

Annual Report

2019

Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity



The Commission on
Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity

CWCSEO
Connecticut General Assembly

Mission

To inform and engage all policy makers about constituent needs for women, children and their families, seniors, and the African American, Asian Pacific-American, Latino and Puerto Rican populations in Connecticut. We are a nonpartisan agency with a data driven, cross-cultural approach to policy innovation. We work to eliminate disparities by identifying opportunities, building connections and promoting change.



The Commission on
Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity
CWCSEO
Connecticut General Assembly

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Letter from the Executive Director



*Steven Hernández, Esq.
Executive Director, CWCSEO*

December 30, 2019

To: Appropriations Committee

Dear Senators Osten, Formica, Representatives Walker, Lavielle and Other Members of the Appropriations Committee:

I am forwarding the 2019 Annual Report on behalf of the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity (CWCSEO), as required by Sec. 2-127 of the Connecticut General Statutes. The Commission strives to inform and engage policymakers about constituent needs. CWCSEO is a nonpartisan agency with a data driven, cross-cultural approach to policy innovation working to eliminate disparities by creating opportunities, building connections and promoting change.

This was a hallmark year for the Commission. During this year in its entirety the former CWCS and CEO operated under my leadership as Director and we used that opportunity to promote intersectional issues that impact our various communities. Importantly, as of July 1, 2019, the Commission is now organized under one banner, with six subcommissions operating under that umbrella on behalf of the communities we represent. By identifying six subcommissions our work has been much more focused on the individual communities while maximizing staff efficiencies and leveraging partners in this work, including our fellows, interns, and volunteers from across the state and beyond.

This year, the Commission expanded its collaborative efforts toward fulfilling its charge to improve and promote the economic development, education, health and political well-being of the communities we serve. We served the Legislature as a valuable resource providing important data, guidance and leadership on important legislation in education, economic development, criminal justice and housing. Many of the issues that we led, advised, or assisted on were part of your successful agendas. I thank each and every one of you for the work you do on behalf of the underserved, underrepresented, and the most vulnerable among us.

Our communities continue to face many challenges but with your support and the support of the Connecticut General Assembly, the Commission will continue to strive to improve the lives of all of the women, children and seniors of the state, regardless of race, gender, class, age, or ability.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Steven Hernández', written over a faint circular stamp.

Steven Hernández, Esq.

Commission Mandate

Section 2-128. Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity.

The Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity shall:

1. Focus its efforts on the following quality of life desired results for women, children and their families, seniors and members of the African-American, Asian Pacific-American and Latino and Puerto Rican populations of the state: That all such [members] persons are (A) healthy, safe and achieve educational success; (B) free from poverty; and (C) free from discrimination;
2. [Make] With the advice of the executive committee of the commission, make recommendations to the General Assembly and the Governor for new or enhanced policies, programs and services that will foster progress in achieving the desired results described in subdivision (1) of this subsection. Such recommendations shall, when applicable, include, but need not be limited to: (A) Systems innovations, model policies and practices which embed two-generational practice in program, policy and systems change on the state and local levels, in accordance with section 17b-112; (B) strategies for reducing family poverty, promoting parent leadership and family civics; (C) the promotion of youth leadership opportunities that keep youth engaged in the community; and (D) strategies and programs that address equitable access, impede bias, and narrow the opportunity gap for women, children and their families, seniors, and members of the African-American, Asian Pacific-American and Latino and Puerto Rican populations of the state. Such

recommendations may include other state and national best practices, and recommendations on federal funding maximization;

3. [Review] With the advice of the executive committee of the commission, review and comment, as necessary, on any specific proposed state legislation or recommendations that may affect women, children and their families, seniors and members of the African-American, Asian Pacific-American and Latino and Puerto Rican populations of the state and provide copies of any such comments to members of the General Assembly;
4. [Advise] With the advice of the executive committee of the commission, advise the General Assembly concerning the coordination and administration of state programs that affect [families]women, children and their families, seniors, and members of the African-American, Asian Pacific-American and Latino and Puerto Rican populations of the state;
5. Gather and maintain, as necessary, current information regarding women, children and their families, seniors, and members of the African-American, Asian Pacific-American and Latino and Puerto Rican populations of the state that can be used to better understand the status, condition, and contributions of such [populations] groups. Such information, as appropriate and pertinent to the desired results delineated in subdivision (1) of this subsection, shall be included in the annual report submitted in accordance with subsection (b) of this section and shall be made available to legislators and other interested parties upon request;
6. Maintain liaisons between women, children and their families, seniors, and members of the African-American, Asian Pacific-American and Latino and Puerto Rican populations of the state and government agencies, including the General Assembly; and
7. Conduct educational and outreach activities intended to raise awareness of and address critical issues for women, children and their families, seniors, and members of the African-American, Asian Pacific-American and Latino and Puerto Rican populations of the state.

Commission Board Members

Alan Tan, Co-Chair
Karen Jarmoc, Co-Chair
Helene Shay
Penelope Young
Mui Mui Hin-McCormick
Clifton Watson
Kunwar Umesh Vig
Hilda Nieves
Joan Barere
Kim Oliver
Dianne Stone
Tiheba Williams-Bain
Hossain Roman Khondker
Leticia Colón de Mejias
Heidi Lubetkin
Myron Genel
Denise Cesareo
Tiana Victoria Hercules
Gladys Rivera
Antonia Moran
Jordan Grossman
Gerard Kerins
Cynthia D. Cartier
Alphonse Wright
Ji Tong
Luis A. Valdez
Emanuela Palmares
Nancy Heaton

Commission Staff

Steven Hernández, Esq.
Executive Director

Werner Oyanadel
Latino and Puerto Rican Policy Director

Denise Drummond
African American Legislative Policy Analyst

Rosemary López
Women's Legislative Policy Analyst

Lucia Goicoechea- Hernández
Asian Pacific-Islander Staffer

VACANT
Children's Legislative Policy Analyst

VACANT
Seniors Policy Analyst

VACANT
Parent & Family Leadership and Engagement
(Fulfilled under Contract with the National Parent Leadership Institute (NPLI)
and its Subcontractor, Melvette Hill)



The Commission on
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2019 Commission Fellows, Interns & Volunteers

Summer 2019 Lee Policy Fellows:

Brenda Calderón

Claire Smith

Tara Thompson

Fall 2019/Sessional Lee Policy Fellow:

Kali Rohrbaugh

Law & Policy Fellow:

Michael Werner, JD

Foster & Adoption Fellow:

Christopher Scott

Interns & Volunteers:

