



# 2024 Impact Report

reimagine**ct**

cbia

# CBIA Is the Leading Voice for Connecticut Business

We fight to make Connecticut a top state for business, jobs, and economic growth: driving change, shaping legislative and regulatory policy, and promoting collaboration between the private and public sectors.

We support the innovators, entrepreneurs, and leaders shaping a vibrant, dynamic Connecticut with opportunities for all—and connect business leaders with each other and with legislators.

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## Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

CBIA respects and acknowledges all aspects of diversity, equity, and inclusion, recognizing how different viewpoints foster teamwork and innovation—cornerstones of our values.

We are committed to being a workplace that reflects the unique experiences and perspectives of the business community we serve, and by welcoming all voices, we further our mission of making Connecticut a top state in which to live and work.

## Stronger Together

The CBIA, CONNSTEP, and ReadyCT strategic alliance combines expertise and resources, providing businesses with effective solutions to their biggest challenges—building a skilled workforce, driving growth, and staying competitive in a fast-changing global economy. This alliance is committed to strengthening every business and resident in Connecticut.

# Table of Contents

**2**

Chair & President's Report

**4**

Reimagine Connecticut

**6**

CBIA Foundation

**8**

What's the Coolest Thing  
Made in Connecticut?

**9**

Bus Tour Highlights  
Connecticut Manufacturing

**10**

Membership:  
Your Competitive Edge

**12**

Member Resource Center

**13**

Energy Connections

**14**

Comprehensive Healthcare  
Solutions for Small &  
Midsize Businesses

**15**

Workers' Compensation

**16**

Networking & Events

**20**

Media Center:  
Making Headlines

**22**

ReadyCT: Elevating  
Internships & Career  
Opportunities

**24**

CONNSTEP: Connecticut's  
Trusted Advisor for  
Manufacturers

**26**

2025 Executive Committee  
& Board of Directors

**28**

CBIA's Core Values

**29**

In Memoriam:  
Phillip Montgomery

# Reimagining a Brighter Economic Future

Connecticut's economy is at a crossroads. The 2017 bipartisan fiscal guardrails positioned the state to fully leverage its tremendous economic potential, creating a sustainable platform for driving long-term growth.

At the same time, persistent structural issues—including the labor shortage and high costs of living and running a business—that predate the pandemic remain significant challenges.

Eighty percent of employers tell us it's difficult to find and retain talent, and 91% say the cost of doing business in Connecticut continues to rise.

Despite those challenges, demand for Connecticut products and services remains high and businesses are innovating and supporting one of the most highly skilled, productive workforces in the world.

Employers are playing their part, making workforce development their top

investment priority and finding new ways to evolve workplaces to attract and retain talent—embracing and investing in new technologies to modernize operations and increase productivity.

It's critical that our state seizes the moment, builds on its strengths, and finds innovative solutions to our challenges.

It's time to reimagine our economy to lower the cost of living and running a business, create new career pathways, expand our workforce, and improve our quality of life to build opportunities for all residents.

Over the last year, the CBIA Foundation held forums around the state in partnership with consulting firm Economic Leadership LLC, bringing together a diverse coalition of business, nonprofit, education, and community leaders to understand what's needed to boost the state's competitiveness.

Those forums, along with extensive research and analysis of more than 25 reports and studies conducted since 2018, led to the creation of the Opportunity Connecticut: Reimagining Our Workforce, Economy, and Quality of Life report.

The report sets a course for sustained economic growth, driving not only

predictability, but greater opportunity for all residents for years to come.

Moving the state's economy forward requires more than a long-range view.

There are immediate solutions that will address the labor shortage and the state's high costs of living and doing business.

Building on the success of CBIA's RebuildCT and TransformCT campaigns, our ReimagineCT policy pledge attracted 136 candidates for elected office—representing a broad bipartisan group—with 73 of those candidates winning their races.

We will work with this coalition to drive policymaking that reimagines the state's workforce, economy, and quality of life to build an economy that emphasizes affordability, career opportunities, and a positive business climate.

The ReimagineCT policy solutions will expand options for quality, affordable childcare, housing, and small business employee healthcare.

The work to build a more vibrant Connecticut economy doesn't only happen within the walls of the state Capitol.

After state lawmakers failed to act—for a second consecutive year—on bipartisan,

## 2025 CBIA executive committee:

Left to right: Marietta Lee, chair; Chris DiPentima, president & CEO; Brian Montanari, vice chair; Michael Brooder, vice chair; Kevin Grigg, immediate past chair; Chris Allen; Leander Dolphin; Michele Etzel; David Fiereck; Rick Iovanne; Jill Mayer; Moy Ogilvie



transformational legislation addressing the growing crisis in the fully-insured small group market, CBIA's Health Connections launched an innovative program providing small and medium business employees access to quality, affordable healthcare coverage.

It is critical that we continue our advocacy, while also building new partnerships with organizations and institutions across the state's economic ecosystem.

