

2011 Program Report Card: Jobs Funnel Programs (Office for Workforce Competitiveness)

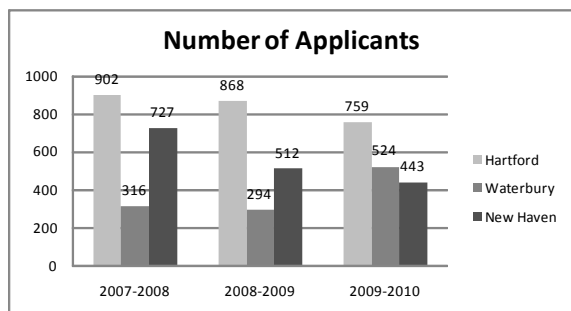
Quality of Life Result: All Connecticut adults achieve economic self-sufficiency.

Contribution to the Result: The Jobs Funnels prepare qualified unemployed/under-employed adult residents of selected communities (Hartford, New Haven, Waterbury and Bridgeport) for good-paying construction jobs and career pathways in the building trades leading to financial self-sufficiency.

Total Program Funding* (PY2009): \$2,166,400 **State Funding:** \$375,000 **Federal Funding:** \$1,015,750 **Other Funding:** \$118,025
(PY2010): \$2,784,600 **State Funding:** \$380,000 **Federal Funding:** \$1,643,030 **Other Funding:** \$762,569

Partners: Organized building trades, workforce investment boards, community-based organizations, municipal governments, non-profit service providers, building contractors, private developers, community foundations, community colleges, Connecticut Department of Labor and other state agencies.

Performance Measure 1: Number of applicants to the Jobs Funnel programs.¹



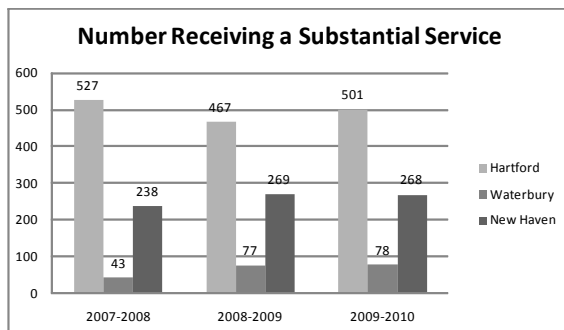
Story behind the baseline: The Jobs Funnels serve individuals who face greater personal barriers to employability than do participants in other workforce/training programs. Characteristics reported by the Hartford and Bridgeport sites indicate that the majority of applicants: are long-term unemployed or under-employed; have limited work histories; have incomes below the poverty level; are often basic-skills deficient despite having attained a high school diploma or GED; are predominantly 25-35 year-old Black or Hispanic males; are parents of young children; and have had contact with the criminal justice system. Jobs Funnel programs attract significant numbers of job-seeking applicants with widely varying employment-related interests, skills and experiences. The focus is on individuals interested in pursuing careers in the construction industry. A

¹ Bridgeport is omitted because its funnel began in late 2009, operating for four months only. It has since been restarted for 2010-11.

rigorous assessment process screens out numerous applicants for referral to alternative workforce programs – including the *CTWorks One-Stop Career System* – consistent with their career interests and employment-related aptitudes.

Proposed actions to turn the curve: Efforts will be undertaken to develop common definitions for key program elements across the various Jobs Funnels sites – standardizing what is meant by “applicant/enrollee”, “participant”, “substantial services”, “case management”, retention support”, etc. These standard definitions will be used by each site to produce consistent data that will allow statewide analysis of outcomes and program service quality to continue program improvement.

Performance Measure 2: Number of Jobs Funnel participants receiving substantial services.



Story behind the baseline: Over the past three years, the number of Jobs Funnel participants receiving substantial service(s) across the various

funnel programs has remained fairly constant, between 808-847. The percentage has increased slightly, from 41.5% to 49%, suggesting that the funnels are improving the effectiveness of their recruitment efforts.

Substantial services offered by the funnels include: intensive case management; remedial math instruction; pre-employment life-skills workshops preparing candidates to find and keep jobs (e.g., math refresher, resume-writing, interviewing, team-building, money management, substance abuse awareness); short-term pre-employment training in various building trades; stipends, work gear and tools; job placement; and, ongoing, post-placement job retention support addressing workplace and life challenges. These services are offered to participants based on their individual needs.