Hassan Aviles

Bruce Bressler

Darya Maliauskaya

Dwayne Moore

Shanelle Morris

Patrina Robinson



The Commission on
Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity

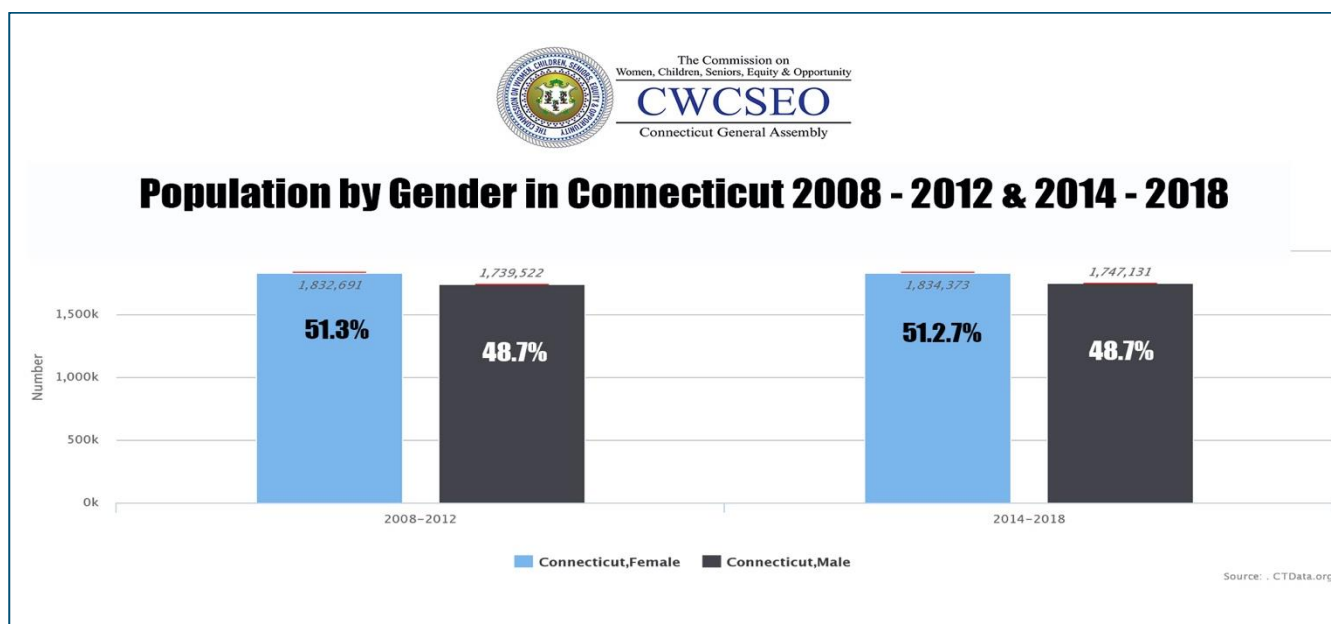
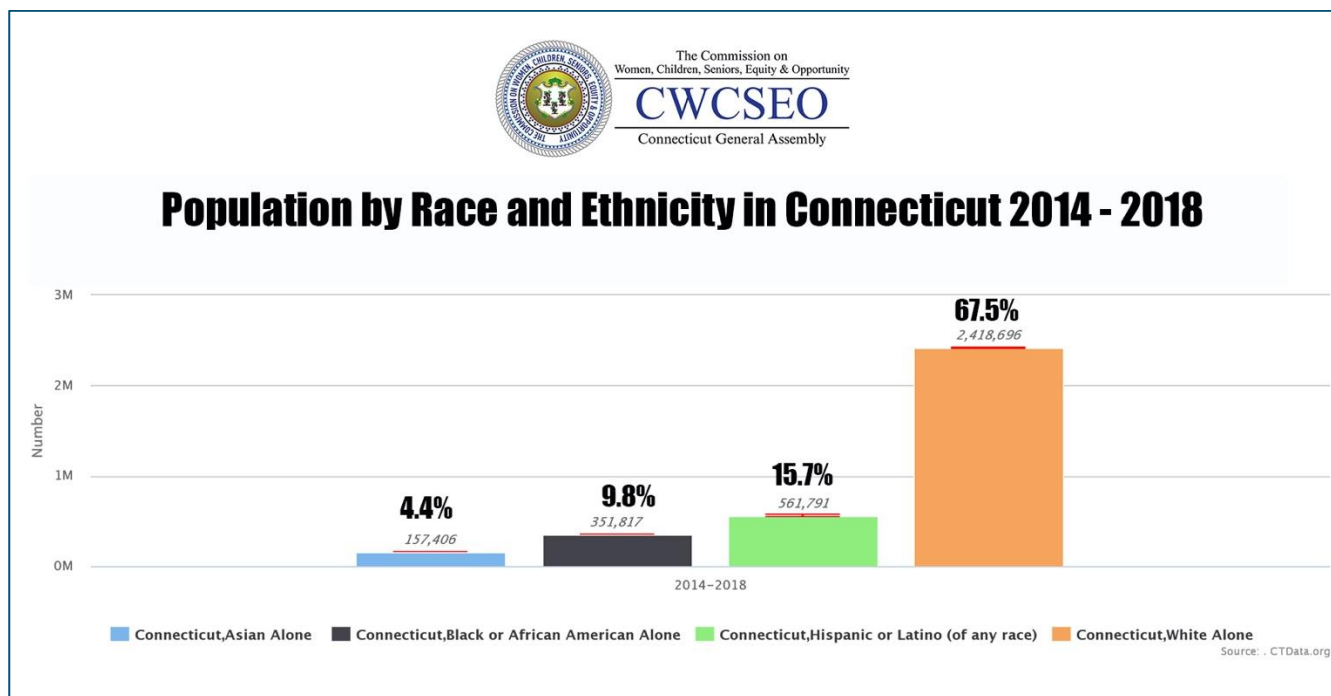
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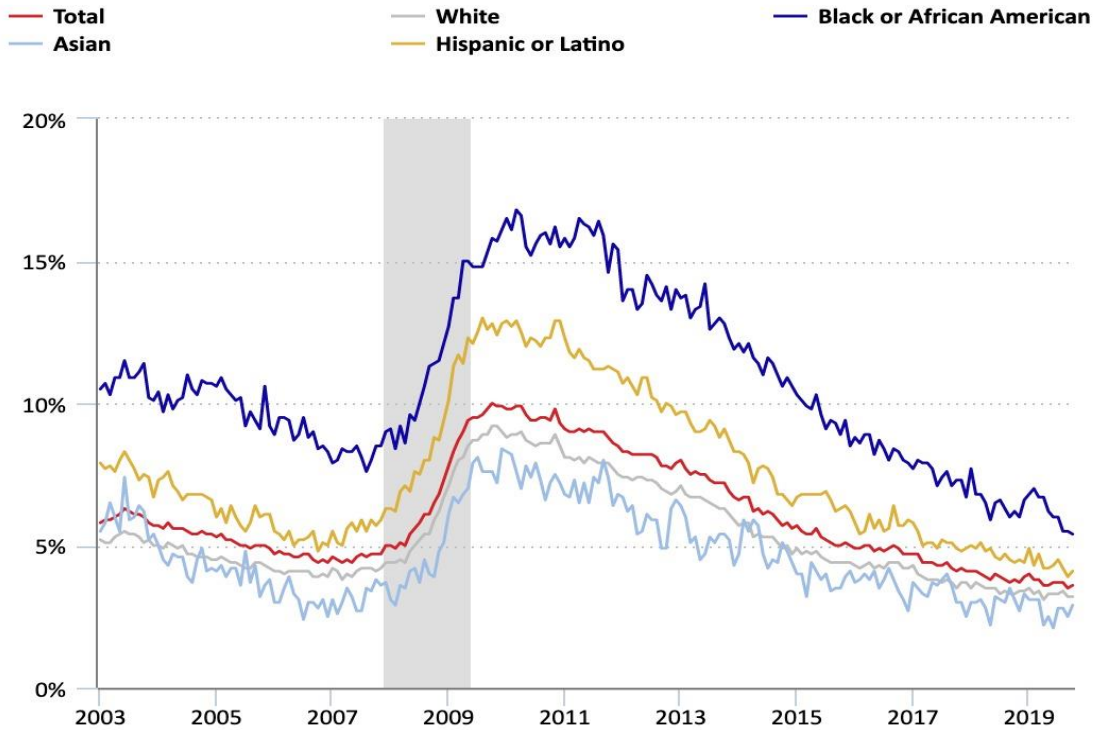