This year, we doubled down on collaborations and initiatives, working with different stakeholders around the state to advance important discussions on critical issues and highlight vital industries for the state's economy.

We again partnered with the Connecticut Office of Workforce Strategy, Governor's Workforce Council, ReadyCT, Social Venture Partners Connecticut, Department of Administrative Services, Department of Labor, Department of Economic and Community Development, Connecticut State Colleges and Universities, State Department of Education, and the Regional Workforce Development Boards for the Connecticut Workforce Summit, which focused this year on discovering hidden talent.

We also partnered with DECD's Office of Manufacturing, the American Manufacturing Hall of Fame, and the Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology on the 2024 Manufacturing Summit, bringing together more than 1,000 attendees to celebrate manufacturing and highlight the opportunities and challenges facing this critical sector.

The CBIA Foundation, with support from CONNSTEP and DECD's Office of Manufacturing, produced the first-ever statewide manufacturing tour, visiting 20 manufacturing companies and workforce development organizations during a week-long bus tour.

The foundation also hosted the inaugural Coolest Thing Made in Connecticut challenge—made possible with the support of CLA, CONNSTEP, and DECD—which saw more than 115,000 people cast votes for their favorite Connecticut-made product.

And for the first time, we joined with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation on the National Civics Bee Connecticut State Finals, aimed at improving civics education and literacy among middle school students, their families, and communities.

Through these partnerships, programs, events, and initiatives, we brought together thousands of business leaders, policymakers, educators, advocates and more to shine a light on the state's incredible businesses and workforce.

Connecticut's opportunities are limitless, but we know that it will take all of us, working together, to turn those opportunities into reality. And when we do, Connecticut's economy will grow more vibrant, with doors to opportunity for all communities and residents.

On behalf of our board of directors and staff, we want to thank you for your ongoing support of CBIA as we work to make Connecticut a better place to live and do business.

Sincerely,



**Marietta Lee, Chair**



**Chris DiPentima, President & CEO**



# Reimagine Connecticut

**C**BIA's 2024 legislative session goal was to develop, propose, and implement the next phase of a multiyear campaign to improve Connecticut's business climate by building upon the achievements of the bipartisan Transform Connecticut campaign launched in 2022 and advanced in 2023.

The successes of that campaign continued in 2024, with many initiatives passing that were developed with input from our member companies and other stakeholders across dozens of forums and meetings while formulating the CBIA Foundation's long-term economic action plan, Opportunity Connecticut.

Given the political imbalance in both chambers of the legislature, success proved challenging, however, due to the lack of action on any bills by the Insurance and Real Estate Committee and the political stalemate over the state budget that ultimately led to most bills with a fiscal impact not moving forward during session.

By forging lasting partnerships with the Lamont administration and lawmakers from both parties, CBIA advanced proposals that are reshaping Connecticut's economy, with the legislature

approving a number of positive measures, including:

- **Improving** access to affordable childcare with the establishment of a tri-share pilot program in New London County and the expansion of the childcare incubator program

- **Creating** additional career pathway opportunities in the trades through the creation of a second act teacher certification
- **Reforming** high school graduation requirements to better prepare students for careers
- **Expanding** the student loan repayment tax credit to further attract and retain a talented workforce
- **Promoting** innovation with an extension of the net operating loss carryforward period

During the legislative session, CBIA also fought hard against bills that drove up the costs of employment, created new mandates and burdensome regulations, or weakened the state's economic competitiveness.

In all, the CBIA public policy team covered hundreds of bills across more than 1,400 hours of lobbying, saving CBIA members an average of \$671 per employee annually.

**reimaginet**





CBIA successfully lobbied Gov. Ned Lamont to veto a bill that offered state benefits to striking workers. Likewise, following a last-minute amendment to a bill in the closing hours of session that significantly increased property and car taxes for businesses, CBIA successfully advocated for a special session to restore the capped commercial car tax rate.

Even before the 2024 legislative session ended, CBIA began preparing for the 2025 session. Building upon the policies developed in the Opportunity Connecticut long-term economic action plan, our

