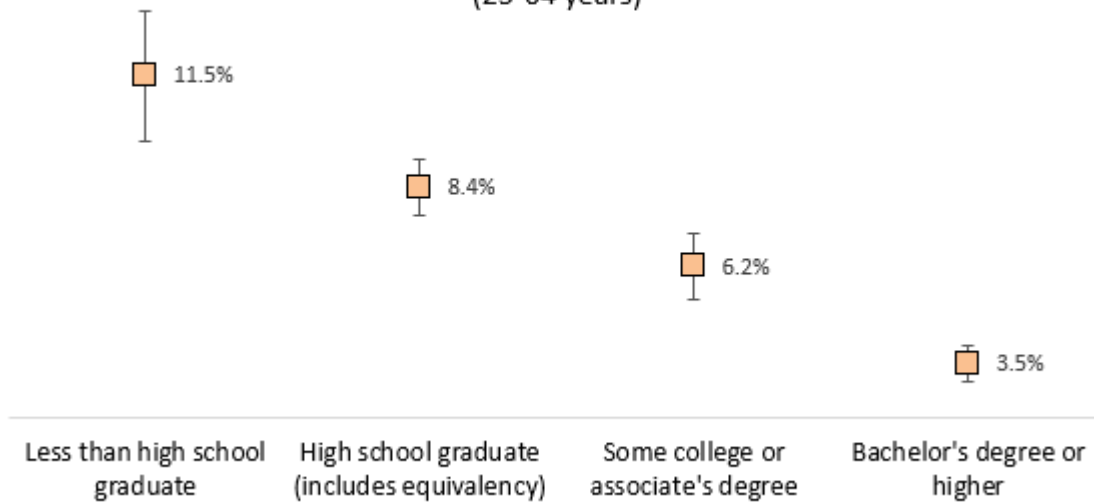
Educational Attainment and Labor Force Status (25-64 Years)



UNEMPLOYMENT

Unemployment decreases with educational attainment.⁵

Unemployment and Educational Attainment (25-64 years)



EARNINGS

Earnings increase with greater educational attainment.⁵ However, the payoff associated with an associate's degree is small. There is only a \$2,000 gap between median earnings for high school graduates and those with some college or an associate's degree.⁵

Median Earnings in 2021 by Educational Attainment (25 years and up)



Individuals with low educational attainment are more likely to experience poverty.⁵ Specifically, 26.5 percent of individuals without a high school education have incomes below the poverty line, while 12.8 percent of high school graduates and 9.3 percent of individuals with some college or an associate's degree have incomes below the poverty line. By contrast, only 5.3 percent of individuals with a bachelor degree or higher have incomes below the poverty line.

RACIAL AND ETHNIC MINORITIES

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

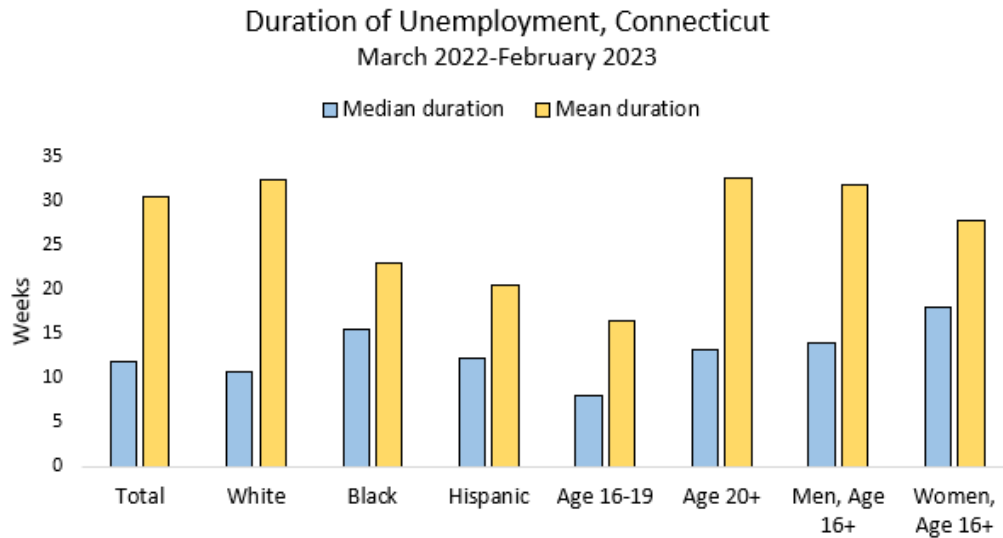
Black, Latino, and Asian populations tend to have higher LFPR than the White population in the Greater New Haven area.⁵ LFPR can be influenced by several factors. These groups tend to have younger populations, who generally have higher labor force participation rates. Additionally, members of these communities may have a higher LFPR because they need to support themselves and their families financially. Black women between the ages of 20 and 55 have the highest LFPR.

UNEMPLOYMENT

According to the ACS, unemployment rates for Black and Latino populations are double the unemployment rates for White and Asian populations.⁵ This is the result of a complex mix of structural, institutional, and historical factors that have contributed to economic inequality and limited job opportunities.

- **Discrimination:** Discrimination in hiring practices and in the workplace, whether intentional or not, is a significant factor which contributes to higher unemployment rates for racial minorities. Studies have shown that job applicants with "White-sounding" names are more likely to receive call-backs for interviews than those with "Black-sounding" or "Latino-sounding" names, even when they have the same qualifications.¹³
- **Educational Attainment:** Approximately 95 percent of Whites have a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 86 and 87 percent of Black men and women and 69 and 77 percent of Latino men and women.¹

- **Historical Inequalities and Systemic Racism:** Racial minorities have faced historical inequalities that can cause economic disadvantages. For example, redlining policies in the past prevented Black individuals from obtaining mortgages and owning homes in certain neighborhoods, which limited their access to wealth-building opportunities and perpetuated economic inequality across generations.



When the mean is greater than the median, it generally indicates some values in the dataset are much higher than the rest- the mean higher than the median. When the median is close to the mean, it generally indicates a symmetrical dataset. For the Black population, there is a 7.5-week difference between the median and mean, compared to an almost 22-week discrepancy in the White population.¹⁴ This suggests there are more individuals in the White population with atypically high unemployment durations.

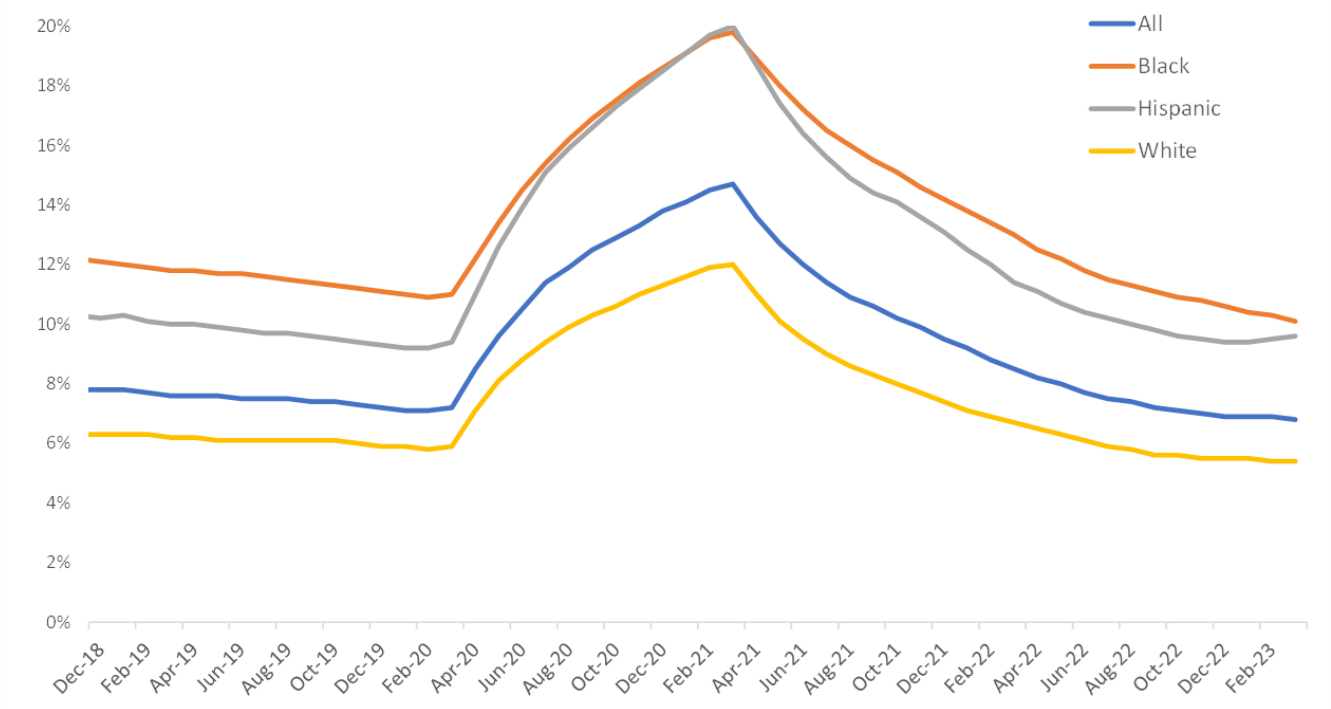
UNDEREMPLOYED AND DISCOURAGED WORKERS

As mentioned earlier, many discouraged workers are not actively looking because they believe they will be discriminated against because of race and ethnicity. Many hold this belief because of past experiences with employment discrimination.

In 2020, 26 percent of discouraged workers nationwide were Black or African American.¹¹ In 2023, Black and Latino workers are nearly twice as likely to be underemployed than Whites nationwide (data was not collected for Asian populations).¹²

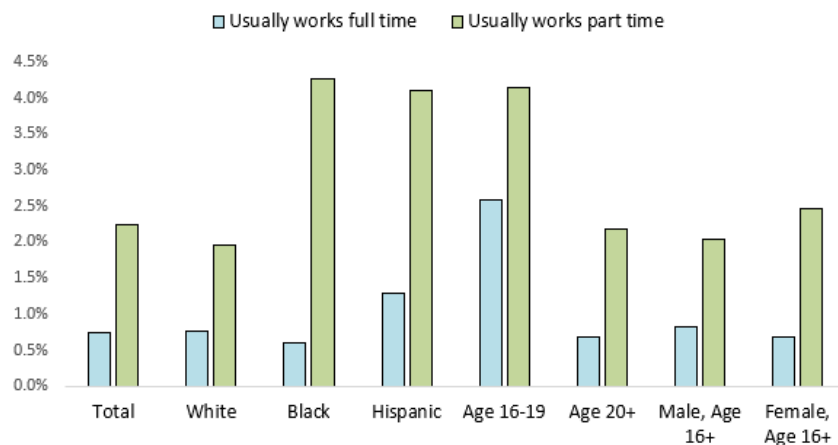


National Rates of Underemployment



According to unpublished Current Population Survey Demecon datasets, 4.27 percent of the Black population and 4.10 percent of the Latino population who are usually employed part-time desire full-time employment status.¹⁴ The Demecon survey data is volatile because of its small sample size.

Involuntarily Part-Time Workers, Connecticut March 2022-February 2023

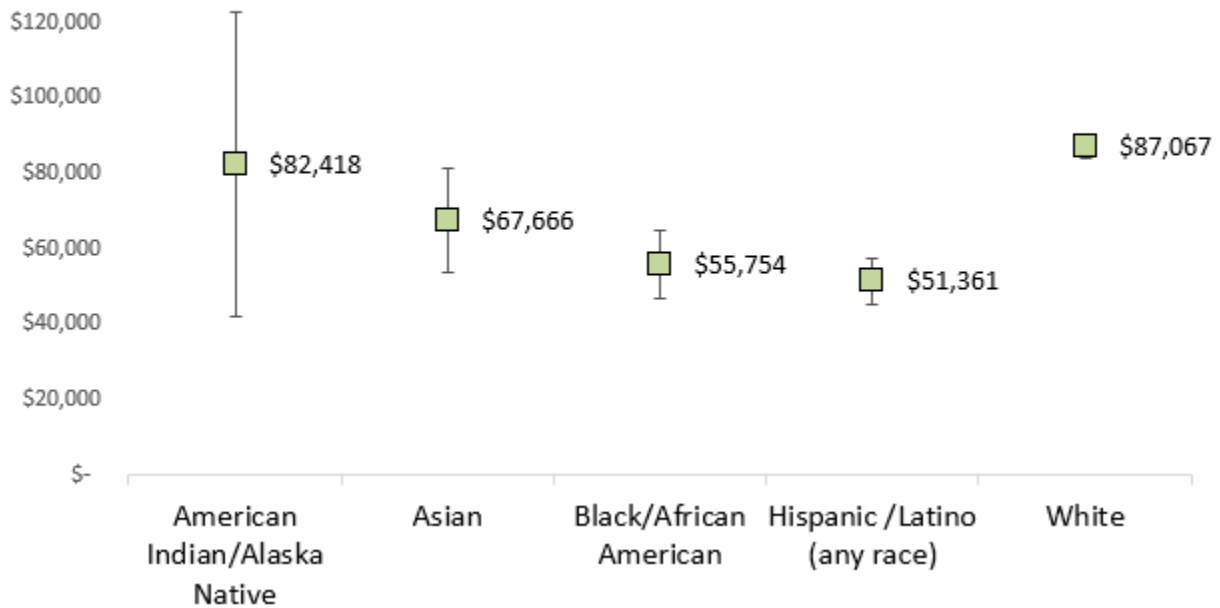


EARNINGS

Homes with a White householder obtain the highest median incomes.⁵ Homes with a Latino householder have the lowest. Large error bars for American Indian/Alaska Native populations suggest a great deal of variability in incomes.