2019 Statistics on the State of Connecticut

Connecticut's Population: 3,565,287



Civilian unemployment rate by race and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, seasonally adjusted

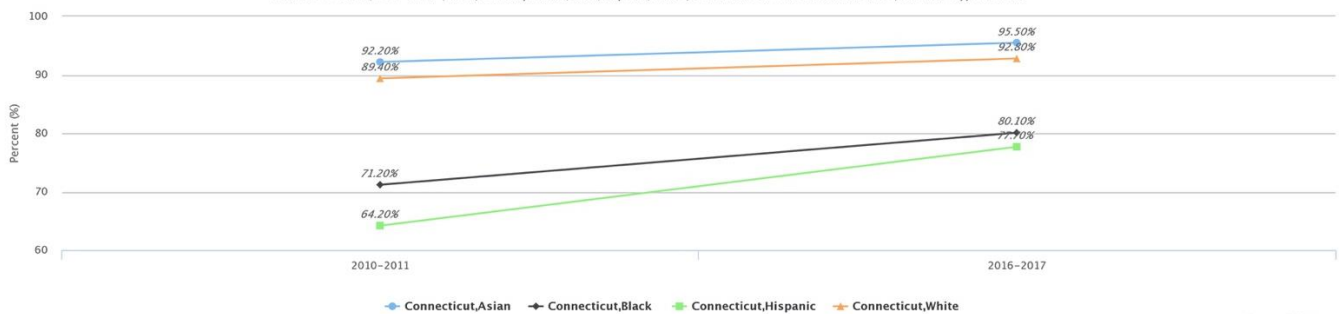


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Graduation Rates by Race & Ethnicity

Four Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Race Ethnicity

Year: 2010-2011, 2016-2017 | Race/Ethnicity: Asian, Black, Hispanic, White | Variable: Four Year Graduation Rate | Measure Type: Percent



Source: CTDData.org

WAGE BY RACE AND ETHNICITY IN COMMON JOBS IN CONNECTICUT

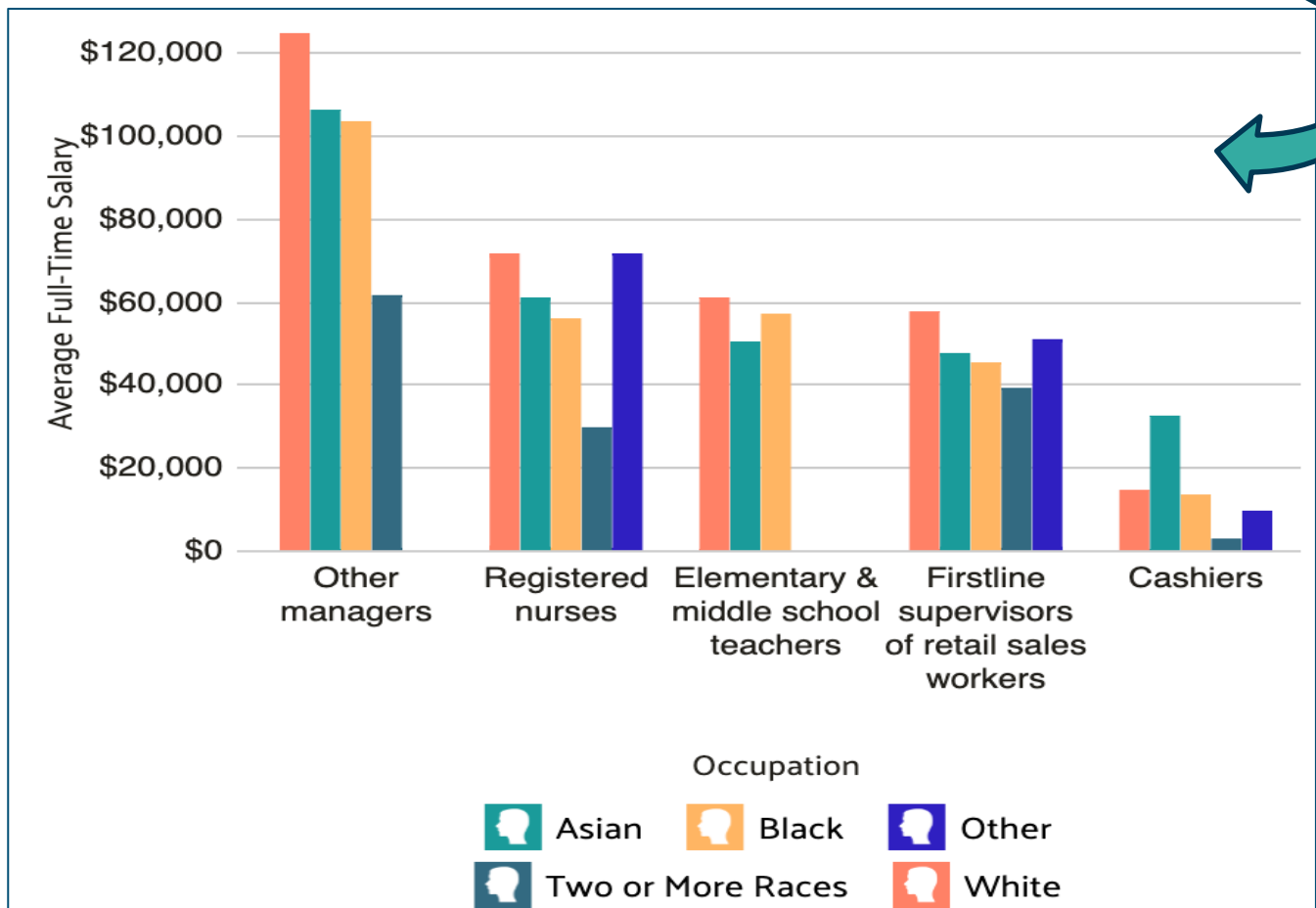
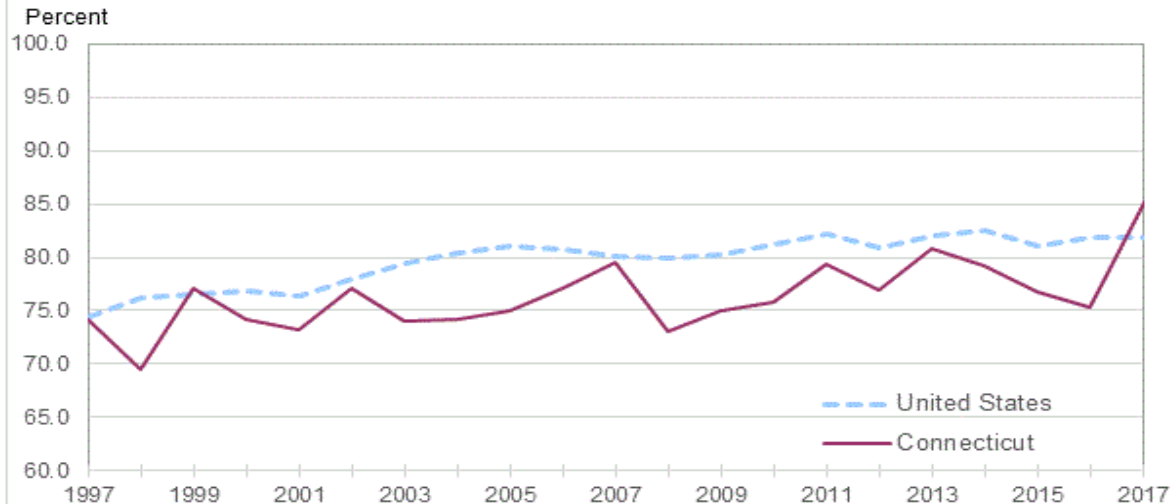
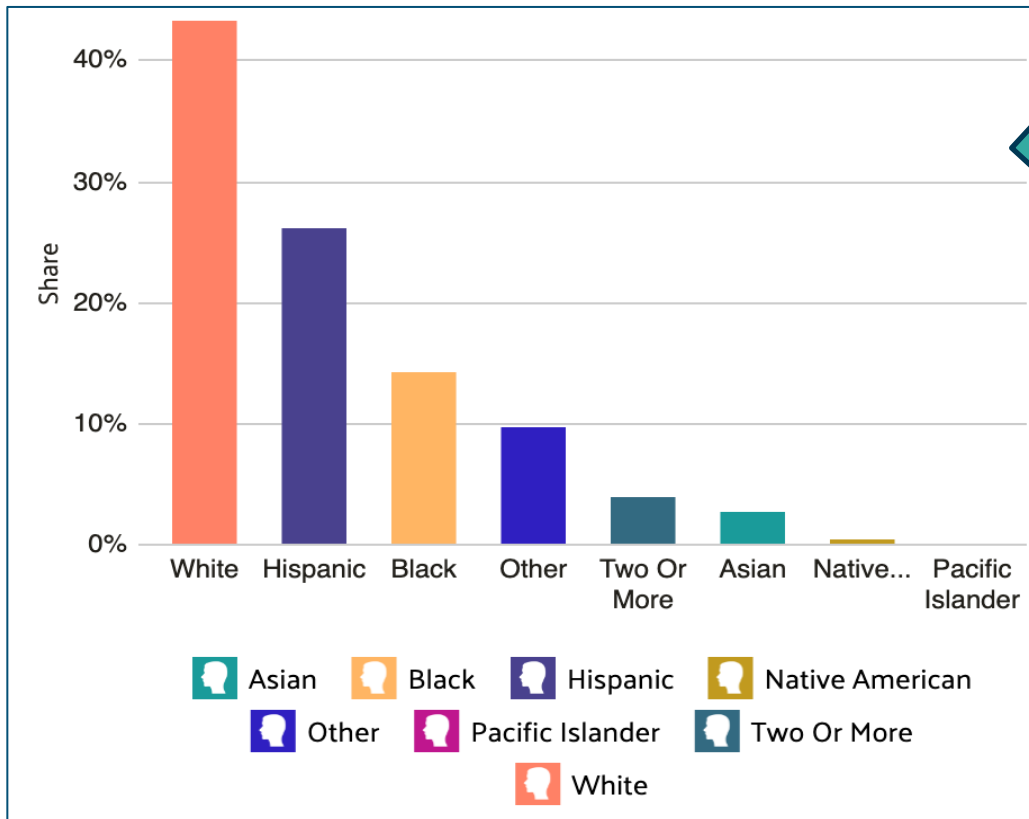