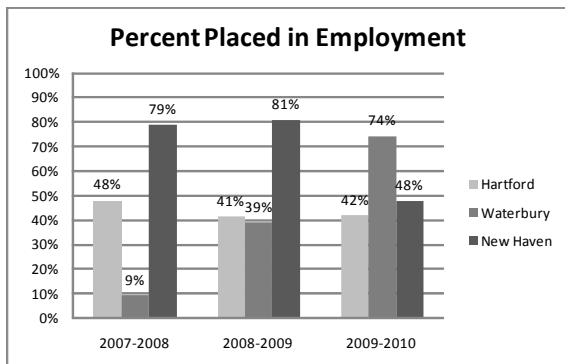
Proposed actions to turn the curve: The programs should continue to improve these services by coordinating and fine-tuning the service content with contractors and the building trades as the nature of the work and equipment used on various jobs continues to evolve.

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Performance Measure 3: *Percent of Jobs Funnel participants with substantial services placed in employment.*



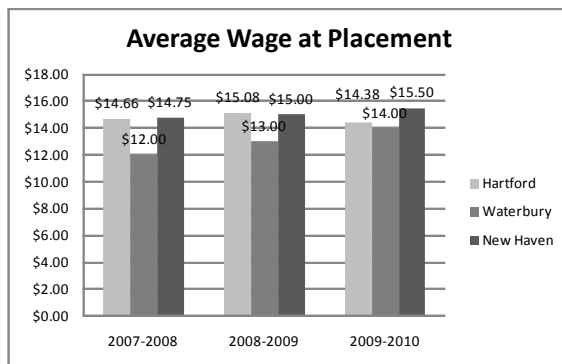
Story behind the baseline: The job placement rate for Jobs Funnel participants who received substantial service(s) has varied by site but remained fairly constant for the entire program over the past three years. The funnels' record of maintaining an overall placement rate of approximating 50% during the current recession suggests that the funnel model, with its unique design, is successful. [Note: The exception in the data was in Waterbury, with 9% during its first year of operation, over an initial 8-month start-up phase. Waterbury's placement results have since improved significantly, demonstrating the learning that has occurred from these early experiences.]

One distinctive feature of the Jobs Funnels is the crucial role played by key partners (see list) in supporting efforts to place qualified participants into viable construction jobs. The organized building trades are vital collaborators in each of the four local sites, providing an invaluable mix of technical assistance, training, entry to apprenticeships, and access to good jobs. Private developers and construction contractors play important roles in access-

ing job opportunities for funnel participants, helping to meet their own needs for qualified workers. These mutually beneficial relationships have made it possible, even in a difficult economy where construction jobs are scarce, for qualified funnel participants to find productive, rewarding work.

Proposed actions to turn the curve: Strategies to improve the number of participants getting access to construction jobs include: increased adoption of project-labor agreements; enforcement of local hiring ordinances; use of first-source hiring agreements; expanding remedial education instruction to participants; increasing mutually beneficial collaboration among key stakeholders; emphasizing apprenticeship as a career pathway.

Performance Measure 4: *Average starting wage for Jobs Funnel participants who receive substantial services and are placed in employment.*



Story behind the baseline: Average starting wages for funnel participants placed in employment increased modestly by an average of 6% over the past three years. This probably reflects a comparable average increase in entry-level construction wages generally in Connecticut during this period.

The Connecticut Employment and Training Commission's 2009 legislative report card used \$20,300 as the self-sufficiency/low-income annual wage threshold for a single individual in Connecticut, translating to approximately \$10 an hour. Funnel participants' wages exceed CT's established self-sufficiency threshold wage. Wages for funnel participants (\$14 - \$15.50 an hour) translate to approximately \$28,000 to \$31,000 annually, exceeding the self-sufficiency/low-income standard. Construction jobs pay better than most other jobs requiring comparable skill levels. Those funnel participants placed in unionized construction jobs do better than average, and usually receive benefits.

Proposed actions to turn the curve: To increase the number of construction career opportunities, leading to wages that approach financial security, links with developers and contractors responsible for building specific projects need to be strengthened. Communication about the benefits Jobs Funnels offer employers needs to be improved. Apprenticeship opportunities need to be enhanced. Jobs Funnel strategies should be expanded into additional communities and used to pursue opportunities in related fields, such as "green" jobs, weatherization, facilities maintenance, etc. The model is also viable for other industry sectors and a wider array of occupations.

*Note: State funds (\$775,000) constitute 15% of the reported total funding (\$4,951,000) for the Jobs Funnel programs over the two-year period.