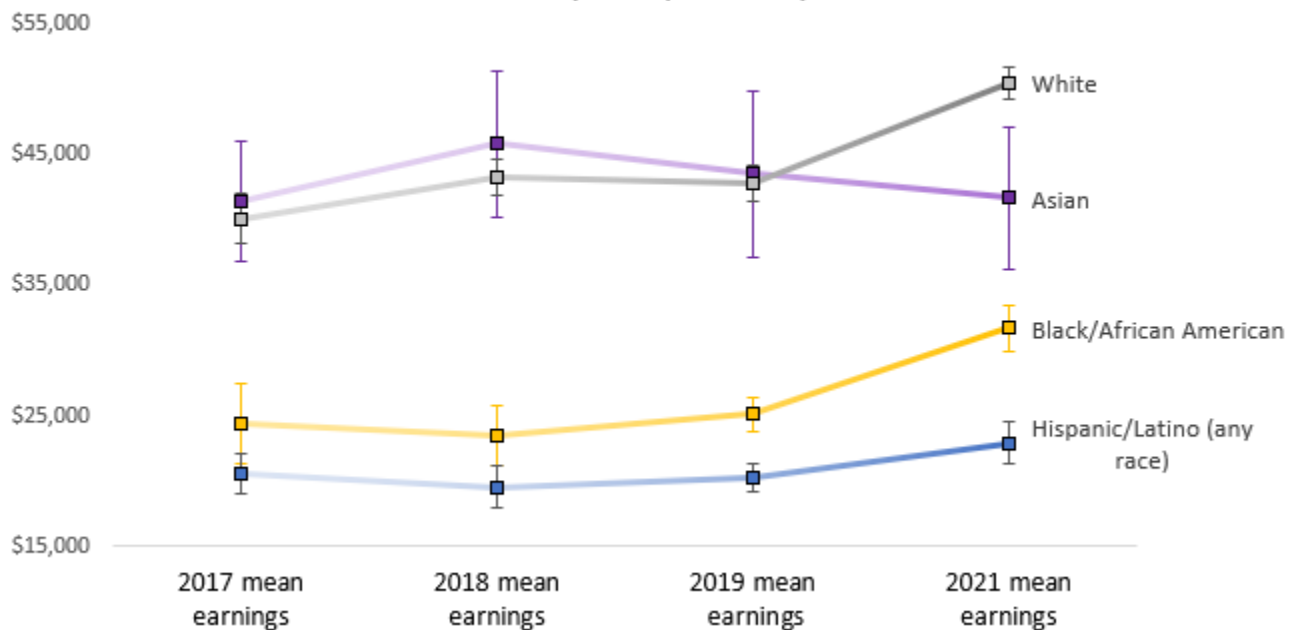


Median Household Income by Race/Ethnicity of Householder



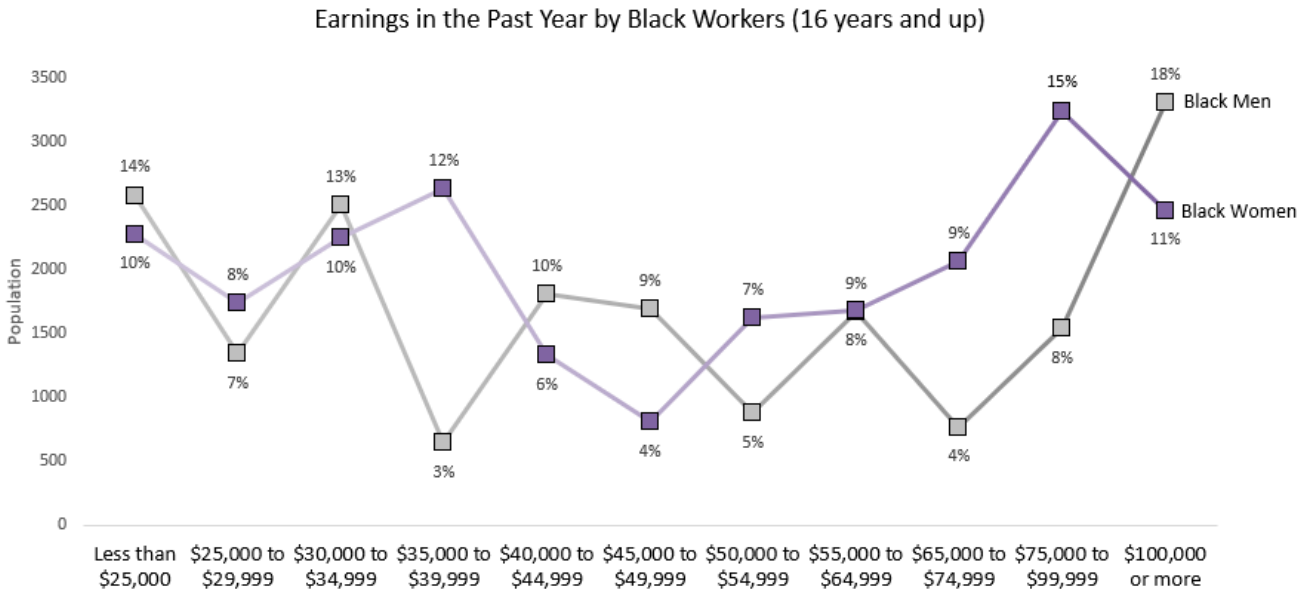
While mean income has increased for most, Asian mean incomes are the same in 2021 as they were in 2017. Mean income has increased by 30 percent for the Black population, by 26 percent for the White population, and 11 percent for the Latino population.

Mean Income by Race/Ethnicity and Year



Compared to Black men, more Black women earn incomes between \$50,000 and \$75,000. More Black men earn incomes between \$25,000 and \$30,000. Compared to Black women, more Black men

earn incomes greater than \$100,000. This may be due to overall higher earnings for men, discrimination against black women, and occupational segregation.



WOMEN

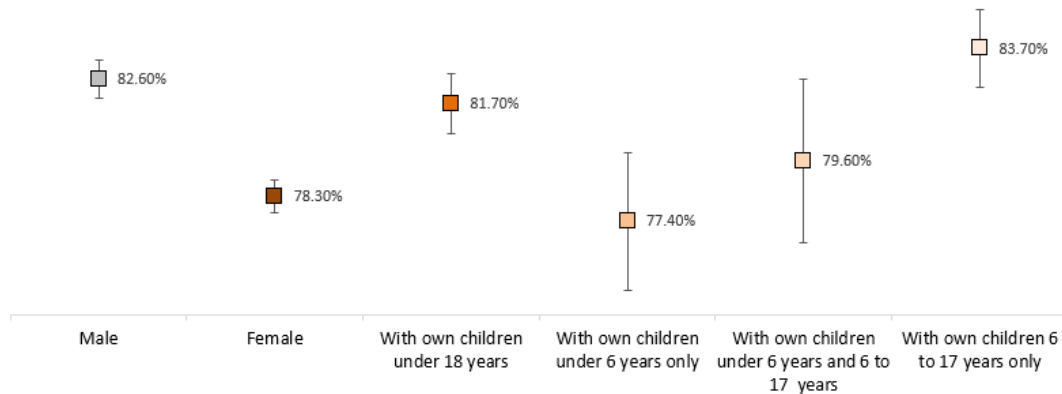
LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

Men are more highly represented in the labor force. Within the population of individuals aged 20-64 years old, men consistently have a higher LFPR than females. Women with children under six have the lowest LFPR, and women with children between six and 17 have the highest.⁵

The cost of childcare is often cited as a reason for the smaller presence of women in the labor force. In 2022, the annual cost of center-based childcare in Connecticut for infants and toddlers (0 to 3 years) was \$28,149⁹. This drops to \$14,487 for preschool age children (3 to 5 years). These costs make childcare unobtainable for much of the population: in 2021, median earnings for women were \$60,072⁵. Median wages for families with one worker were \$75,043.⁵

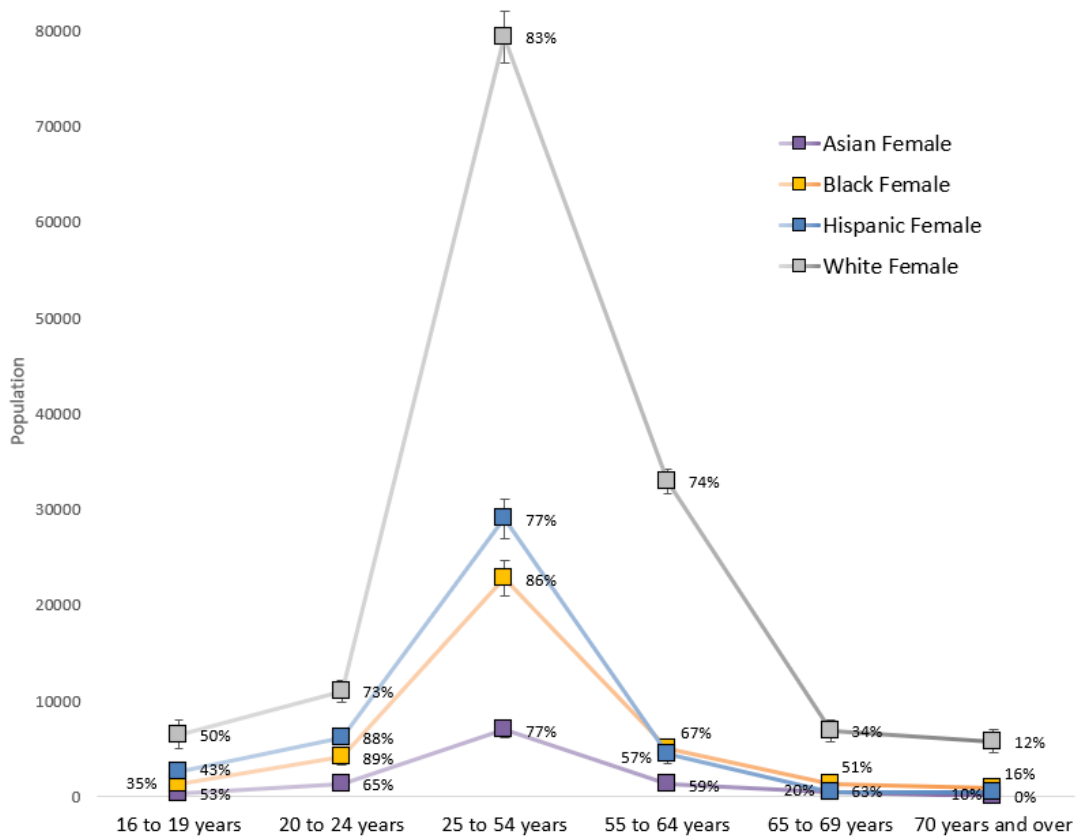


LFPR and Sex



Black women between the ages of 20 and 54 have a high LFPR.⁵ Black and Asian women also have high LFPR between 65 and 69 years (63 and 51 percent) when compared to White and Hispanic/Latina women.⁵ Please see the table titled *Labor Force Participation by Race/Ethnicity and Gender* in Labor Force Participation for more data.

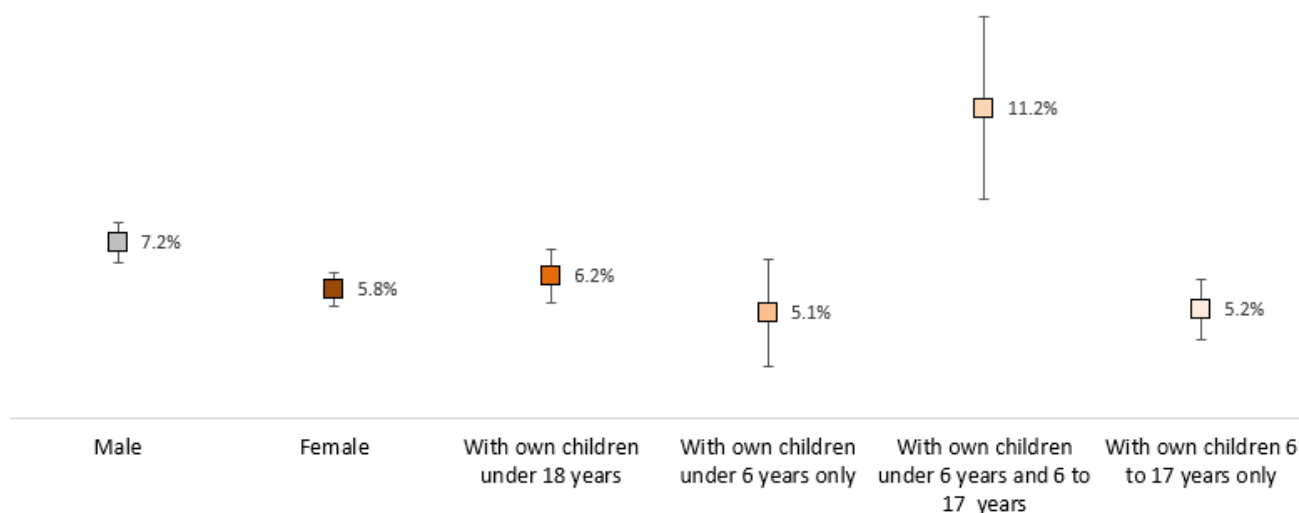
LFPR for Women by Age and Race/Ethnicity



UNEMPLOYMENT

As a whole, men have higher rates of unemployment than women (7.2 percent versus 5.8 percent). Women with children under the age of 6 **and** under the age of 17 have the highest rates of unemployment- 11.2 percent. It is worth noting that the error bars for women with children tend to be large, indicating a wide degree of variability.