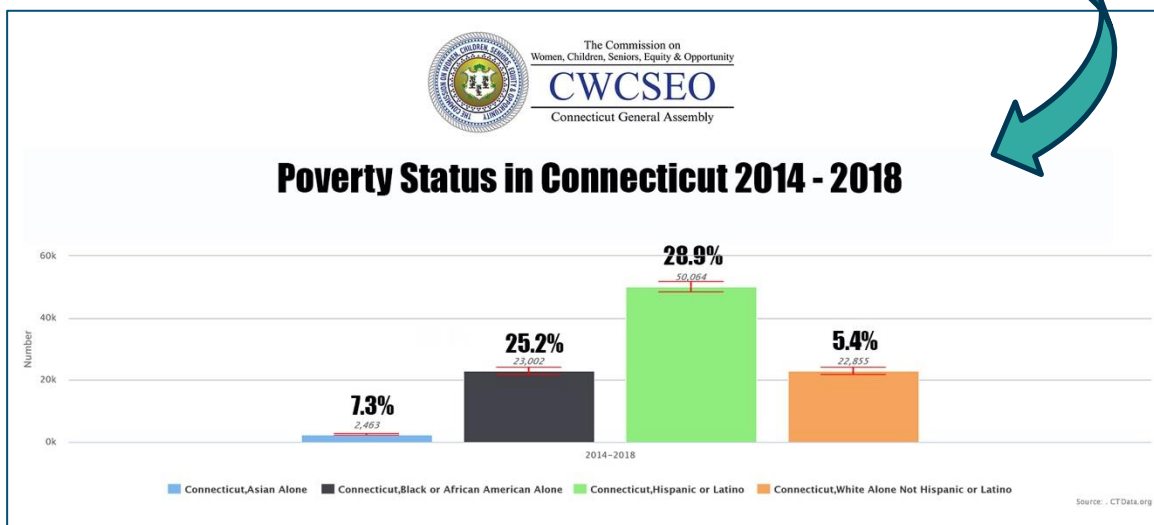
Chart 1. Women's earnings as a percentage of men's, full-time wage and salary workers, the United States and Connecticut, 1997–2017 annual averages



