

For Immediate Release  
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**Connecticut Community Colleges Awarded \$2.19 Million U.S. Department of Labor Grant to Support Manufacturing Education and Initiatives**

Manufacturing programs which address critical workforce needs will be expanded at the Connecticut Community Colleges (CCCs), through a \$2,191,400 grant awarded to the CCCs by the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) on March 11, 2008. An estimated 750 students will be prepared for careers in industries such as precision manufacturing and aerospace components manufacturing through the Skills for Manufacturing and Related Technologies (SMART) Initiative. Grant funding will build the capacity of the Connecticut Community College System to develop and provide students with the educational programs and skills needed to enter and advance in manufacturing and related technology-focused careers.

The CCCs were selected as the recipient of this highly competitive grant in the USDOL's third round of Community-Based Job Training Grants. The Connecticut Community College grant proposals have been selected for funding in all three rounds of awards, beginning in 2005 and 2006 with grants in the area of Nursing and Allied Health. This third grant award, focused on manufacturing and related technologies, makes Connecticut the only state in the nation to receive awards in all three rounds of the Community-Based Job Training Grant competition. CT Department of Labor Commissioner Patricia Mayfield applauded the awarding of the third grant to Connecticut's Community College System as "an opportunity to expand this effective partnership that will assist workers and employers in becoming competitive in the global economy by meeting the demands of the manufacturing industry for job-ready candidates."

An aging workforce, a thinning pool of young talent, and limited training opportunities all contribute to the shortage of skilled manufacturing workers in Connecticut. According to the Employment and Training Administration of the USDOL, the creation of one manufacturing position creates 1.88 additional jobs in Connecticut.

The initiative will enable the CCCs to develop and offer three certificate-granting programs: 1) a non-credit *Pre-Manufacturing Certificate* Program designed to prepare students for college-level manufacturing programs; 2) a 600-hour Level One *Precision Manufacturing Certificate* Program, which will teach core competencies and provide students with transferable skills and portable credentials; and 3) an 18-credit specialized Level Two *Precision in Manufacturing Certificate* Program, offering training in areas such as precision machining and computer numerically controlled (CNC) technologies, welding technologies, and electronic control technology. Scholarships, paid internships, and expert mentors will support student success, persistence, and advancement through the levels of the program. The mentors will work closely with industry partners involved in the initiative to provide on-the-job oversight and continuing education to reinforce classroom lessons for students involved in the program.

"Preparing students to enter Connecticut's Knowledge Economy with the education and skills needed to succeed is a primary focus of our Community College System," according to Marc S. Herzog, Chancellor of the Connecticut Community College System. "This SMART grant responds directly to the skills gaps and workforce shortages outlined in state and regional economic development and workforce investment plans, and will enable our colleges to expand their efforts to realize Governor Rell's vision for a talented pipeline of workers that will retain jobs in Connecticut and keep Connecticut competitive. We are grateful to Governor Rell and to the State's Congressional delegation who provided the invaluable support, along with our key partners, that led to another winning grant proposal."

The SMART Initiative proposal was supported by significant leveraged commitments from key partners valued at over \$3 million. These key partners include: the Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology (CCAT); the Connecticut Community College System's College of Technology, a nationally recognized curriculum pathway in engineering and technology, and its Regional Center for Next Generation Manufacturing; the Governor's Office for Workforce Competitiveness; the CT Workforce Development Council, a consortium of the state's five regional workforce investment boards; the CT Distance Learning Consortium; CT Department of Labor; CT Department of Economic and Community Development; CT Economic Resource Center; CT Department of Higher Education; Charter Oak State College; CT State Department of Education (SDE); CT Technical High School System; Manufacturing Alliance Service Corporation (MASC); CT Technology Council (CTC); the CT Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF); and nearly two dozen private manufacturing companies and industry organizations.

The Community-Based Job Training Grants, introduced by President Bush in his 2004 State of the Union address, are designed to improve the ability of community colleges to provide their regions' workers with the skills needed to enter growing industries.

For more information on this USDOL Community-Based Job Training Grant Initiative, please contact Gail O'Keefe, Director of Workforce Development, Connecticut Community College System, [GOKeefe@commnet.edu](mailto:GOKeefe@commnet.edu) or 860.244.7619.

There are 12 Connecticut Community Colleges conveniently located throughout the state. Visit the Connecticut Community College System website at [www.commnet.edu](http://www.commnet.edu).

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