Unemployment and Sex

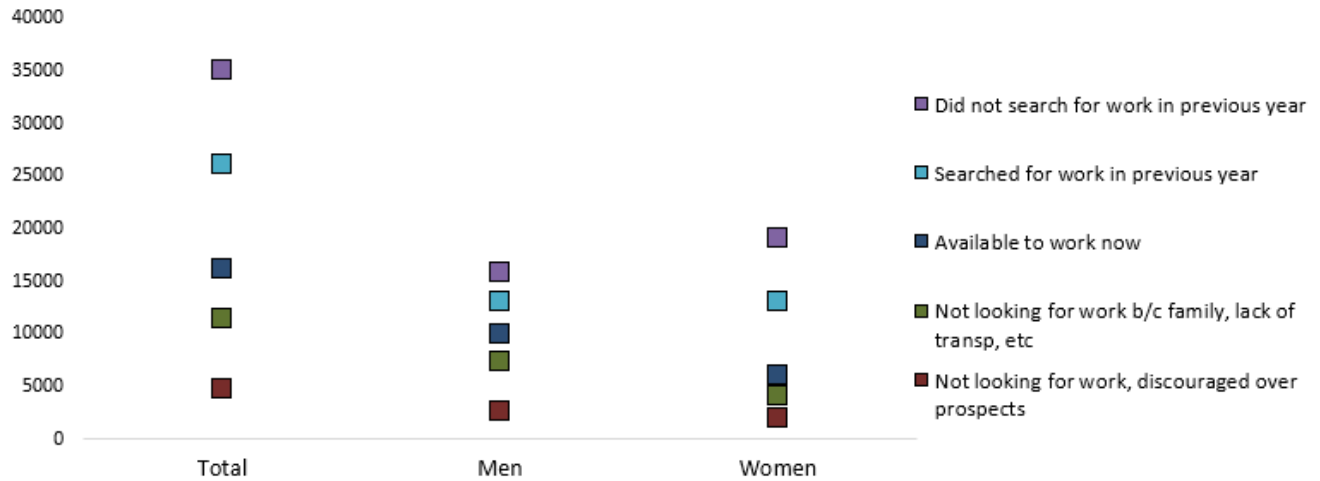


UNDEREMPLOYED AND DISCOURAGED WORKERS

According to BLS⁷ from 2022, women nationwide were slightly more likely than men to be discouraged workers. Men were twice as likely to be discouraged over job prospects, while women were twice as likely to not look for work because of family responsibilities or lack of transportation.

If data from the Demecon is accurate, then this trend is reversed in Connecticut. More men than women report they are not looking for work because of family responsibilities or lack of transportation, contrary to national trends¹⁴.

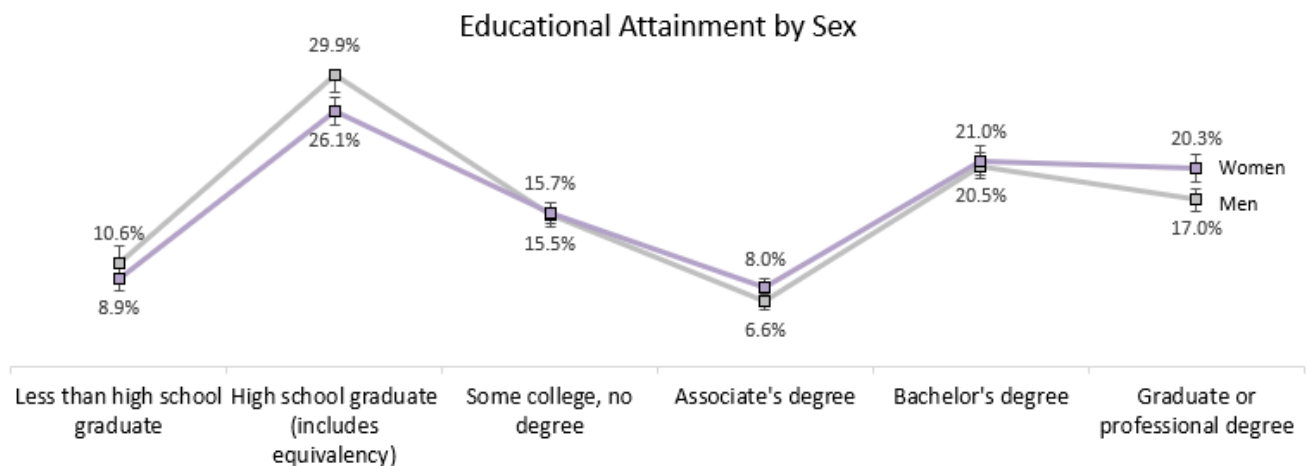
Discouraged Workers by Sex, Connecticut March 2022 - February 2023



This 1.2 percent difference between men and women in Connecticut accounts for 43,272 individuals.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

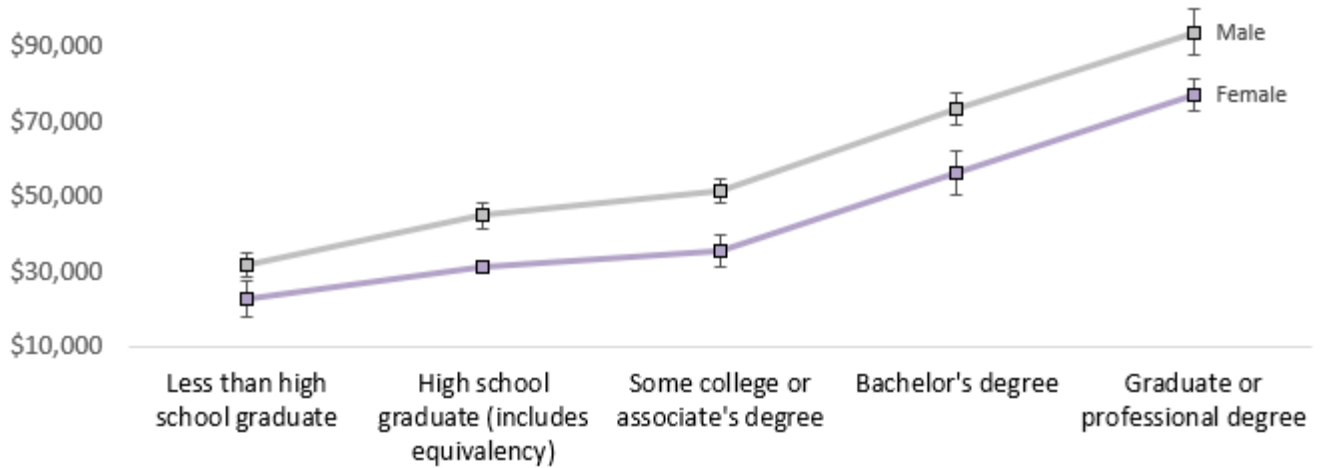
Men and women have very similar rates of educational attainment.⁵ Men are slightly (4 percent) more likely to only have a high school diploma and women are slightly (3 percent) more likely to have a graduate or professional degree.⁵ 52 percent of men and 50 percent of women have the educational attainment to consider middle skill careers — positions that require a high school diploma or equivalent, but less than a bachelor's degree.⁵



EARNINGS

Women with some college experience or an associate's degree earn only about \$3,000 more a year than men without a high school diploma.⁵

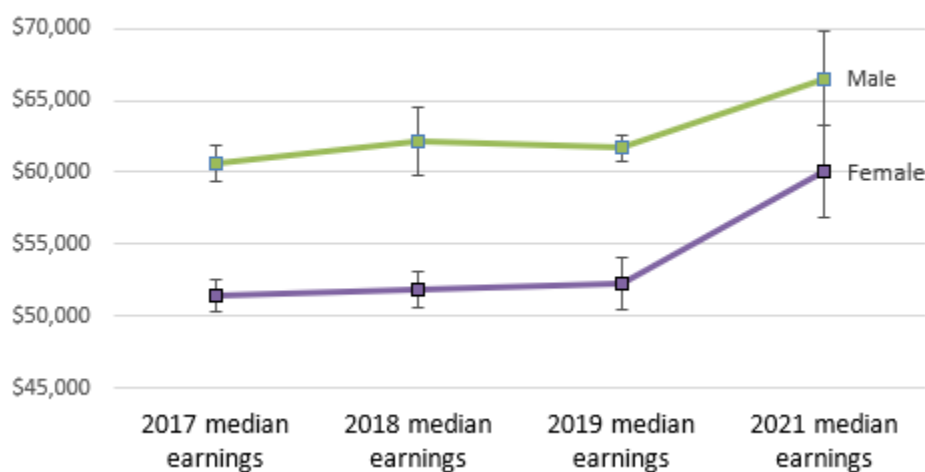
Median Earnings in Past 12 Months



Men earn more than women in every industry.⁵ Finance and insurance and real estate industries have the largest gap of \$25,528; followed by Information (\$22,528) and Professional, Scientific, & Management/Administrative/Waste (20,638). Construction and Arts, Entertainment, Recreation/Accommodation & Food Services Industries have the smallest pay gaps (\$4,721 and \$5,949).

Median earnings increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. This may be a result of the fact that some of the lowest paid workers, such as those in the hospitality industry, were not working at all. The COVID-19 pandemic does not appear to have had a meaningful effect on the difference between median earnings by men and women.¹

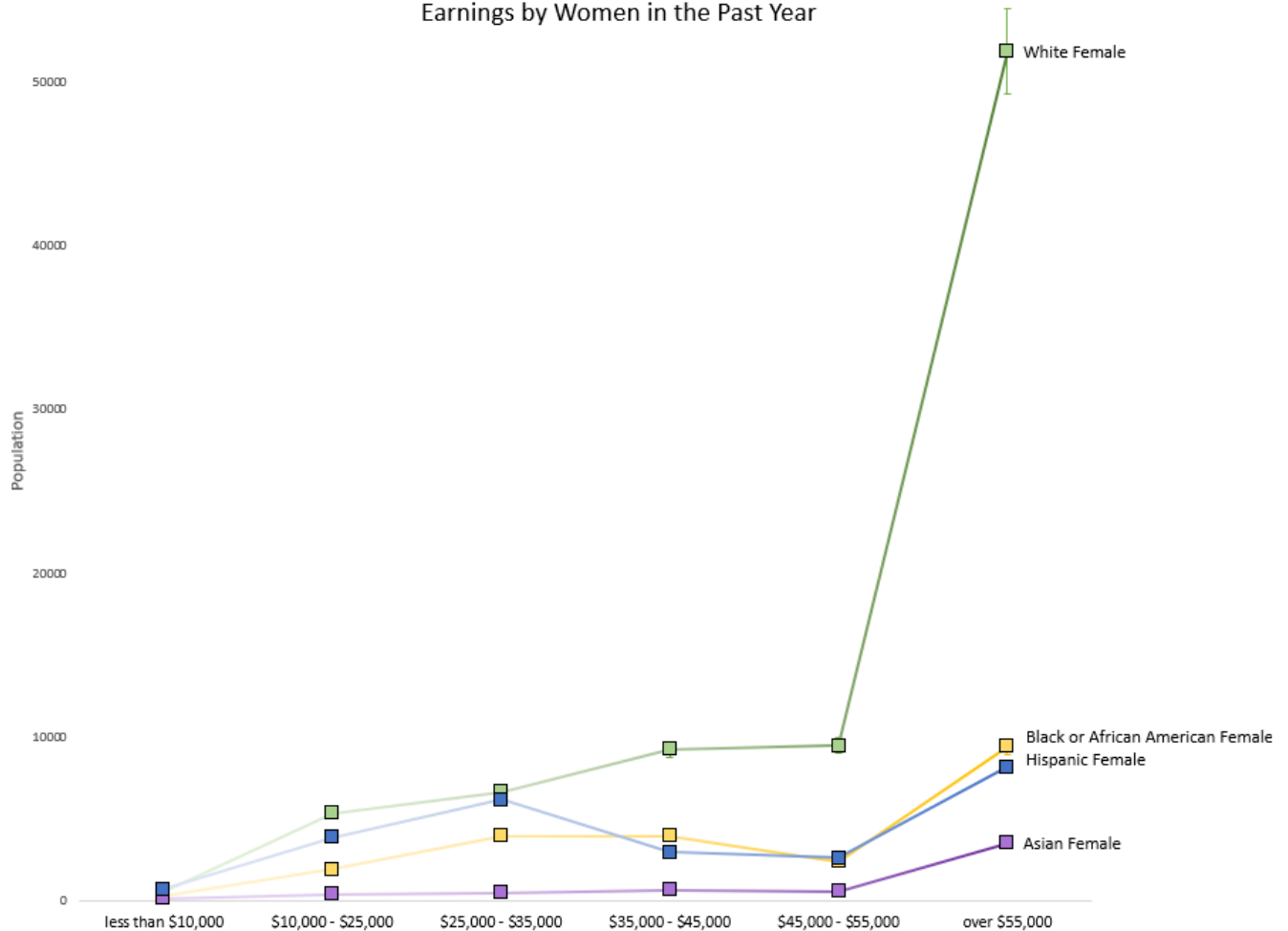
Median Earnings by Sex and Year



Minority women make substantially less than White women.⁵



Earnings by Women in the Past Year



CONCLUSION

Our labor market analysis shows that while in aggregate, the workforce in Greater New Haven and The Valley is doing well, there are significant disparities and opportunities. Women and women of color in particular are disadvantaged in the workforce both because of occupational segregation which has caused them to be overrepresented in positions that are lower paid and affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Lack of care infrastructure is keeping potential workers out of the labor market altogether.

We also see significant levels of underemployment in the communities of color with Black and Latino workers reporting higher levels of involuntary part-time employment. There is a significant opportunity to advance equity by connecting workers who are marginalized by gender, race/ethnicity, and lack of a degree to well-paying jobs.