POVERTY BY RACE AND ETHNICITY IN CONNECTICUT



PERCENTAGE IN POVERTY BY RACE

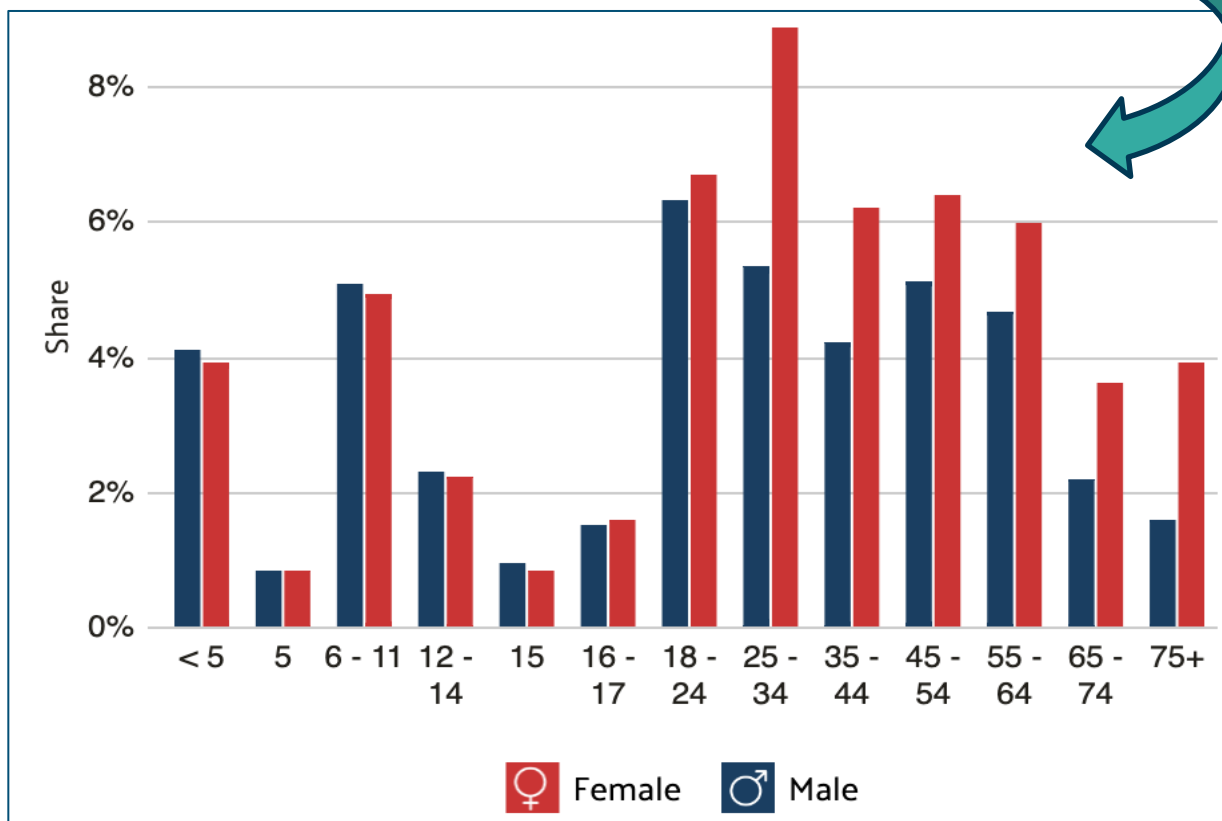


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¹ <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/connecticut>

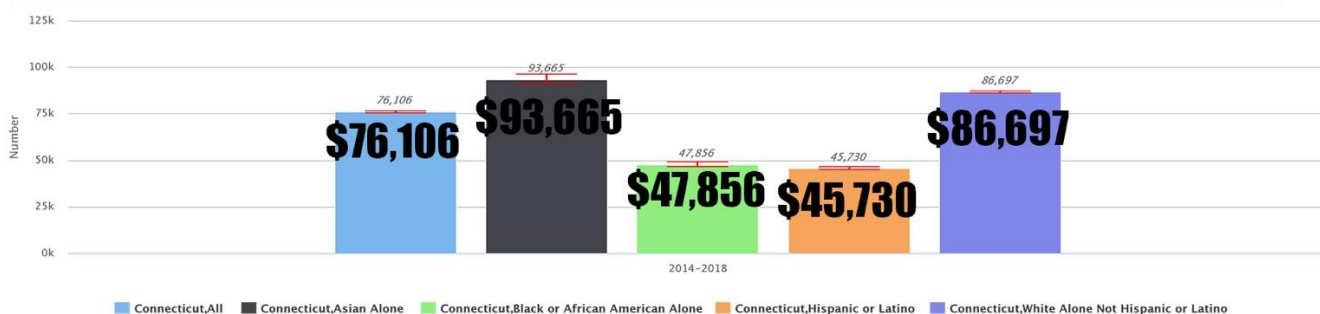
² [Bls.gov/regions/new-england/news-release/womensearnings_connecticut.htm](https://www.bls.gov/regions/new-england/news-release/womensearnings_connecticut.htm)

POVERTY BY AGE AND GENDER IN CONNECTICUT



The Commission on
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Median Household Income by Race & Ethnicity



2019 Legislative Wrap-Up Report

The Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity (CWCSEO) aimed at improving and promoting the economic development, education, health and political well-being of the populations that the commission is mandated to represent in the State of Connecticut. Through best practices models and partnerships with local, state, and national organizations, the CWCSEO uses a cross-cultural lens to inform public policy and involve traditionally underserved populations in the legislative process to unite minority communities in the policy arena.



The Commission on
Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity

CWCSEO
Connecticut General Assembly

2019 Legislative Wrap-Up Report

Minority Teacher Recruitment and Retention

This new law requires the State Department of Education's (SDE) Minority Teacher Recruitment Policy Oversight Council (i.e., "council") to develop and implement strategies to ensure local and regional boards of education to annually hire and employ at least 250 new minority teachers and administrators, of which at least 30% are men beginning with the 2020-21 school year. The bill expands teacher certification reciprocity with other states and provides mortgage assistance and re-employment of retired teachers who graduated from colleges and universities that traditionally serve minority students. Additionally, it allows some flexibility in certain teacher certification requirements, and removes subject-matter assessment requirements for teachers seeking to be recertified after their certification lapse in particular cases. Public Act No. 19-74.

Increasing the Minimum Fair Wage

This new law increases the state's minimum hourly wage from its current \$10.10 to \$15.00 in five steps: first, to \$11.00 on October 1, 2019; second, to \$12.00 on September 1, 2020; third, to \$13.00 on August 1, 2021; fourth, to \$14.00 on July 1, 2022; and, fifth, to \$15.00 on June 1, 2023. It also deals with a 'tip credit' to employers of hotel, restaurant and bartenders who customarily receive tips, and with the 'training wage' that employers may pay to learners, beginners, and people under age 18. The law freezes the employer's share of the employees' minimum wage requirement and allows employers to count these employees' tips towards the difference between the employer's share and the increasing minimum wage. It requires the training wage to be the greater of \$10.10 or 85% of the minimum wage, as well as learners and beginners who are at least age 18 to be paid the full minimum wage. Starting October 1, 2020, the bill prohibits employers from taking any action to displace, or partially displace, an employee in order to hire people under age 18 at a subminimum wage rate. The law further expands the duties of the labor commissioner to study tipped workers and to make recommendations on whether any scheduled minimum wage increases should be suspended.

Paid Family and Medical Leave

This law creates the Family and Medical Leave Insurance (FMLI) program to provide wage replacement benefits to certain employees taking leave for reasons allowed under the state's Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) or the family violence leave law. It allows up to 12 weeks of FMLI benefit over a 12-month period, and two additional weeks of benefits for a serious health condition that resulted in incapacitation during pregnancy. The law establishes the requirements for those who are eligible for FMLI benefits, and the process of determining the employee contribution rate, which cannot exceed 0.5%, to the FMLI Trust Fund. The bill creates the FMLI Trust Fund and the Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Authority to implement, monitor and administer the program.

Additionally, it extends the FMLA to cover private-sector employers with at least one employees; allows employers to alternatively provide benefits through a private plan on the same conditions; and to lay off an employee who was temporarily filling the job of an employee on FMLA leave without increasing the employer's unemployment taxes.

The Inclusion of African-American Latino Studies in the Public-School Curriculum

This new law adds African-American and Puerto Rican/ Latino studies to the required programs of study for public schools and requires all local and regional boards of education ("boards") to include these topics in their curriculum beginning with the 2021-22 school years. According to the new statute, the State Board of Education (SBE) must make curriculum materials available to help boards develop their instructional programs, and the State Education Resource Center (SERC) must develop a Black and Latino studies high school course, which should be reviewed and approved by the SBE by January 1, 2021. Each board then is required to offer the course beginning with the 2022-23 school year.

This law also eliminates the provisions requiring an African-American and Latino studies course to become a high school graduation requirement. For the school year 2022-23 to 2024-25, the SDE must conduct an annual audit to ensure that the black and Latino studies course approved under the new statute is being offered by each board of education and submit a report on the audit to the Education Committee.

Public Act No.19-2: Sexual Harassment and Assault Expanded Training

This new law expands sexual harassment training requirements. Previously it was only for supervisors or for employers with 50 or more employees. The new laws require that now all employers with 3 or more employees need to receive sexual harassment training. Any employee hired after Oct. 1, 2019 need to be trained within 6 months of start date. The current employees by Oct. 1, 2020 and training must be updated every 10 years at minimum. The time to file a complaint with CHRO has been expanded from 180 days to 300 days.

Increasing Fairness and Transparency in the Criminal Justice System

This law establishes new prosecutorial data collection and reporting requirements for various agencies including the Division of Criminal Justice, the Board of Pardons and Paroles, and the Office of Policy and Management (OPM). Under the bill, the Division of Criminal Justice must collect disaggregated, case level data on adult defendants and annually share the data with the OPM; the Board of Pardons and Paroles is required to make available online specified parole-related case level data and annually report to the OPM secretary; and the OPM, starting by July 1, 2021, should annually present prosecutorial data to the Criminal Justice Commission and report the presentation to the Judiciary Committee. The law requires the state's chief public defender to establish a pilot program to provide representation to persons at parole revocation hearings and report to the OPM secretary specified information on cases served as part of the program during the prior calendar year. The bill also adjusts some technical methods in the work of the Criminal Justice Commission in terms of posting online notices of its meetings and holding the meetings for any appointment, reappointment, removal, or otherwise discipline the chief state's attorney, a deputy state's attorney, or a state's attorney in the Legislative Office Building.

Police Use of Force, Accountability/Transparency & Pursuits by Police

This law makes various changes to law enforcement's use of force, body-worn and dashboard camera recording disclosures, and police pursuit. It establishes a task force to study policy transparency and accountability and requires the Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POST) to study and review police officers using

firearms during a pursuit. Under the new law, each law enforcement unit must prepare and submit a use of force report for the preceding calendar year to the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) including the necessary information required by the Public Act.

The law also makes certain body-worn or dashboard camera recordings disclosable to the public within 96 hours after the incident; it narrows the instances deadly force is justified, and generally prohibits a police officer engaged in a pursuit from discharging a firearm into or at a fleeing motor vehicle and from intentionally positioning his or her body in front of a fleeing vehicle, unless such action is a tactic approved by the employing law enforcement unit.

The Trust Act

This law makes several changes to the state's civil immigration detainer law, including the prohibition of law enforcement officers and school police or security department employees from arresting or detaining someone pursuant to such a detainer unless it is accompanied by a judicial warrant. The law establishes new procedures for law enforcement officers to respond to detainers. It places additional restrictions on the actions they may take and limits the circumstances under which law enforcement officers may disclose an individual's confidential information to a federal immigration authority. Under the new law, all record to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) access maintained by law enforcement agencies are deemed public record under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Additionally, municipalities are required to report specified information monthly to the Office of Policy and Management (OPM), if their law enforcement agency provided ICE access, and the OPM is expected to ensure that the law enforcement agencies and school police or security departments receive appropriate training.

Discrimination Based on a Person's Criminal History

This law established a 20-member Council on the Collateral Consequences of a Criminal Record within the legislative department. The Council will consist of 10 ex-officio members, including CWCSEO's executive director, and 10 appointed members. Under the law, the Council must study discrimination faced by people in the state living with a criminal record and develop legislative recommendations to reduce or eliminate discrimination based on a person's criminal history. The new mandate creates the statute for the Council, as well as determines the process of selecting and appointing the members to the Council.

Clean Slate Act Legislation (SB 691) – Bill died

Currently, for most offenses, misdemeanors and felonies alike, one guilty of such offenses has to go to the Board of Pardons and Paroles to get a pardon. If the Board of Pardons and Paroles does not grant a pardon, for whatever reason, the offense will not be erased from an individual's criminal record. This could greatly hinder a justice impacted individual the ability to get certain basic necessities such as housing and/or employment. The proposal (SB691) which died in the Senate this year would have allowed a returning citizen who committed certain misdemeanors the ability to move forward from that record. SB691 would have given justice impacted individuals a better chance at not going back to jail because there would be an increased likelihood of adding stabilizing factors to their lives, such as stable housing and employment, which make recidivism less likely. In Connecticut African Americans are over 9 times more likely to be incarcerated than Whites in CT; Hispanics are over 4 times more likely to be incarcerated than whites in CT even greater than US averages.

Cannabis Legislation – Bills died

The Commission supported legislation during the 2019 Legislative session (SB No. 1085, Raised SB 1089 & Raised HB 7372) that would have regulated adult recreational usage of cannabis. The Commission emphasized that communities that have been harmed by racial disparities in drug law enforcement should equitably benefit from growth in the cannabis sector, through community reinvestment, business opportunities, and employment. It's estimated that only 1 % of legal cannabis retail dispensaries are owned or operated by people of color. In fact, most existing legalization laws erect barriers to full and equal participation

of people of color in the marijuana industry by restricting access to licensing and setting the costs of entry at an unaffordable level. Several bills on this topic died in Committee this year.

Breast feeding in the workplace – Bill died

The Breastfeeding in the Workplace bill (HB 7043) – Failed – it would've added to the language that room to be used shall be (1) be free from intrusion and shielded from the public while such employee expresses breast milk, (2) include or be situated near a refrigerator or employee-provided portable cold storage device which the employee can store her breast milk, and (3) include access to an electrical outlet.

Doula Certification Legislation – Bill died

SB 1078 AAC Doula Certification and Medicaid Reimbursement passed the Senate but was not called in House. This bill would've provided a state certification of doulas, Medicaid reimbursement for their services on health outcomes for pregnant Medicaid beneficiaries and their infants.

Minority Teacher Grants

Expands the minority educator teacher incentive program to (1) include a loan reimbursement grant program to provide applicants with annual grants up to 10% of their student loans not to exceed \$5,000 a year and (2) provide grants to minority students enrolled in the alternate route to certification program administered through SDE. The act requires OHE, in collaboration with the Minority Teacher Recruitment Policy Oversight Council and the minority teacher recruitment task force, to administer this grant program within available appropriations.

Communities of Color Pilot Grant

Authorizes a two-year pilot grant program to build the capacity of certain community-based organizations.

The act requires the DSS commissioner, within available appropriations, to contract with an eligible nonprofit organization to administer a two-year pilot program to build the capacity of eligible community-based organizations by helping them to improve operational efficiencies through performance-based metrics and adopt long-term fiscal sustainability strategies. In order to administer the program, the nonprofit organization must have (1) at least 15 years of experience coordinating advocacy, service, and outreach efforts for Hispanic charitable organizations that support Hispanic people and (2) a proven track record of establishing networks with non-Hispanic organizations that provide services to fellow communities of color (i.e., nonwhite Hispanic, African-American, or Asian Pacific-American).

Legislative Commissions Consolidation

- Merges the legislative CEO and CWCS into a single entity, the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity, which the act designates as the successor to the two former commissions

The act merges the legislative Equity and Opportunity (CEO) and the Women, Children and Seniors (CWCS) commissions into a single entity, the Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity, which the act designates as the successor to the two former commissions. It organizes the new commission into a 44-member advisory board, an eight-member executive committee, and six sub commissions.