The employers and industries in the region are the same ones that provide middle-skill jobs. The largest employers in the region are in healthcare, and manufacturing – industries that depend on middle skill workers

Sources

- 1- 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau (Geography: New Haven-Milford MSA)
 - a. B19121 MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS (IN 2021 INFLATION-ADJUSTED DOLLARS) BY NUMBER OF EARNERS IN FAMILY
 - b. DP03 SELECTED ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS
 - c. DP05 ACS DEMOGRAPHIC AND HOUSING ESTIMATES
 - d. S1903 MEDIAN INCOME IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS (IN 2021 INFLATION-ADJUSTED DOLLARS)
 - e. S2301 EMPLOYMENT STATUS
- 2- [Local Area Unemployment Statistics, US Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)
- 3- [2021 DataHaven Community Wellbeing Survey](#)
- 4- Feb 2023 [Labor Situation, Office of Research, Connecticut Dept. of Labor](#)
- 5- 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau (Geography: Richmond-Milford MSA)
 - a. B20005 SEX BY WORK EXPERIENCE IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS BY EARNINGS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS (IN 2021 INFLATION-ADJUSTED DOLLARS) FOR THE POPULATION 16 YEARS AND OVER
 - b. B23002 SEX BY AGE BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS FOR THE POPULATION 16 YEARS AND OVER
 - c. DP04 SELECTED HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS
 - d. S1401 SCHOOL ENROLLMENT
 - e. S1501 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT
 - f. S1901 INCOME IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS (IN 2021 INFLATION-ADJUSTED DOLLARS)
 - g. S1902 MEAN INCOME IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS (IN 2021 INFLATION-ADJUSTED DOLLARS)
 - h. S1903 MEDIAN INCOME IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS (IN 2021 INFLATION-ADJUSTED DOLLARS)
 - i. S2001 EARNINGS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS (IN 2021 INFLATION-ADJUSTED DOLLARS)
 - j. S2413 INDUSTRY BY SEX AND MEDIAN EARNINGS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS (IN 2021 INFLATION-ADJUSTED DOLLARS) FOR THE CIVILIAN EMPLOYED POPULATION 16 YEARS AND OVER
- 6- [Subject Definitions, United States Census Bureau](#)
- 7- [Alternative Measures of Labor Underutilization for States 2022 Annual Averages, US Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)
- 8- [Current Population Survey, US Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)
- 9- [UConn-Office of Early Childhood, 2022. *The Cost of Providing Early Childhood Education and Care in Connecticut: A Narrow Cost Analysis*. University of Connecticut School of Social Work](#)



- 10- Stewart, C., Tatian, P.A., Lo, L., Davila, K. and Walker, F., 2021. Housing Connecticut's Future: Meeting the State's Affordable and Accessible Housing Needs.
- 11- [Labor force characteristics by race and ethnicity](#), US Bureau of Labor Statistics
- 12- [Underemployment](#), Economic Policy Institute, State of Working America Data Library
- 13- Bertrand, M. and Mullainathan, S., 2004. Are Emily and Greg more employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A field experiment on labor market discrimination. American economic review, 94(4), pp.991-1013.
- 14- Feb 2023 Demecon datasets, BLS/CPS. Personal communication with Patrick Flaherty, Director of Research at the Connecticut Department of Labor and Adjunct faculty at the University of Connecticut in Economics

INDUSTRY OVERVIEW REPORT

Industry	Health Care and Social Assistance	Retail Trade	Educational Services
NAICS	62	44	61
<i>New Haven-Milford MSA</i>			
Total Employment	75,054	39,716	38,383
Total Payroll (Annual)	\$4,263,907	\$1,400,722	\$2,611,674
Payroll/Employment	\$56.81	\$35.27	\$68.04
Number of Establishments	2,699	2,643	327
Establishments per Capita	0.0031	0.0031	0.0004
<i>United States</i>			
Total Employment	20,681,593	15,530,630	3,488,028
Total Payroll (Annual)	\$1,188,600,694	\$541,353,646	\$167,086,654
Payroll/Employment	\$57.47	\$34.86	\$47.90
Number of Establishments	947,570	1,036,879	111,543
Establishments per Capita	0.0029	0.0031	0.0003
<i>Biggest Employers (South Central WIOA)</i>	Yale New Haven Hospital Hospital of St Raphael Masonicare Health Ctr Middlesex Hospital Mental Health American Medical Response	Edgewell Personal Care Walmart Supercenter Big Y Ikea Stop & Shop Supermarket	Yale University / School of Psychiatry Amity Regional High School Gateway Comm Tech College Middlesex Comm College Madison Board of Education
Industry	Manufacturing	Accommodation and Food Services	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services



BLAKELY CONSULTING, LLC

NAICS	31	72	54
<i>New Haven-Milford MSA</i>			
Total Employment	26,313	23,735	15,689
Total Payroll (Annual)	\$1,831,196	\$583,025	\$1,625,583
Payroll/Employment	\$69.59	\$24.56	\$103.61
Number of Establishments	974	2,036	1,774
Establishments per Capita	0.0011	0.0024	0.0021
<i>United States</i>			
Total Employment	11,710,424	12,142,327	9,531,475
Total Payroll (Annual)	\$785,195,521	\$298,821,121	\$981,361,328
Payroll/Employment	\$67.05	\$24.61	\$102.96
Number of Establishments	283,015	745,930	962,470
Establishments per Capita	0.0009	0.0022	0.0029
<i>Biggest Employers (South Central WIOA)</i>	LATICRETE International Inc Lee Co USA Assa Abloy Inc Whelen Engineering Fire Lite	Subway Marquee Events Water's Edge Resort & Spa Omni-New Haven Hotel at Yale Texas Roadhouse	Yale New Haven Health System VA Connecticut Healthcare System Wiggin & Dana LLP River Valley Svc Sent Text Solutions

Industry	Wholesale Trade	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	Construction
NAICS	42	56	23
<i>New Haven-Milford MSA</i>			
Total Employment	15,644	14,506	13,548
Total Payroll (Annual)	\$1,445,366	\$643,331	\$1,057,395
Payroll/Employment	\$92.39	\$44.35	\$78.05
Number of Establishments	894	994	1,768
Establishments per Capita	0.0010	0.0012	0.0020
<i>United States</i>			
Total Employment	5,925,945	12,509,600	7,062,022
Total Payroll (Annual)	\$497,749,720	\$672,851,459	\$489,514,844
Payroll/Employment	\$83.99	\$53.79	\$69.32
Number of Establishments	390,842	447,474	780,257
Establishments per Capita	0.0012	0.0013	0.0024
<i>Biggest Employers (South Central WIOA)</i>	Medtronic, Inc CANBERRA Industries Inc East Haven Builders Supply Watson, Inc Dichello Distributors	SARGENT Manufacturing Co AAA Advantage Cleaning LLC Fosdick Fulfillment Corp Securitas Security Svc USA	Lane Construction Home Services at Home Depot Petra Construction Corp New Haven Partitions

TARGET OCCUPATIONS STUDY

The following occupations, identified by their Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) code have been identified as opportunities that do not require a 4-year degree and do pay a living wage. These occupations and data are from Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Position Details	OCCUPATION				OCCUPATION				
	Surgical technologists	Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses	Medical records specialists	Health technologists and technicians, all other	Ophthalmic laboratory technicians	Opticians, Dispensing	Machinists	Heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers	Computer Numerically Controlled Tool Programmers (CNC Tool Programmers)
	29-2055	29-2041	29-2072	29-2099	51-9083	29-2081	51-4041	53-3032	51-9162
Salary & Benefit Expectations									
Hourly Mean (NH-M MSA)	\$31.97	\$28.43	\$28.18	\$27.50	\$26.24	\$33.40	\$25	\$25	\$26
Salary a Living Wage?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Lowest 10% (NH-M MSA)	\$37,250	\$47,530	\$37,180	\$36,400	\$36,590	\$36,690	\$30,330	\$37,310	\$45,850
Highest 90% (NH-M MSA)	\$73,100	\$59,770	\$56,010	\$46,870	\$48,050	\$59,580	\$76,070	\$66,830	\$98,070
Additional Benefits				This is a broad occupational group with variety in pay.	Best pay in NH mean wage - \$16.46 Nationally - \$19.30				
Required Qualifications:									
Level of Education Requirement	Postsecondary nondegree award	Postsecondary nondegree award	Postsecondary nondegree award (per BLS- but all job ads just say high school diploma)	Postsecondary nondegree award	High school diploma or equivalent On-the-job training (6-12 months)	High school diploma or equivalent	High school diploma or equivalent	Postsecondary nondegree award	Postsecondary nondegree award
Certification Requirement?	Yes	Yes	Not required but recommended		Not required but recommended	Not required, but recommended	Depends on industry	Yes	no
Certification (if applicable)	CST Certification	NCSBN	Certified Coding Associate (CCA)		Technician in Precision Optics (TPO) Certified Eye Bank Technician (CEBT)	Advanced Competency in Medical Optometry (ACMO) Contact Lens Registry Certification (CLRF)	Lots	CDL License	
Other skills or knowledge based requirements: (i.e. language, lifting heavy objects)	Customer Service Medicine and Dentistry English Language Education and Training Psychology, Biology Public Safety and Security	Medicine and Dentistry Customer and Personal Service Psychology English Language Therapy and Counseling Mathematics Education and Training	Health Information Technologists and Medical Registrars Medical Assistants Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants		Production and Processing Mechanical Mathematics Customer and Personal Service Administration and Management Computers and Electronics	Customer and Personal Service Sales and Marketing Mathematics Production and Processing Administrative Service Orientation	Critical Thinking Active Listening Mathematics Mechanical Production and Processing	Public Safety and Security Production and Processing Mathematics Transportation Education and Training	Computers and Electronics Mechanical Mathematics Production and Processing Engineering and Technology Design
Training & Career Advancement Opportunities									
Local training pathway or on-the-job training provided?	Gateway CC (AA) Housatonic Community College (AA)	Lincoln Tech (New Britain, Shelton) (Cert)	Middlesex Community College (cert) (30 miles from NH) Online with AHIMA Yes: Certified Coding Specialist Registered Health Information Technician						Lincoln Tech (AA?) Gateway Community College Housatonic (cert)
Opportunities for Position Growth					Medical appliance tech Manufacturing optician Optical mechanics				

Position Details	OCCUPATION				OCCUPATION				
	Surgical technologists	Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses	Medical records specialists	Health technologists and technicians, all other	Ophthalmic laboratory technicians	Opticians, Dispensing	Machinists	Heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers	Computer Numerically Controlled Tool Programmers (CNC Tool Programmers)
	29-2055	29-2061	29-2072	29-2099	51-9083	29-2081	51-4041	53-3032	51-9162
Relevant Industries & Similar Role Types									
Industries in which position is available	Hospitals Outpatient Care Centers Phys Offices Home Health Med and Diagnostic Labs	Nursing Homes Phys Offices Home Health	Hospitals Outpatient Care Centers Phys Offices Home Health Education and Health Services	Federal Executive Branch (VA???) Hospitals Outpatient Care Centers Phys Offices Med and Diagnostic Labs Insurance Carriers Other Ambulatory Health Care Services	Medical Equipment and Supplies Manufacturing Health and Personal Care Retailers Commercial and Service Industry Machinery Manufacturing Offices of Physicians Outpatient care centers	Offices of Other Health Practitioners Health and Personal Care Retailers General Merchandise Retailers Offices of Physicians Outpatient Care Centers	Machine Shops; Turned Product; and Screw, Nut, and Bolt Manufacturing, Metalworking Machinery Manufacturing Engine, Turbine, and Power Transmission Equipment Manufacturing, Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing Machinery Manufacturing, Electric Power Generation, Transmission and Distribution, Scheduled Air, Transportation, Local Government, excluding schools and hospitals, Petroleum and Coal Products Manufacturing Rail Transportation	Electric Power Generation, Transmission and Distribution Telecommunications Support Activities for Water Transportation Rail Transportation Waste Collection Manufacturing Deep Sea, Coastal, and Great Lakes Water Transportation	Machine Shops; Turned Product; and Screw, Nut, and Bolt Manufacturing Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing Machinery Manufacturing Metalworking Machinery Manufacturing Aerospace Product and Parts Manufacturing Foundries Dairy Product Manufacturing Building Equipment Contractors Professional and Commercial Equipment and Supplies Merchant Wholesalers
Similar occupations available	Lead Technologist/Management, Equipment Sales/Applications, Medical Sales, Operating Room Technician	Social and Human Service Assistants Cardiovascular Technologists and Technicians Radiologic Technologists and Technicians Psychiatric Technicians Occupational Therapy Assistants Physical Therapist Assistants Dental Assistants Medical Assistants	Health Information Technologists and Medical Registrars Information Clerks Medical and Health Services Managers Medical Assistants Medical Transcriptionists Pharmacy Technicians		Dental lab tech Medical Appliance tech	Counter and Rental Clerks Dental Laboratory Technicians Medical Assistants Optometrists Pharmacy Technicians Buyers and Purchasing Agents Customer Service Representatives Ophthalmic Technicians	Numerical Control Machine Operators Industrial Electronics Repairers Numerical Control Tool Programmers Tool and Die Makers Tool Grinders Automobile Mechanics Manufacturing, Transportation, and Construction Worker Supervisors Industrial Machinery Mechanics	Delivery truck drivers and driver/sales workers Laborers and material movers Material recording clerks Bus drivers Train engineers and operators Water transportation occupations	Electrical and Electronic Engineering Technologists and Technicians, Industrial, Engineering Technologists and Technicians, Mechanical Engineering Technologists and Technicians, Electrical and Electronics Repairers, Commercial and Industrial Equipment Machinists, Model Makers, Metal and Plastic, Patternmakers, Metal and Plastic, Tool and, Die Makers
Growth Occupation?									
Long Term (Connecticut)	6.60%	1.00%		6.60%	23.90%	15.40%	14.30%	13.20%	36.20%
Total Employed (Hartford)	310	1,580	580	270	120	429	1,070	3,160	40
Mean Annual Openings-CT	87	608					?	506	94
Jobs on careeronestop.org:	33	130	105	24	4	11	50	194	11

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Bureau of Labor Statistics: <https://www.bls.gov/oes/>

Connecticut Department of Labor, Labor Market Information:
https://www1.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi/hotnot_results.asp

O*Net Online: <https://www.onetonline.org/>

REGIONAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, JOB SEEKERS, AND EMPLOYERS REPORT

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ECOSYSTEM IN CONNECTICUT

Connecticut's long history of innovation in medicine, device manufacturing, and medical technology has placed the state in a competitive position. Today, Connecticut considers itself a top destination for the bioscience/biomedical industries, a title long held by San Francisco, Boston, and New York (BioCT, n.d., Work section). In addition, Governor Ned Lamont has committed to "coordinating the state's workforce ecosystem around a common strategy and set of goals." The combination of expanding industries, a history of innovation, and commitment from its leader to improve the ecosystem can set a pathway to meeting employers' demands while offering job seekers the opportunity to learn the skills necessary to earn a livable wage.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARDS

Workforce concerns in the United States date back to the late 1800s. The rise of the industrial revolution gave way to terrible working conditions and unfair treatment of workers. In 1913 the Department of Labor was established to "foster, promote and develop the welfare of working people, to improve their working conditions, and to enhance their opportunities for profitable employment" (cited in MacLaury, n.d.). However, despite improving working conditions and employment opportunities, the country's labor force issues have never dissipated.