Under the act, the new commission must focus its efforts on issues affecting the two former commissions' constituencies of underrepresented and underserved populations: African Americans, Asian Pacific Americans, and Latinos and Puerto Ricans (CEO's constituencies), and women, children and the family, and elderly individuals (CWCS's constituencies). It generally gives the new commission the same powers and duties that prior law provided for CEO and CWCS.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019

Two Generational Initiative

In general, two-generation approaches target low-income children and parents from the same household, combining parent and child interventions to interrupt the cycle of poverty. This whole-family wraparound approach combines intensive case management and supplemental supports and services for adults and for children.

The State of Connecticut was the first state to adopt comprehensive two-generational legislation that links early learning, adult education, housing, job training, transportation, financial literacy and other related support services. The goal of two-generational policy is family economic self-sufficiency. PA 19-78 changed that goal and instead makes it the initiative's objective to disrupt poverty cycles and advance family economic self-sufficiency.

Two-gen, or a whole family approach to jobs, recognizes that a family's income determines a child's wellbeing and future prospects. When a parent has a stable, well-paying job, their children thrive and are ready to learn. This is true for every family. To join families in their journey towards economic self-sufficiency and to sustainably break cycles of intergenerational poverty, it is imperative that we adequately provide avenues to train for the jobs available in our state today, and in the future. This is good for CT's residents, its businesses and our state.

Background: Thirteen separate state agencies interact with Connecticut families — helping them find jobs and support, care for children, access to education, housing and more. But existing law does not require them to collaborate or share data, presenting a critical obstacle to growth and financial security for untold numbers of residents.

Public Act 19-78— This act makes several changes to the two-generational initiative to advance family economic self-sufficiency. In summary the act requires the OPM secretary, in collaboration with the advisory board, to develop an interagency plan to coordinate and align service delivery to assist families to overcome barriers to economic success.

- Development of an infrastructure to promote data sharing within and between state agencies to the extent permissible under federal and state law,
- Coordination and leverage of existing resources to assist families to overcome common barriers to economic success,
- Consideration of innovative approaches based on parental and community input to increase the initiative's impact,
- Shared indicators and goals for interagency collaboration to achieve quantifiable and verifiable systems change to disrupt cycles of intergenerational poverty and advance family economic self-sufficiency and racial and socio-economic equity, and
- Increase in the number of parent participants on the Advisory Board to equal 25% of the Advisory and allows for compensation for the parent leaders' participation when funding is available.

Under prior law, the statewide initiative's objective was to foster family economic self-sufficiency in low-income households through a comprehensive two-generational service delivery approach. The act instead makes it the initiative's objective to disrupt poverty cycles and advance family economic self-sufficiency. It directs the initiative to achieve these goals by collaborating across public and private sectors, rather than promoting systemic change to create conditions across local and state public and private sector agencies and the private sector, as required under prior law.

Debt-Free Community College Program

The act requires the Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR) to establish by January 1, 2020, a debt-free community college program for certain Connecticut high school graduates who enroll as first-time, full-time regional community-technical college students. The program must provide these students with awards on a semester basis that (1) cover the unpaid portion of the tuition and required fees established by BOR (i.e., tuition and fee costs, minus scholarships; grants; and federal, state, and institutional aid awarded to the student that is not a loan) or (2) provide a minimum \$250 grant, whichever is greater.

Awards under this program apply to the first 72 credit hours earned by a student in the first 36 months of community college enrollment in a program leading to a degree or certificate. BOR must make awards to qualifying students beginning with the fall 2020 semester within available appropriations. The act prohibits BOR from using an award to supplant any financial aid otherwise available to qualifying students, including state or institutional aid.

The act establishes student eligibility requirements for the program along with program-related administrative duties and reporting requirements for BOR. Source: § 362 of PA 19-117— HB-7424

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019

2019 Commission Community Engagement

The Harlem Renaissance Public Forum

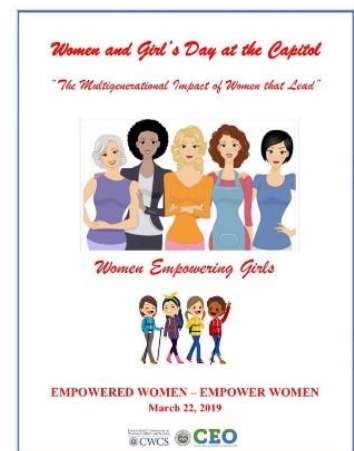
In honor of Black History Month, the Connecticut Commission on Equity and Opportunity (CEO) hosted a public forum titled, "The Harlem Renaissance." Congresswoman Jahana Hayes participated as the Guest Speaker, and Bill Costen, with his exhibit, "The Costen Cultural Exhibition," displayed the Harlem Renaissance exhibition. The Harlem Renaissance was a spiritual coming of age, marked by achievement in the arts, literature and music. The movement redefined how the world understood African American culture and set the stage for the Civil Rights Movement. Our conversation was joined by artists, scholars,

and leaders and together we spoke of the importance of African American history, and the impact that it has on us all.



Women and Girl's Day

In honor of Black History Month, the Connecticut Commission on Equity and Opportunity (CEO) hosted "Women and Girl's Day" at the Capitol. The Commission held a discussion with state and community leaders, and provided workshops for young people on "The Multigenerational Impact of Women who Lead." Our keynote was Lydia Mele, a community leader and disability rights advocate, whose mother, the late Olga Mele, an accomplished Puerto Rican leader and public servant, was the inspiration for this discussion.



An Act Creating a Working Group to Study Housing Options for Persons Reentering the Community after Incarceration: The Report

On January of 2019 our agency pursuant to Special Act 18-14, "An Act Creating a Working Group to Study Housing Options for Persons Reentering the Community after Incarceration," released their final recommendations on a 30-page document that identified restrictive housing policies and a lack of re-entry support as obstacles to Connecticut continuing to lower recidivism and shrink its prison population. This report was released at a two-hour workshop at the State Capitol, where the participants included several experts in the state's criminal justice reform movement including but not limited to Correction Commissioner Rollin Cook and Marc Pelka, the criminal-justice policy adviser to Gov. Ned Lamont among other lawmakers and justice advisors.



Socio-Economic and Health Equity in Marijuana Policy Forum

The Commission hosted a Socio-Economic and Health Equity in Marijuana Policy Forum on Friday, March 15, 2019 at the Legislative Office Building. A multi-faceted discussion on the necessary elements of any state policy regulating legalized marijuana that ensures socio-economic and health equity while promoting opportunity for distressed communities. This critical discussion featured a keynote presentation by Commissioner Shaleen Title of the Massachusetts Cannabis Control Commission, along with experts and leaders from across the state.

2019 Connecticut Re-Entry Reform Day at the Capitol

On April of 2019 CWCSEO co-hosted the 2019 Connecticut Re-Entry Reform Day at the Capitol. This is an annual event of advocacy for Connecticut citizens concerned with reforming processes around community re-entry from incarceration. Stakeholders and concerned citizens congregated for Connecticut's annual Reentry Reform Day at the state Capitol. The day's activities focused upon a goal both remarkably simple and incredibly complex: the creation of a system of criminal justice and community reentry that reflects the dignity and humanity of the individual, and that positions individuals exiting incarceration to thrive in their communities. Steven Hernandez expounded upon the Committee on Equity and Opportunity's Hope for Success: Returning Home report, and the necessary steps to make Connecticut a "true second chance state".