During the 1990s, the country was trying to balance a rising economy and a boom in technology jobs with a growing number of individuals receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits. In response, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 was passed. The act led to the development of Workforce Investment Boards tasked with training job seekers on work-related skills that would improve their earnings, increase the quality of the workforce, and reduce dependency on benefit programs. In 2014, the Workforce Investment Act was reauthorized as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The new legislation strengthened four key areas:

- increasing its focus on the most vulnerable workers
- expanding options for education and training
- providing employment-based activities that allow individuals to earn money while being trained
- increasing accountability across programs

In Connecticut, WIOA funds are distributed to five Workforce Development Boards through the State Department of Labor. The Workforce Alliance comprises the South Central towns in the State, including the Greater New Haven area. In contrast, The WorkPlace oversees workforce training in the Southwestern cities and towns in Connecticut, including the Valley. The boards allocate funds to organizations that help the un- and under-employed through skill building, education, job search assistance, and matching employers with workers. They also create an annual employment and training plan based on their assessment of local employment priorities and training needs.

American Job Centers, also known as One Stop Offices in Connecticut, provide various services for businesses and job seekers within the Workforce Development Boards. Services include job search and career workshops, business seminars, fully equipped computer labs and resource libraries, copying, mailing,

and faxing services. In addition, job seekers can receive labor market information, career counseling, skills assessment, job development, placement assistance, job training, tuition assistance programs, and supportive services such as childcare and transportation for qualified individuals.

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS OFFERING TRAINING

In addition to Workforce Development Boards, nonprofit organizations offer workforce development training. The organizations below were interviewed for this report but do not represent an exhaustive list of training programs.

ConnCAT provides job training in the health sciences, culinary, and bioscience.

ReadyCT offers employability skills workshops, internships, and career research support services to high school students interested in college or a career path.

New Haven Hiring Initiative connects qualified New Haven residents with jobs at Yale University and its union partners.

DAE offers software engineering programs to high school students and a four-month training for adults to prepare them for a technology job.

DCI Resources offers IT training in Microsoft Office Specialist, Computing Technology Industry Association, Microsoft Technology Associate, Internet Core Competency Certification, and Customer Service & Sales certification. *(note: although DCI is a privately owned business, their training program is included in this report given that it receives funding so that it is free for students).*

New Haven Job Corps Center supports individuals in gaining skills and employment within ten high-growth industries. Job Corps offers various services, including housing on campus, medical care, meals, school supplies, childcare, a living allowance, and a supportive community. Students can be in the program for between eight months and three years.

Services that help job seekers with “soft skills” complement workforce training programs. These skills are often associated with getting or keeping employment. Many programs named in this report offer programs designed to coach applicants on interviewing skills (through mock interviews), resume writing, job search, and interview attire. In addition, several nonprofit organizations also focus on developing soft skills.

SCHOOLS

Technical High Schools are Building the Future Workforce

There are 20 high schools that offer technical education to prepare students for future employment. Schools within the Greater New Haven and Valley regions include:

- Eli Whitney Technical High School (Hamden)
- Emmett O'Brien Technical High School (Ansonia)
- Platt Technical High School (Milford)

These schools offer academic classes, career programs, and technical education programs. Students initially engage in an exploratory year where they participate in all of the technical programs offered at the school. Then during grades 10 – 12, students focus on the industry of their choice. Students receive work-based

learning (mostly during their senior year), earning academic credit, an apprenticeship salary, and real-world experience.

Industries included across technical high schools include:

- Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources (which includes Bioscience)
- Information Technology
- Manufacturing
- Health Science
- Arts, Audio/Video Technology, and Communications
- Human Services
- Architecture and Construction
- Law, Public Safety, Corrections, and Security
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics
- Marketing, Sales, and Services

Technical high schools serve several functions, including offering school-to-career options for non-college-bound students, developing the future workforce, and offering employers opportunities to connect with individuals through apprenticeships or workplace projects, which can lead to employment. Technical schools often have a community liaison where relationships with employers are strengthened to serve as conduits for apprenticeships. The connections between the school and employers are essential for the program's success. Technical high schools are aware of the disconnect between young people who want to work and employers looking for help and look to bridge that gap.

One technical high school reported that 80% of eligible students have remained employed by a company after their internship. When asked how high school students can get to their job sites, the school reported that many already have cars, others use UBER for transportation, and when either is not an option, students will use the bus system to get to and from their work-based placement. Students can earn between \$15 - \$18 per hour during their apprenticeship and go on to make \$21 - \$22 per hour after graduating.

While schools prepare the future workforce, manufacturing companies are not ignoring the younger generation: middle schoolers. Currently, manufacturing companies visit schools and present the advanced manufacturing industry to students in middle school. The goal is to inform students of the range of careers they can have as they consider which high school to attend and potential career pathways.

COLLEGES

Two- and four-year colleges also offer programs that prepare students for jobs in the four focal areas for this report (healthcare, bioscience, manufacturing, and IT).

Given the increase in the bioscience industry, Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU), in partnership with The City of New Haven, developed the BioPath program "to help sustain the Greater New Haven region as a leader in bioscience" (BioPath, n.d.).

In addition to BS and MS programs, SCSU offers boot camps (non-credit bearing), internships, research experiences (through a competitive process), and community and networking events. These programs are provided at no cost to the student.

CONNECTICUT IS WORKING HARD TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE THE ECOSYSTEM

In 2019, Connecticut's Governor, Ned Lamont, signed an Executive Order establishing the Governor's Workforce Council (GWC). The council's main role is to advise the Governor on workforce development issues and "coordinate the efforts of all state agencies and other entities in promoting workforce development throughout the State (Office of the Governor, 2019)." Today, the Office of Workforce Strategy, led by Kelli-Marie Vallieres, Ph.D., is an executive branch that serves as the administrative staff to the GWC.

In 2020, the GWC finalized a strategic plan focused on four main areas:

- **Business leadership** aimed at building a dynamic workforce through regional sector partnerships that integrate business needs with supporting parties.
- **Workforce participation:** Equity and access aimed at reducing the barriers that have limited access to training, sustainable work, and high-quality career opportunities.
- **Career building** aimed at helping students explore and enter educational programs aligned with in-demand career pathways.
- **Accountability and data-driven** management aimed to design and implement innovative workforce solutions focused on delivering a comprehensive, intuitive customer experience.

All of the work that has been done thus far has expanded the workforce development ecosystem. Today, Connecticut has Regional Sector Partnerships that meet regularly, fund innovative training programs like MATCH (Manufacturing and Technical Community Hub) in New Haven and create a strategic and thoughtful school-to-career pipeline.

The efforts put forth by the Office of Workforce Strategy and the Governor's commitment are showing promise. They have many elements needed to create a viable workforce and address the needs of growth industries. Many initiatives are still in their infancy, and outcome data is not yet available; however, stakeholders can correct what is not working as data becomes available.

This report includes several organizations that have received funding through this initiative. In addition, this report contains feedback from employers and job seekers. Below are a few themes that surfaced through interviews and listening sessions:

Workforce development & training programs

- Some training programs are not at full capacity since the pandemic. This could be due to potential workers who have moved into the gig economy, which offers flexibility and autonomy. Other training programs have wait lists but do not have enough funding to meet demand.

- Few job seekers we spoke with mentioned any training programs offered by the Workforce Investment Boards, nonprofit organizations, or the new opportunities the Governor and the Office of Workforce Strategy set forth. There continues to be a disconnect between job seekers, training programs, and employers. On-the-ground marketing will be essential.
- Transportation continues to be a challenge in many ways (discussed in greater detail in the section on job seekers). If not addressed, Connecticut may continue to face issues in meeting its workforce strategy.

Community-Based Nonprofits offering training programs

- Individuals who receive services and training through a nonprofit organization often need additional support. Nonprofits are tasked with helping individuals who have language, childcare, transportation, and mental health needs. These organizations may have insufficient funds to provide the comprehensive services that they need.
- Cultural differences impact individuals' ability to obtain and retain employment. Nonprofits help with those differences and offer services to prepare individuals to work and be successful by understanding and meeting workplace standards.
- Even when an individual has completed training, gained the necessary skills, has received support in identifying jobs, and has practiced interviewing, discrimination serves as a barrier to getting hired.

Job seekers

- Fear of the benefits cliff and the need for flexibility make it challenging for job seekers to join the workforce. See our report on the Benefits Cliff.
- Many still use Indeed to learn about job openings but have limited success. There is little knowledge about the other portals listing open positions in Connecticut.
- Individuals are looking for growth opportunities in companies and are even willing to start at a lower wage if pathways are clear and attainable.
- Having mental health issues can be challenging for some individuals. Some who have gone through a training program that has also provided them with wraparound services or case management enter the workforce without that support and can feel overwhelmed and distrustful of the system.
- Discrimination is the leading belief as to why individuals struggle to get employment, especially at a livable wage.
- Job seekers also noted that they depend on "for hire" signs to learn about open positions. When the topic of networks arose, some job seekers reported successfully obtaining employment through the help of a friend. However, it is more challenging to get a job through networking when it comes to companies with few or no people of color in executive positions.
- There is a sense that employers are looking to hire someone with all the skills needed to do that job. Although this saves the employer from investing in training, it leaves out many potential candidates.

WHAT WE LEARNED: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Individuals whose role is to advance the workforce within the Greater New Haven and Valley regions (and some throughout the State) shared their successes and challenges,

WRAPAROUND SERVICES ARE CRITICAL.

- One program discussed that they continue to support the 80%-85% of participants that obtain employment after completing the program. During the training program, there is great emphasis on workplace standards/behaviors, which sets up the participant for success. This support continues throughout their first year of being employed.
- Under-employed or unemployed individuals often need support such as childcare, transportation, and navigating systems. Case management can serve as supplemental support while individuals focus on gaining skills for future employment.
- Another program offers support around getting a driver's license to combat the transportation barrier. They also provide support around mental health to prepare the job seeker for the workplace.

COMMUNICATION & MARKETING

- One noted barrier is the need to make the connection between a job and a job seeker's skills. Some jobs have titles that feel out of reach for individuals (e.g., Photovoltaic Installer) because what they are called or referred to doesn't resonate with individuals who don't know the industry. There is a suspicion that it's not that individuals lack interest in these roles, but job seekers may not be familiar with them.
- The State of Connecticut has invested a lot in training programs. Today we have Workforce Investment Boards monitoring growth industries to ensure that Connecticut holds a competitive position when attracting companies. Training programs are not at capacity, however, and when job seekers were asked where they look for jobs, very few mentioned using the training programs mentioned in this report.
- There continues to be a disconnect between those seeking employment, knowledge about where to build skills, and employers seeking employees.
- Several organizations interviewed reported participating in job or career fairs and conducting outreach efforts in community spaces such as libraries and community events, while others reported hosting webinars. Currently, there are no mechanisms for tracking the number of people who contact an organization and follow through to enrollment and graduation. This limitation makes it difficult to assess vulnerabilities. One interesting learning was how few job seekers we met mentioned training programs.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) TRAINING PROGRAMS HAVE CHALLENGES

- Individuals noted that one of the challenges with the IT industry is the wide range of skills and credentials one can obtain. IT is a rapidly changing industry with different skills or credentials constantly surfacing. Because of this, some programs have been challenged when it comes to preparing individuals for employment that pays a living wage.
- IT training programs offering specific and current credentials ("specific tech stacks") can teach individuals the skills needed for today's IT industry needs and for employment that pays a livable wage. The challenge these programs face is that they require longer training, which means individuals have to be able to commit a significant amount of time to learn. If the program does not offer a stipend to offset living expenses, these programs may not be a good choice for those under- or unemployed.

INDIVIDUALS ARE MOVING INTO THE GIG ECONOMY

- Many training programs shared how they are not at full capacity, yet before the pandemic, training programs were at capacity; some even had a waiting list. One speculation is that individuals are choosing to work in the gig economy and have moved on to jobs like UBER, DoorDash, and InstaCart. This hypothesis was validated when meeting with individuals with a former criminal history. Given the discrimination they face and the limited types of opportunities available to them, almost all of them talked about starting their own business. Given this trend, training programs may continue to have challenges filling programs.

TRANSPORTATION & HOUSING

- Many employers have moved to the suburbs, where public transportation is inconsistent or lacking. This makes it difficult for individuals that live in urban areas and do not have a car. Other transportation issues include riding multiple buses, which can be tricky during the winter. If someone misses a bus or the bus is delayed, it can impact their ability to get to work on time. The third shift is also challenging, given that buses run inconsistently during off-peak hours, hindering one's ability to get to and from work.
- Workforce housing can be another solution to offset the rise in housing costs and transportation challenges. One program is addressing workforce housing as a potential solution. When asked about a livable wage, many job seekers reported that the increase in housing costs and food makes it very challenging to obtain employment that will sustain them and their dependents.

WHAT WE LEARNED: NONPROFITS OFFERING TRAINING PROGRAMS

EDUCATING JOB SEEKERS IS CRITICAL

- One program helps job seekers by teaching them how to find open positions and determine their qualifications. They have learned that job seekers apply (or want to apply) for jobs they don't qualify for, as they tend to focus on the title and pay. This program guides them in reviewing the tasks and duties of the position and then assessing which skills they possess.
- Outreach is critical, given that job seekers do not know where to go. Traditionally, employers have depended on individuals finding their posted positions and applying; however, today, many individuals may have limited access to technology or are not comfortable navigating internet research. This digital divide could leave many potential and willing individuals searching for employment. During our listening sessions with job seekers, we learned that many depend on "for hire" signs posted outside an establishment to hear about job opportunities.
- Some job seekers may end up in a position they do not enjoy because they tend to have limited employment history and do not know the type of work they want. Employers can help these individuals by offering different positions and seeing if the employee finds alignment in another role within the organization.

WRAPAROUND SERVICES ARE IMPORTANT

- Mental health is an issue that needs addressing. One program addresses mental health among its participants through group work. They also work to destigmatize mental health.
- Programs that do not offer a stipend during training reported that this was a barrier for some participants.
- Another challenge identified was staying employed. Due to the consequences of missing work or pay, individuals with chronic health issues may ignore them, especially if they do not have paid sick time. Health neglect becomes a cyclical issue, where individuals become ill to a point where they cannot ignore their symptoms and seek medical treatment, but then miss work and get fired for absences.

LANGUAGE BARRIERS

- Some organizations do not have bi-lingual staff and cannot conduct outreach efforts or offer training to non-English speaking individuals.
- Individuals who cannot communicate in English tend not to be hired because communicating with the supervisor or manager is challenging.
- Those individuals who go on to advanced work and can speak conversational English are often challenged with written and reading capabilities. This can limit how far they can go in a company.
- Individuals attempting to learn English mentioned how long it takes to complete a course; coupled with working full-time and family duties, the time investment can be too much.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

- Individuals from different countries also expressed cultural barriers. For example, in some countries, the concept of childcare (in that a stranger takes care of your child) is uncommon or nonexistent.
- Other cultural differences are needing a resume, being interviewed, or providing references. Job searching and obtaining employment are more informal in different countries and is often done through networks. In addition to learning English, cultural learning also needs to occur.
- Individuals do better in trusting environments. The process of getting employment is perceived as distrustful. Even when individuals get employment, trust is a critical factor. "Employers must consider that the models that work for White individuals do not necessarily work for people of color/traditionally underserved individuals."
- Often, training programs replicate classroom learning. The classroom learning environment may not work for many underserved individuals and those who did not attend college or finish high school. "It is hard to learn in a space where you have already failed."

NOT EVERYONE GETS A JOB AFTER TRAINING.

- People of color continue to experience discrimination because of their race or appearance (e.g., being overweight). One organization invests enormous resources in supporting its clientele in obtaining employment. Even after creating an excellent resume, practicing through mock interviews, and learning to talk about their skills, individuals still do not get hired.
- Reentering citizens are less likely to get a job in a big company as they tend not to hire individuals with criminal histories.
- Individuals are being discriminated against for various reasons besides race, including living in a shelter or transitional house or having a past criminal conviction.
- Many of the programs require the participant to self-direct their job search. One program believes that teaching self-advocacy puts the individual in a better position. Given that finding employment post-graduation is where we found a lot of vulnerability, training programs may want to focus on partnering with employers with jobs available for graduates.
- "Connecticut is one of the hardest places to get a driver's license." Usually, there are issues around taxes or unpaid tickets. If too much time has lapsed, an individual may need to retake the driver's exam. Transportation is a commonly reported barrier, especially shifts outside regular bus hours.

ADDITIONAL LEARNINGS

- Many individuals want to work, but the fear of losing benefits due to employment and the inability to support a family may keep them from working. Those who are forced to work because they lost their benefits find themselves struggling.
- Employers need to learn to "value individuals deeper." This means helping individuals feel good about their work and developing trusting environments.
- Many workforce development programs have come and gone because of funding. This challenge limits the opportunity to learn what works and leaves an entire group of individuals unserved.

- While some training programs reported not being at capacity, others have limitations because of funding. In other words, they could serve more individuals with more funding. Others noted that funding streams create bottlenecks due to eligibility requirements.
- There is a need (from employers) for administrative personnel, but there are few training opportunities for such roles.

WHAT WE LEARNED: JOB SEEKERS

REFUGEES

Two listening sessions were conducted with refugees. While they offered insight into the various challenges they face, there were two clear themes: college-educated professional refugees are not able to transfer their education or licenses and obtain the same jobs they had back home, and female refugees tend to have no work experience given that they were able to stay home and care for children and family and did not have to work. Both of these circumstances present a host of challenges.

Challenges

- Language and the inability to communicate. The lack of writing and reading in English becomes another barrier when offered a more advanced position.
- Many refugees already have a post-secondary degree, but their educational credentials are not recognized in the U.S. This results in them returning to school or getting a job outside of their profession.
- Employers appear to lack trust in individuals from middle eastern countries.
- Some refugees are unfamiliar with technology, especially women who tend to stay home and care for their families in their home country.
- Having a limited network (or no network at all) makes it difficult to learn about job openings. It also is challenging for isolated individuals to learn about U.S. culture.
- Refugees must learn all existing systems, including transportation, employment, healthcare, and education.
- Refugees with larger families require a caretaker at home.
- The rapid rise in the cost of food and housing has made refugees afraid of losing their benefits if they find employment and risk being unable to support themselves.

Opportunities for Employers

- Flexibility to go to appointments
- Offer work schedules between 9 – 3
- Part-time work so they can focus on school and ESL classes
- Teach capacity building around finding jobs and going through the interview process.
- Mentorship can be more useful than just training.

- Working in a safe neighborhood is important, especially for late shifts.
- Childcare is important.
- Teach technology
- Recognize past jobs, skills, and education.

IT TRAINEES

Two listening sessions were held with individuals participating in an IT training program. Participants were diverse in age, race, and work experience.

Challenges

- Sending a resume does not always yield a response. Many reported sending resumes for open positions, only never to hear back from the employer.
- Job requirements are numerous for some roles, discouraging job searches.
- Employment gaps can be challenging. Employers always want to know why there is a gap in someone's resume.
- There may be IT jobs, but many are far from home.
- "Almost impossible to get a job without experience."
- There aren't many jobs in the technology field (lately).

Opportunities for Employers

- Growth opportunities are essential in a job, even if it means starting at a lower salary.
- Continued training for additional certifications.
- Offer IT internships for hands-on experience.

YOUTH

Youth between the ages of 16 – 24 participated in a listening session. Those who spoke with us also noted the challenges we heard from adults.

Challenges

- Experiencing racism and age discrimination.
- There are a lot of low-wage jobs.
- Location/transportation
- Not being qualified for jobs that pay more.
- Experiencing stress, anxiety, or depression.
- Not knowing how to advocate for oneself.

- Not feeling mature enough.

REENTERING CITIZENS

Challenges

- Employers tend not to hire individuals with a criminal history and make that decision based on the person's record without considering all they have done since then to improve their life.
- The best way to get a job is to know someone that works at the company so that person can vouch for them.
- Given inflation and the cost of rent, there is often a need for workers to have second jobs.
- Depending on how long someone has been away, they most likely lack skills.
- Older individuals, who have been away for a long time, are not eligible for social security benefits because of the lack of employment. This results in elderly individuals having to work and being unable to retire.
- Food and rent costs are growing faster than salaries. Everyone should be eligible for food benefits.
- Mental health needs addressing.

Opportunities for Employers

- Transportation is a huge barrier, especially when employees work second and third shifts. The responsibility for transportation should rest with the employer.
- Values such as "each one, teach one" can go a long way to creating a positive culture (feel like a family).
- Reentering citizens are also people with hearts. Consider everything about the person, what they did before they were incarcerated, and what they have done since their incarceration. Their incarceration is only one part of the story.

WOMEN

Challenges

- Mental health can make it challenging to pursue and retain employment.
- Medical cannabis is still frowned upon. When employers who require drug testing learn about the use of cannabis, they do not get the job.
- To make a livable wage, individuals have to work multiple jobs.
- When the company's values do not align with yours, it gets hard to work there.
- Discrimination around race, weight, tattoos, eyelashes. "if you do not look like them, they don't like you."
- Often told, "You are overqualified," as a reason not to hire them.

- Getting into training at the Workforce Investment Board can take a long time (up to 30 days + 90 days of training), but you need money now.
- Applying for jobs is difficult; people do not return calls, and you never get the same person when you call. Email does not yield a response either.
- Complicated processes, such as needing specific paperwork and not being able to get it, often mean that's the end of the process.

Opportunities for Employers

- Shifts should end in the early afternoon so caretakers can be with their families.
- Not everyone has the training to overcome things emotionally; people live with trauma.
- Employers should consider investing in training rather than trying to find someone that has all of the skills they want in a person. For example, train people to speak another language if you can't find bilingual staff.
- Employers should look for people "where they are" – out in the community. Let people know you are hiring.

WHAT WE LEARNED : EMPLOYERS

Employers were interviewed in an effort to learn of the challenges they face regarding the workforce and the opportunities they offer to job seekers.

Retention is a concern

- Employers investing in training and career pathing, which is the process of aligning opportunities for employee career growth with organizational talent priorities, run the risk of employees moving on, which is a cost to the company.
- Some companies cannot offer every employee a career path, which can be difficult for a company and for managing employee expectations.
- Employee expectations are different today and create challenges for employers.
- Living costs detract individuals from moving to CT and have encouraged residents to move to different states.
- One employer noted that transportation is not an issue for their employees.
- One employer noted that issues around turnover are often due to the job being a mismatch regarding expectations, structure, and physical demands.

There is a difference in workforce attitudes

- Employers are witnessing their workforce deal with mental health issues.
- Employees are "naming their price," making it a challenge to afford to pay what individuals want to earn.
- Current employees struggle with the structure and physical demands of manufacturing.

Apprenticeship is a double-edged sword

- Some employers use the State's funding for apprenticeships to leverage attracting talent.
- For some employers, an apprenticeship can be a double-edged sword if the apprentice earns more than the current workers.

UNDERSTANDING CLIFF EFFECTS: IMPLICATIONS AND SOLUTIONS

INTRODUCTION

Many families depend on benefits such as cash assistance, childcare assistance, and housing assistance to sustain their households. Perversely, these systems can trap families in poverty and prevent their economic mobility. As family incomes increase, they lose benefits – sometimes greater than the value of their increased income. In other words, families can work harder, earn more, and have less money to spend.

The term “cliff effects” refers to abrupt and significant changes in an individual's benefits or financial status that occur when they reach income thresholds. However, the situation is more complex than the term implies. Each of the benefits that families might use have different eligibility criteria, meaning that any change in income can change their available funds in unpredictable ways. It is crucial for policymakers, social workers, and individuals themselves to understand cliff effects, mitigate their adverse consequences, and promote upward social mobility. This report provides an overview of cliff effects, their implications, and potential solutions.

IMPLICATIONS OF CLIFF EFFECTS

Cliff effects have three main effects: financial insecurity, workforce disincentives, and creating poverty traps.

FINANCIAL INSECURITY

Cliff effects can trap individuals in a precarious financial situation, where any increase in income leads to a reduction in benefits, leaving them worse off than before the change in earned income. Common benefits accessed by low-income families include:

- Health insurance: Federal and state programs increase access to health insurance through programs like Medicaid.
- The Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), commonly referred to as Food Stamps, helps families afford healthy food.
- The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides additional nutritional support for women who are pregnant, and parents who care for infants and young children.
- Heat Subsidies or Fuel Assistance assists families to pay their winter heating bills and, in some states, summer cooling bills.
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) provides cash support to pregnant and parenting women and their children.
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) provides cash assistance to low income individuals with disabilities.
- Child Care Vouchers help low-income families pay for childcare. In CT, the childcare public subsidy program run by the Office of Early Childhood is called Care 4 Kids.
- Federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is a refundable tax credit for low-income workers with children.

WORKFORCE DISINCENTIVES

When individuals realize that earning more income may result in a net loss due to cliff effects, they may be discouraged from seeking better job opportunities or pursuing career advancement. This leads to stagnant economic growth. Furthermore, the systems are so complex that workers often cannot anticipate how a change in income will affect their take-home pay, leaving them to avoid raises or promotions out of fear (Leap Foundation, n.d.). Benefits vary by family size, family composition, age of children, and city, county, and state of residence.

Managing a workforce that participates in benefits programs can be a challenge to managers who will struggle with recruitment, promotion, and retention when presented with so much uncertainty about take-home pay (Leap Fund, n.d.). This is crippling in some industries. For example, more than half of fast-food workers participate in public benefits programs (Leap Fund, n.d.).

Loss of childcare subsidies can be devastating to employment. When a family's income increases above the level of eligibility for childcare, they can lose the entire benefit, making it financially untenable to work (Birken et al., 2018).

The Center for Social Policy at University of Massachusetts Boston has published a set of benefits cliff calculations that demonstrate that for many families, there is no net benefit to increasing their income above \$10 per hour. In many cases, there is no net benefit until families are earning over \$25 per hour (Agarwal et al., 2018). For some individuals, the threat of loss of benefits such as health care or disability benefits keeps them out of the workforce altogether (Blanco, 2023).

POVERTY TRAPS

Cliff effects can contribute to the perpetuation of intergenerational poverty, as individuals may struggle to escape poverty despite efforts to improve their circumstances.

POTENTIAL SHORT-TERM SOLUTIONS

MAKING FAMILIES WHOLE

A pilot program in Massachusetts puts \$1 million towards helping families overcome cliff effects. Using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, the program reimburses families for the loss in benefits that they incur when their income increases. The pilot program will send families Earned Income Tax Credits that reimburse them for the value of benefits that they have lost due to increased earned income during the year (Conway, 2023). At the time of this writing, it has not been determined how families will apply to the program.

EARNED INCOME DISREGARDS

Some states are creating legislation to exclude additional income from benefits calculations. For example, in 2018 Massachusetts implemented an earned income disregard for TANF for the first six months of employment as long as the family's income was less than 200% of the federal poverty level. 11 states¹ have earned income disregards for determining continuing eligibility for TANF (McCann, 2019).

ENHANCE EDUCATION AND COUNSELING

Providing comprehensive information about cliff effects to individuals, including financial planning and career counseling, can empower them to make informed decisions and navigate the complexities of benefits

¹ Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Delaware, Hawaii, Indiana, Massachusetts, Montana, Utah, and Texas

programs. Programs such as the Leap Fund (Leap Fund, n.d.) have created benefits calculators to help workers and employers understand the implications of income increases in their specific municipalities so that workers can make informed decisions about their labor force participation and employment.

CONCLUSION

Cliff effects pose significant challenges to individuals striving for economic mobility and self-sufficiency. They also contribute to the labor shortage by reducing the hours that workers are willing to take on, preventing promotion and retention strategies, and keeping workers out of the labor force altogether. By recognizing the implications of these effects and implementing targeted solutions, municipalities, policymakers, social workers, employers, and individuals can collectively work towards a system that supports upward mobility, encourages work incentives, and breaks the cycle of poverty. Addressing cliff effects requires a comprehensive and coordinated approach that balances the need for targeted assistance with the promotion of long-term financial independence.

PROMISING PRACTICES: CASE STUDIES

BIOLAUNCH AT CONNCAT, NEW HAVEN, CT

BioLaunch is a program hosted by the Connecticut Center for Arts & Technology (ConnCAT) and designed to provide laboratory instruction and internships to prepare individuals for high-demand, high-quality careers in the field of biotechnology. BioLaunch is a new, three-year pilot project offered by the Office of Workforce Strategy in collaboration with the Office of the Governor and the General Assembly.