Puerto Rican Day

The Commission directed the first of its kind "Puerto Rican Day" at the Capitol with a roundtable discussion entitled "Somos de Aquí" around the rich history of the people and culture of Puerto Rico in Connecticut through the eyes of historians, academics, local and state leaders, and students. The forum was followed by a legislative reception at the State Capitol featuring special presentations, hors d'oeuvres, special guests from the Connecticut General Assembly, and local Puerto Rican stakeholders. Our distinguished list of speakers included Dr. Elsa Núñez, Dr.

Zula Toro, Fernando Betancourt, Executive Director of the San Juan Center in Hartford, the Honorable Wildaliz Bermúdez, CWCSEO Gladys Rivera, Joseph Rodriguez, John Torres, and the Honorable Edwin Vargas. Wednesday, May 29 2019.

Voices Around Re-Entry

"Voices Around Re-Entry" is an educational documentary released July of 2019 that discusses the challenges faced by individuals trying to obtain housing accommodations immediately after incarceration in the State of Connecticut. An effort spearheaded by the Commission on Equity and Opportunity (CEO) now CWCSEO with the financial support of the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. Reentry reform starts with the belief that incarceration without rehabilitation is

truly unwise. The nature of the incarceration, and indeed everything that proceeds after sentencing should be directed toward rehabilitation and reform. This brief documentary is currently hosted at the CWCSEO Facebook page and the general public is encouraged to see it at our site at

<https://www.facebook.com/commission.equity.opportunity/videos/400542540805422/>



2019 Parent Leadership and Engagement

Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI)

In 1992, focused on prevention and capacity building, the Commission on Children (predecessor to the CWCSEO) created The Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI) as a statewide family civics initiative. PLTI enables parents and other caring adults to become leading advocates for children. The CWCSEO continues to support and lead PLTI in the State of Connecticut.

PLTI is the premier leadership training initiative for parent leaders in Connecticut. Through PLTI, parents who wish to improve the lifelong health, safety and learning of children become practiced change agents for the next generation. Communities sponsor the 20-week program in which parents complete a community civic project and accrue college credit for the program through Charter Oak State College. Each PLTI alumni class mentors the next, creating a ripple effect of community caring and a developing coalition of parent leaders. The program is evidence-based and program evaluation is done by parents weekly. Additionally, parents complete a pre- and post-survey.

PLTI SEEKS TO DIGNIFY THE ROLE OF PARENTS AS CHANGE AGENTS WITHIN COMMUNITY AND GOVERNMENT BY BUILDING THEIR CAPACITY AS WELL AS CONTINUING TO ELEVATE THE FIELD OF PARENT LEADERSHIP NATIONALLY. PARENTS USE THEIR NEW CIVIC TOOLS TO ADDRESS ISSUES THAT AFFECT CHILDREN AND FAMILIES PRIMARILY AND ENGAGE IN SMALL AND LARGE GROUP DISCUSSIONS THAT FACILITATE THE PROCESS OF LEARNING THE TENETS OF DEMOCRACY AND HOW TO WORK WITH LOCAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT IN THE BEST INTEREST OF CHILDREN.

SIMILARLY, INSTITUTIONS, THROUGH PARENT LEADERSHIP TRAINING, IMPROVE THEIR CAPACITY TO WORK WITH AND EMPOWER PARENTS. PLTI HAS WORKED WITH EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS, SOCIAL SERVICES INSTITUTIONS AND CITIES TO IMPROVE: 1) PARENT ENGAGEMENT POLICIES; 2) CONSUMER-DRIVEN SERVICE DELIVERY; AND 3) LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARENTS.

The Children's Leadership Training Institute (CLTI) is a parallel course to the Parent Leadership Training Institute. Following the profile of PLTI, it is organized into the two sections: Phase I – Developing Community and Phase II – Democracy and civic skills. CLTI was an idea that emerged at a PLTI graduation. It was there that the children's pride in both their parents' accomplishments and their own became visible. This challenged us to

develop a parallel childcare component that includes parallel content. It is an organic bridge for parents and children who would now share the course experience.

CLTI uses literacy as a base and creates a full spectrum of activities that parallel the PLTI course and encompass the multiple intelligences.

In 2019, PLTI and CLTI, graduated over 150 parent and child leaders in June 2019. The communities represented in the 2019 cohort were: Bridgeport, Danbury, Milford, Naugatuck, Stamford and West Hartford. We believe

Parent leaders take a pre-survey and a post-survey which allows evaluators to determine outcomes. After engaging in the 20-week curriculum, evaluation shows significant improvement in these key categories:

- Policy experience. There was a 35% increase in the degree to which participants felt confident in skills relating to policy.
- Community activism. There was a 22% increase in how often the participants engaged in certain civic behaviors or felt a certain way about their civic abilities.
- Civic engagement. There was a 24% increase in how many of the 9 possible civic actions participants engaged in.
- Government knowledge. There was a 36% increase in how many of the answers to the 5 questions about how government works participants reported knowing.

Parent and child leaders developed and executed community civic projects, applying skills and knowledge attained to create change in community (local/state) for children and families. Evaluation shows that most projects usually are in the areas of education/special education, health and safety. After PLTI there continues to be an increase in the percentage of parents who engage in all civic behaviors. The largest changes were seen in contacting elected officials, working with others in immediate neighborhood to fix or improve something, and receiving a request to take an active role in addressing a community issue.

Coalitions & Partnerships

The CWCSEO serves or leads on the following coalitions:

- Coalition for Choice
- Healthy Youth Connecticut
- Family Law Working Group
- Maternal and Child Health Coalition
- Campaign for Paid Family Leave
- Secretary of State Civic Health Advisory Group
- Safe Havens Working Group
- Connecticut Early Childhood Alliance
- Commission on the Standardization of the
- Collection of Evidence in Sexual Assault Investigations
- Trafficking in Persons Council
- Commission for Child Support Guidelines
- Governor's Sexual Assault Kit Working Group
- Long-Term Care Advisory Council
- Council on Medicaid Assistance Program Oversight
- Task Force on Senior Centers
- Hospital Merger Watch Coalition
- Legislature's Task Force to Study School Climate
- Children's Behavioral Health Plan Implementation Advisory Board
- MTR Policy Oversight Committee
- Legislature's Minority Teacher Recruitment Task Force
- Legislature's Achievement Gap Task Force
- LGBT Aging Advocacy

Informing the public of our work means reaching out to community groups, colleges, high schools, advocacy groups and coalition partners. This work is as local as the school down the street and as far away as national summits. Here is a partial list for the year 2019:

- CASEL
- Hartford Involvement in Leading with Kindness
- NCSL Legislative Forum
- VOICES Forum
- Leading for Literacy
- 2Gen Policymakers Institute
- Annual Higher Education Institute
- NCSL Capitol Forum
- University of Hartford
- Alliance for Retired Americans
- WestCOG-Western CT Council of Governments
- CT Department of Transportation
- Connecticut Community Foundation
- Tunxis Community College
- CT Coalition on Aging
- Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities
- University of Connecticut School of Law
- Two-Generational Interagency Working Group CT Women's Organization Network
- Connecticut Elder Action Network (CEAN)

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