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

BioLaunch is a workforce training program designed to train and prepare New Haven residents for a career in the region's growing biotechnology industry. The program prepares individuals for careers as technicians in biotechnology, life sciences laboratories, or research programs. Training is four months long, followed by a paid internship with a local biopharmaceutical company. During the six-month program, students are provided with a monthly stipend in addition to childcare and transportation support. The program intends to train two cohorts of 15 participants annually.

POPULATION SERVED

The program serves non-college bound New Haven residents between the ages of 18 - 26.

WHAT STANDS OUT: THE BIOLAUNCH APPROACH

A TRILOGY FOR SUCCESS

Founder Craig Crews, Ph.D. uses the metaphor of three legs of a stool to describe BioLaunch's approach. The first leg is developing a program influenced by industry needs and partners motivated to solve its workforce development challenges. Currently the program has ten biotech companies informing and guiding the curriculum. The second leg is partnering with workforce development experts to design a successful curriculum and program. These partners include ConnCAT, Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce, Elm Street Ventures, and others. The third is offering training in a state-of-the-art laboratory, centrally located in Downtown New Haven.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT THROUGHOUT TRAINING AND INTERNSHIPS

The program is funded to support full-time trainers, offer bi-weekly stipends, paid internships, and provide support for childcare and transportation.

AMENDABLE HOURS

The training program runs Monday through Friday from 8:30 am - 2:30pm, a schedule that is comparable with children's school hours, allowing caretakers to be home in time for their children's arrival from school.

THE MANUFACTURING AND TECHNICAL COMMUNITY HUB (MATCH)

A comprehensive program where manufacturing trainees receive on-the-job training and support. As they train, students make components for manufacturing companies who have contracted with MATCH. Classroom instruction is taught by current manufacturing experts who know the needs of the industry and how to develop skills among trainees. Families needing additional support such as diapers or energy assistance can come to MATCH and work with a service provider to assess their eligibility and obtain benefits.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

MATCH is specifically designed for individuals who have experienced barriers to employment, including immigrants, women, returning citizens (individuals who are returning to the community following incarceration), and individuals who are unskilled. It is also designed to allow a trainee to explore where their interests fit best through on-the-job training; in other words, if a certain position or operation does not seem like the right fit, trainees will be able to learn other machines or operations until they can find the best match.

Population Served

MATCH has not begun its training program, but it intends to offer training opportunities to individuals eligible to work in the US and who have passed a drug test. MATCH is intended to begin in September 2023.

WHAT STANDS OUT: THE MATCH APPROACH

Addressing many barriers

MATCH intends to address the myriad of challenges faced by today's workforce. Its approach is intended to address barriers such as:

Transportation & Location: Located in the Fair Haven neighborhood of New Haven, Connecticut, the training/manufacturing facility will be located on one of the most traveled bus lines and in a densely populated, racially and ethnically diverse neighborhood.

Family Friendly Schedules: Individuals will train for 25 hours per week, enabling caretakers to be home in time for the arrival of school-aged students. The program's willingness to challenge the traditional 40-hour work week is ground-breaking and MATCH has challenged other employers in the region to experiment with this and other types of innovations.

Transcending Language Barriers: In response to New Haven's growing immigrant population, which speaks approximately 20 different languages, MATCH will offer translators, bi-lingual instructors, and on-site ESL classes.

Industry Led Training: Students are taught by instructors who are currently working in the manufacturing industry and learn current skills and standards. In addition, administrative and sales training will be offered for roles outside the shop floor.

Comprehensive Supports: MATCH will collaborate with local nonprofit organizations that offer resources such as energy assistance, diapers, and housing. Non-profits offering these services or resources will be onsite, making the facility a "one-stop shop" for resources, training, and job opportunities.

PATHWAYS TO HEALTHCARE AT VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY (VCU) HEALTH SYSTEM, RICHMOND VA

Pathways to Healthcare is a workforce development initiative started in 2018 to prepare Richmond residents for employment in the healthcare industry. Once employed, the program provides active support to help workers retain their positions and continue their education.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Pathways to Healthcare program at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) Health is a workforce development initiative designed to provide individuals with the skills and training needed to pursue careers in the healthcare industry. The program is a collaboration between VCU Health and several community partners. The Pathways to Healthcare program recruits high school graduates into entry level positions at VCU Health. The program offers a range of training programs and services, including classroom instruction, hands-on skills training, and job placement assistance.

Population Served

The program serves Richmond students who are graduating from high school and are either not ready or not interested in matriculating to college.

WHAT STANDS OUT: MENTORING

All of the students who are accepted into the Pathways to Healthcare program will be placed in the hospital system in an entry-level job that matches their skills. These positions range from Patient Access Coordinators to valets or groundskeepers.

One of the unique features of the Pathways to Healthcare program is its emphasis on providing students with the support and resources needed to overcome barriers to success. Their staff provide one on one career coaching to new hires to ensure that workers can retain their employment for the first year. This involves actively mentoring workers and providing a source of support for them and their managers as they manage the transition to full time employment. For example, staff intervened when a worker was having difficulty getting to work on time. They coached the worker to explain how the bus schedule was creating a barrier and to advocate for a change in their work schedule. As a result, the staff member was able to retain that worker's employment.

After one year, workers are actively encouraged to take advantage of VCU Health's tuition remission program in order to advance in their careers. Mentors work with them to identify educational opportunities. VCU Health offers a generous tuition remission program (a benefit in which the employer contributes towards tuition costs) that will pay for an associate's, bachelor's, master's and PhD degree per worker.

PROGRAM RESULTS

Data

The Pathways to Healthcare program places approximately 60 students per year in positions at VCU Health.

Results Summary

The VCU Pathways to Healthcare program is an important resource for individuals looking to pursue careers in the healthcare industry. By providing comprehensive training programs, academic support

services, and job placement assistance, the program helps to address the workforce needs of the healthcare industry, while also providing valuable career opportunities for individuals in the community.

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

This section offers recommendations for the workforce development ecosystem and employers. Potential action steps are also provided.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ECOSYSTEM

1. DEVELOP A ROBUST COMMUNICATION/MARKETING STRATEGY THAT REACHES EVERYONE.

BACKGROUND: Training programs reported not being at full capacity since the pandemic. Job seekers reported two main pathways to learning about work opportunities: searching on Indeed and asking friends. Few job seekers we spoke with mentioned any training programs offered by the Workforce Investment Boards, nonprofit organizations, or the new opportunities the Governor's Workforce Council and the Office of Workforce Strategy set forth.

Potential Actions

- Develop recruitment strategies that reach job seekers "where they are" – in the community, places they frequent, and grassroots canvassing, so that the gap between training programs, job seekers, and employers is closed.
- Strengthen marketing about CT-specific job search portals such as Career ConneCT or CT Hires. These portals also offer skills assessments, training programs, and other support.
- Ensure that titles and positions use terminology that the general public understands. Some job titles are not commonly used and can deter applicants.

2. STRENGTHEN COLLABORATIONS BETWEEN EMPLOYERS AND TRAINING ORGANIZATIONS.

BACKGROUND: Job seekers, training programs, and employers all reported that there are no guaranteed jobs once an individual has completed training. This has left training graduates discouraged and takes training programs and employers "off the hook."

Potential Actions

- Improve/strengthen partnerships between training programs and employers so that there are direct pipelines to employment for training graduates.

3. DEVELOP NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

BACKGROUND: Many job seekers go to friends to learn about job opportunities; however, others reported not having a formal network they can go to. Job seekers expressed how difficult networking can be when you do not have a relationship with executive-level individuals.

Potential Actions

- Develop "informal events" where job seekers and employers can meet. For many job seekers, the traditional resume-interview model is not effective. Creating space for informal networking opportunities can help those challenged by the conventional job search process.
- Create alternative pathways for job seekers to learn about employment opportunities, such as through social media

4. SUPPORT JOB SEEKERS THROUGHOUT THEIR FIRST YEAR OF EMPLOYMENT

BACKGROUND: Training programs tend to offer supportive or wraparound services during training and less support during the individual's employment. The decrease in support can be challenging. Programs extending support past the training period had greater outcomes.

Potential Actions

- Offer support around navigating workplace standards, company cultures, and self-advocacy so that individuals are more successful in the new environments.
- Develop training that offers stacked credentialing so individuals can continuously improve their skills.
- Invest in creative solutions against transportation barriers, such as shuttles to work.

5. EVALUATE THE RELEVANCE AND QUALITY OF TRAINING PROGRAMS

BACKGROUND: Our interviews exposed a mismatch between industry needs and training programs. While efforts ensure training programs meet employers' current needs, job seekers and employers highlighted that more work must be done.

Potential Actions

- Strengthen the assessment of training programs meeting industry needs by increasing the frequency or strengthening key performance measures so that course correction can occur in a timely manner.
- Assess additional employers' workforce needs and develop a strategy to meet those needs; for example, there is a need (from employers) for administrative personnel, but there are not many training opportunities for administrative roles. In addition, employers need IT professionals to have specific skills beyond the basics currently available.

6. INVEST IN QUALITY TRAINING PROGRAMS THAT LEAD TO EMPLOYMENT

BACKGROUND: Community-based organizations struggle with tracking the ratio between outreach and enrollment. This presents a vulnerability in understanding where the problems are regarding enrollment. Furthermore, some programs are not at capacity, while others could train more individuals if they had funding. A tracking mechanism can address some of these vulnerabilities.

Potential Actions

- Track outreach activity to assess performance on outreach efforts. Track the process from outreach to participation, graduation, and obtaining employment.
- All training programs should provide a stipend during training to offset living expenses. Advocacy efforts should focus on this.
- Research programs that have the capacity to train more individuals but lack funding. Assess their quality and employment rate (post-graduation) and fund.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

1. RECONSIDER THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

BACKGROUND: All of the job seekers who participated in listening sessions for this labor market analysis reported discrimination as a barrier. Employers can use this information to examine their processes and ensure equitable practices.

Potential Actions

- Create outreach efforts that reach job seekers where they are. Listing openings on websites may not reach some groups given the digital divide and the lack of technology skills individuals may experience.
- Redesign the application process so that it takes into consideration different cultural norms. Hiring processes tend to be based on interviews; consider skill assessment or competency for training.
- Assess your current recruitment process. Is it too complicated? Does it bias one group over another? Consider a less complex and simpler process.
- Make career pathways explicit to attract job seekers. Ensure your company has processes for equitable career growth by assessing the opportunities and processes for growth.
- Recognize past jobs, skills, and education by assessing or connecting with past international employers.

2. OFFER BENEFITS NEEDED BY TODAY'S WORKFORCE

BACKGROUND: Today's workforce is different compared to past generations. Changes in the economy, way of life, and our complex environment affect how individuals show up for work. To attract and retain candidates, create innovative practices that will increase trust, engagement, and loyalty.

Potential Actions

- Ensure your medical healthcare plan includes mental health and dental benefits. Allow employees to attend medical (including therapy) appointments during working hours with no penalty.
- Hire a translator or offer onsite English as a Second Language (ESL) classes so that individuals do not have to go from the workplace to evening classes.
- Offer transportation benefits such as rideshare stipends. Many jobs are located in areas that are difficult or impossible to reach by public transportation. But the expense of care is prohibitive for workers. Employers have an opportunity to lower transportation costs and increase employee attendance and punctuality by providing transportation solutions such as shuttles or vouchers for ride share apps.
- Offer work schedules that allow caretakers to be home after school, attend medical appointments, or enroll in training or ESL classes.

3. TAP INTO YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AS A RETENTION STRATEGY

BACKGROUND: Job seekers are searching for organizations that value them and whose values align with theirs. Employers reported challenges with retention. Creating a values-driven organizational culture can help with employee citizenship, thus reducing turnover.

Potential Actions

- Offer informal opportunities for individuals to network among colleagues and executives. Develop a robust training and mentorship program for individuals who do not meet all the job requirements.
- Embrace a culture of values that includes trust and making employees feel valued.

4. EVALUATE AND ADDRESS DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES

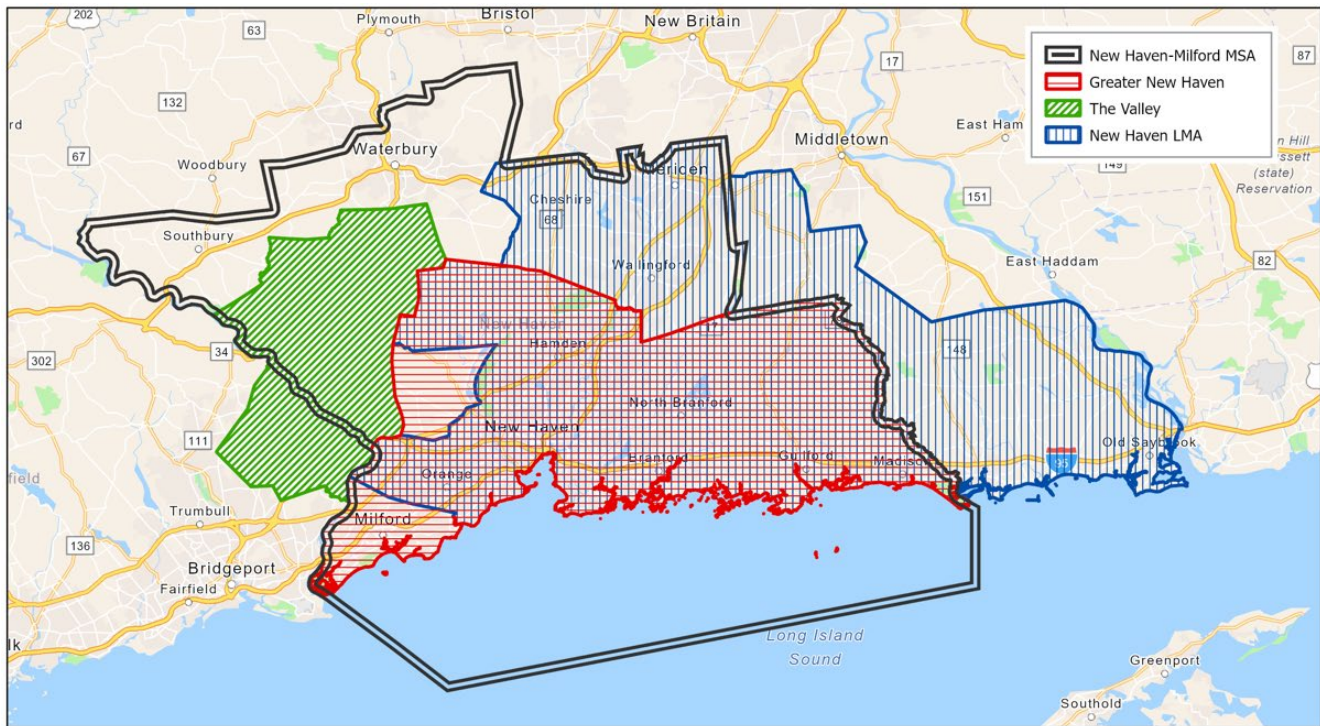
BACKGROUND: Every group of job seekers cited discrimination as a barrier to obtaining employment.

Potential Actions

- Develop a task committee, including Human Resources (HR) or a designated leader, to review, audit, and address discriminatory practices. Make changes based on recommendations.
- Review your employment practices (the committee could do this) and highlight where changes can improve inclusion. Make recommendations. Initiate changes.
- Audit your personnel demographics, such as race/ethnicity, gender, mode of transportation, and compensation. Continue to track these numbers. Create goals for diversity and address gaps and vulnerabilities.
- Develop a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI) committee that is staff led and includes HR personnel. Task the committee with assessing practices and providing recommendations for inclusive and equitable practices and policies.
- Celebrate different cultures through company events.
- Develop clear policies around returning citizens and medical cannabis to ensure consistent practice across all applicants.

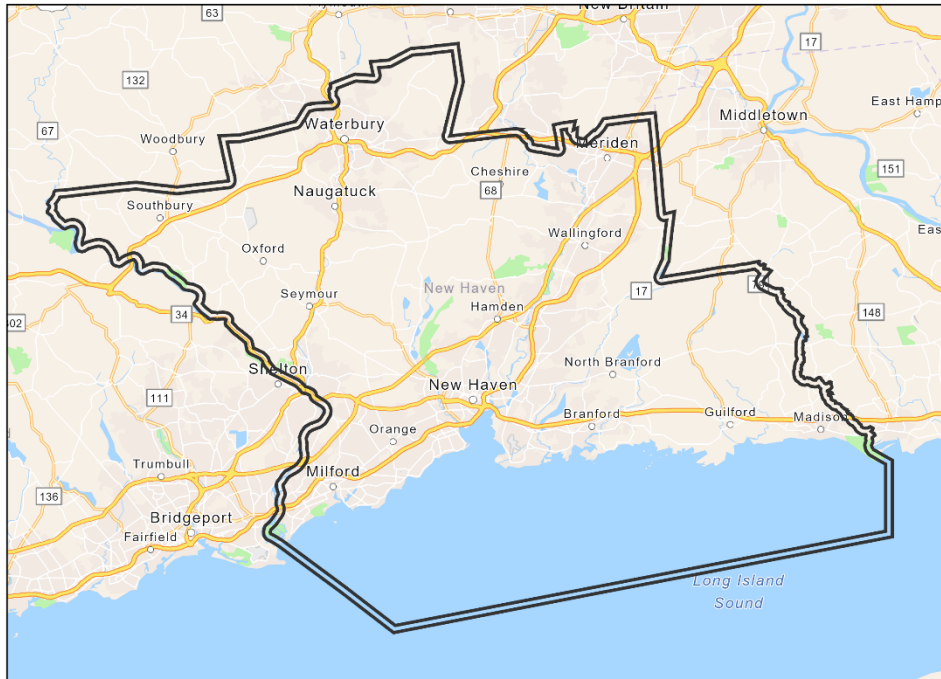
APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: REGIONS OF SOUTH-CENTRAL CONNECTICUT



NEW HAVEN-MILFORD MS

Population 861,113



- Ansonia
- Beacon Falls
- Bethany
- Branford
- Cheshire
- Derby
- East Haven
- Guilford
- Hamden
- Madison

- Meriden
- Middlebury
- Milford
- Naugatuck
- New Haven
- North Branford
- North Haven
- Northford
- Orange
- Oxford

- Prospect
- Seymour
- Southbury
- Wallingford
- Waterbury
- West Haven
- Wolcott
- Woodbridge

THE VALLEY

Population 139,085

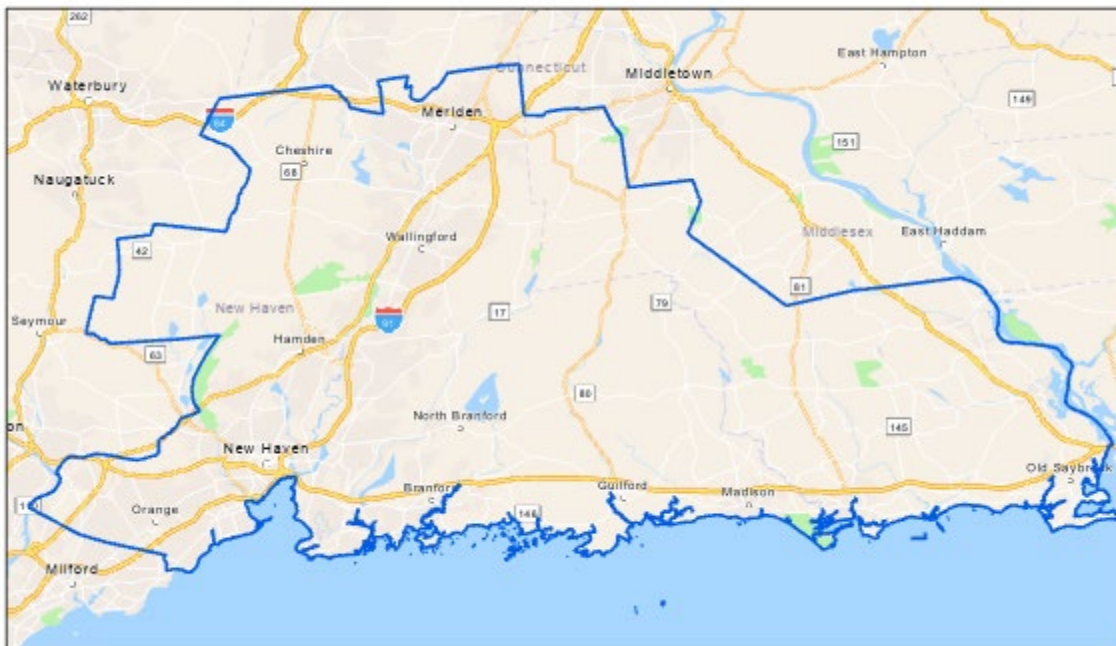


- Ansonia
- Beacon Falls
- Shelton

- Derby
- Naugatuck

- Oxford
- Seymour

NEW HAVEN LABOR MARKET AREA (LMA)



- Ansonia
- Beacon Falls
- Bethany
- Branford
- Cheshire
- Derby
- East Haven
- Guilford
- Hamden
- Madison
- Meriden
- Middlebury
- Milford
- Naugatuck
- New Haven
- North Branford
- North Haven
- Northford
- Orange
- Oxford
- Prospect
- Seymour
- Southbury
- Wallingford
- Waterbury
- West Haven
- Wolcott
- Woodbridge

APPENDIX B: COMMENTS ON METHODOLOGY

In any research project, the values of the researchers play a crucial role in shaping the chosen methodology. In this project, Blakely Consulting applied the equitable growth vision and values of The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven (CFGNH) and Valley Community Foundation (VCF) to the design and implementation of this study.

CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING PUBLICLY AVAILABLE DATA

Blakely Consulting designed a study that included both qualitative and quantitative elements. The labor market analysis reflects the current condition of the region's economy, placing the work in the context of the current time. Because the aim of this study was to emphasize the most disadvantaged workers, the analysis focused on people of color and women to the extent that publicly available data allows. The publicly available data does not support the types of intersectional analysis, such as focusing on the experiences of women of color specifically, that the design team felt was crucial to understanding the barriers that job seekers face. Therefore, the qualitative analysis was extensive and carefully designed.

CENTERING INCLUSION & EQUITY IN INFORMATION GATHERING

In order to ensure that the consulting team was able to hear from a large diversity of stakeholders, our design included a series of focus groups including populations that have been historically underrepresented. Creating groups around a theme -- e.g., all individuals who had experienced incarceration -- helped to foster a sense of shared understanding, enabling individuals to feel comfortable sharing their experiences candidly. Designing focus groups with individuals of similar backgrounds has the advantage of highlighting shared experiences, enhancing communication as individuals in the group will tend to use the same language, jargon, and cultural references, increasing comfort and trust within the group.

In order to make sure that we fully captured the stories of immigrants and refugees for whom English was a second or third language, we hired a community member as facilitator and translator. She conducted focus groups in several languages. The team trained and compensated her for conducting interviews and analyzing the data. CFGNH, VCF, and the consulting team agreed that adding to the skill set of a member of the community is the best way to collect data while contributing to the local labor force and honoring the strengths of the Greater New Haven community.

The consulting team also leveraged the community's assets to recruit participants for our listening sessions. Community based organizations served as partners, advertising listening sessions to the individuals they serve that aligned with the study's focus populations.

Employing sensitivity and flexibility was critical to the information gathering process. Members of one immigrant group felt that their community was too close knit for them to feel comfortable discussing their employment challenges in a group setting. This prompted an adjustment to the plan with participants interviewed individually to build comfort in sharing their stories.

The consulting team understood that asking individuals, particularly those currently seeking employment, to participate in focus group or interview conversations is a valuable use of their time. To demonstrate respect and acknowledgement for the time and experiences that our listening session participants contributed to the project, we compensated each participant at a rate of \$37 per 45-minute interview or \$50 per 1-hour interview by sending them electronic Visa gift cards.

INTEGRATING ADDITIONAL VOICES FOR CRITICAL FEEDBACK

The project leadership also convened a group of employers, employer organizations, and workforce development professionals from the Greater New Haven and Valley regions. The advisory group provided useful context to the work, identified gaps in our research, and connected us with employers and workforce development organizations. They also helped to ensure that the product of this work would be useful and relevant to the intended audience.

APPENDIX C: METRICS FOR LONGTERM TRACKING

This document provides recommended measures to track CFGNH and VCF's progress on providing access to middle skill jobs for disadvantaged and marginalized workers. These are metrics that are available from public documents and refer to the Greater New Haven, Greater New Haven Labor Market, or Connecticut regions.

KPI	What it Indicates	Data Source	Population Constraints	Most Recent	Year	Geographic Region	Why are results different?
The name of the Key Performance Indicator	Its significance, particularly as it relates to an inclusive growth strategy	<i>Where to source the data. Sometimes more than one source is offered.</i>	The population that is included in the metric in the original survey including age	The most recent value available for this metric	The year of the most recent value	The geography for which the data is provided in the census product	When multiple data sources are offered, an explanation of why they might provide slightly different values
Labor Force Participation Rate	Overall well-being and preparation to participate in employment	ACS 5-Year Estimates S2301: Employment Status	16+ years	65.2%	2017-2021	New Haven-Milford MSA	Within margin of error
		Demecon	16+ years	64.9%	February 2023	Connecticut	
Labor Force Participation Rate: For Women	Overall well-being and preparation to participate for women in employment	ACS 5-Year Estimates S2301: Employment Status	20-64 years	78.9%	2017-2022	New Haven-Milford MSA	Demecon includes women over the age of 64 who are likely retired
		Demecon	20+ years	61.4%	February 2023	Connecticut	
Labor Force Participation Rate: For Blacks	Overall well-being and preparation to participate for Black people in employment	ACS 5-Year Estimates S2301: Employment Status	16+ years	70.0%	2017-2023	New Haven-Milford MSA	Close to margin of error
		Demecon	16+ years	73.2%	February 2023	Connecticut	
Labor Force Participation Rate: For Hispanics	Overall well-being and preparation to participate for Hispanic people in employment	ACS 5-Year Estimates S2301: Employment Status	16+ years	68.6%	2017-2024	New Haven-Milford MSA	Within margin of error
		Demecon	16+ years	69.9	February 2023	Connecticut	

KPI	What it Indicates	Data Source	Population Constraints	Most Recent	Year	Geographic Region	Why are results different?
Unemployment Rate	Underutilization of the workforce	Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS)		2.7%	April 2023	New Haven Labor Market Area	Gathered partly from unemployment claims/payroll surveys- older population Seasonally adjusted
		Demecon	16+ years	4.1%	April 2022-February 2023	Connecticut	Not seasonally adjusted
		ACS 5-Year Estimates S2301: Employment Status	16+ years	6.7%	2017-2021	New Haven-Milford MSA	Not seasonally adjusted Includes COVID-19 unemployment
Underemployed Workers: % of Involuntarily Part Time	Underutilization of the workforce	Demecon		1-12%	April 2022-February 2023	Connecticut	1% usually work full time, involuntarily part time 12% usually work part time, involuntarily part time
		DataHaven Community Well-Being Survey		12-23%	2021	Milford, New Haven, Waterbury, West Haven, Hamden, Lower Naugatuck Valley	Survey respondents self-report as underemployed
		Current Population Survey		2.80%	2022	Connecticut	Survey and household interviews, results are weighted during analysis

KPI	What it Indicates	Data Source	Population Constraints	Most Recent	Year	Geographic Region	Why are results different?
Discouraged Workers	Underutilization of the workforce and immigrants in survival jobs	Demecon		0.16%	April 2022-February 2023	Connecticut	
		Current Population Survey		0.20%	2022	Connecticut	
		Demecon	16-24 years	0.04%	April 2022-February 2023	Connecticut	
		Demecon	25-54 years	0.07%	April 2022-February 2023	Connecticut	
		Demecon	55+ years	0.04%	April 2022-February 2023	Connecticut	
		Demecon	Men	0.09%	April 2022-February 2023	Connecticut	
		Demecon	Women	0.07%	April 2022-February 2023	Connecticut	

Notes: In many cases, Demecon is offered as an alternate data source. It should be noted the Demecon uses a small sample size and is therefore more volatile than other data sources

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