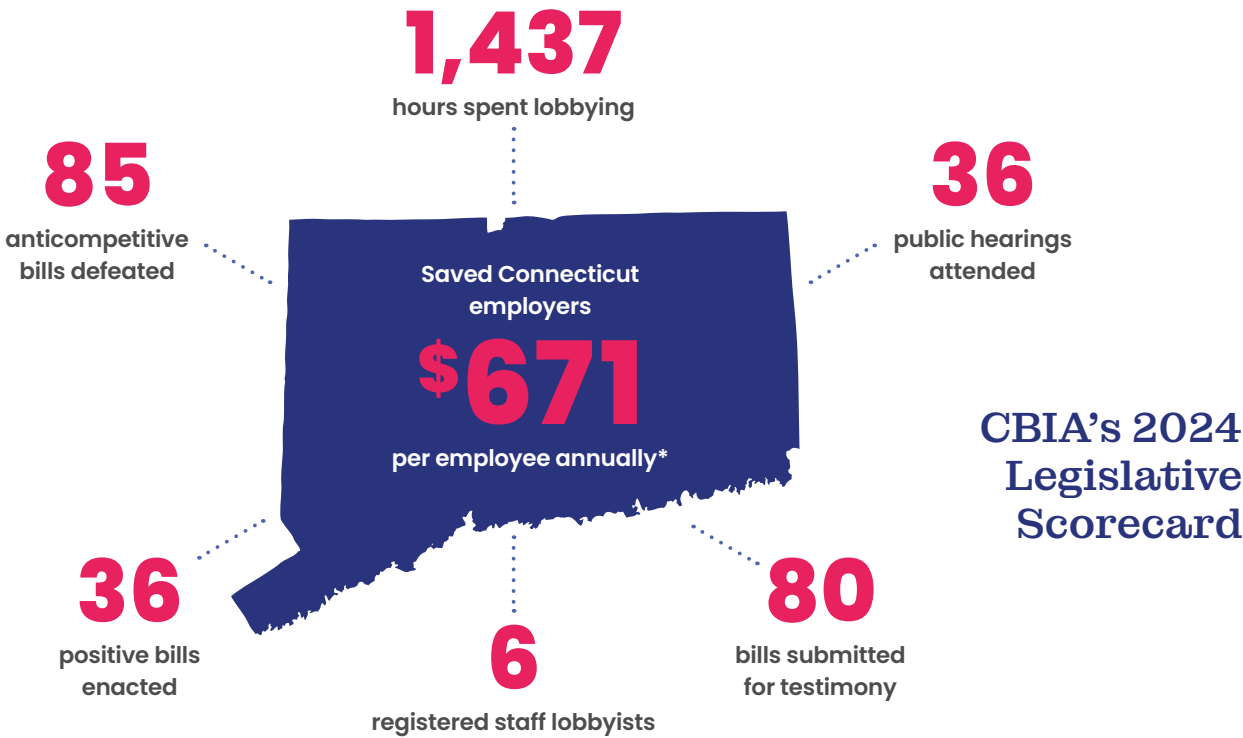
advocacy and communications teams got to work on our new campaign, Reimagine Connecticut.

In the first year of this two-year effort, the Reimagine Connecticut pledge focuses on 11 policy proposals addressing the two biggest issues facing employers—the workforce crisis and making Connecticut a more affordable place to live and work.

Through CBIA’s advocacy efforts, 136 candidates for office signed the pledge, with 73 of those candidates winning their races.

This broad coalition of moderate members of the legislature from both parties gives CBIA a strong advocacy platform to continue to promote a better climate for employers across the state.

We will continue to advocate strongly for employers of all sizes and from all industries, pushing lawmakers to address the challenges facing Connecticut and help the state unlock its full economic potential. ■



*\*Savings per employee calculated by annual cost savings realized or cost increases avoided through lobbying for or against bills including HB 5269, HB 5436, HB 5523, HB 5446, HB 5325, and HB 5524 during the 2024 General Assembly session. There are 1.47 million private sector employees according to the Connecticut Department of Labor.*

# Charting a Course for Long-Term Economic Growth

**L**aunched in 2023, the CBIA Foundation for Economic Growth and Opportunity was created to develop long-term strategic responses to meet the evolving needs of Connecticut's economy.

Established as a 501(c)(3), the foundation aims to be a thought leader and think tank devoted to creating the most competitive Connecticut for years to come.

The foundation's landmark achievement this year was the development and

release of Opportunity Connecticut: Reimagining our Workforce, Economy, and Quality of Life, a comprehensive, long-term economic action plan for the state.

In collaboration with national consulting firm Economic Leadership LLC, the foundation conducted eight months of intensive research, analyzing more than 25 reports and studies from 2018 to the present.

The foundation also held more than 30 forums across Connecticut, gathering valuable insights from a diverse range of stakeholders including business leaders, nonprofit organizations, educators, community leaders, state lawmakers, and administration officials.

The resulting plan evaluates Connecticut's positioning in four key areas: business

climate, workforce, infrastructure, and innovation.

Ultimately, after analyzing feedback from the forums and data from recent years, strategic recommendations were framed around

three pillars—Business Climate, Workforce and Education, and Quality of Life.

The recommendations in these pillars are designed to foster a vibrant and competitive state economy that creates opportunities for all residents.

Since the plan's release, the foundation has made significant progress in socializing its findings and recommendations.

The foundation engaged with top state leaders, including Gov. Ned Lamont and members of his administration,



The CBIA Foundation's economic forums brought together stakeholders including business leaders, nonprofit organizations, educators, community leaders, state lawmakers, and administration officials.





including representatives from key agencies such as the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Department of Housing, and Department of Transportation.

The plan was also shared with influential organizations such as the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities and the Connecticut Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives.

Through these efforts, the foundation has engaged dozens of additional organizations and individuals, with plans to continue engaging with more legislators, municipalities, chambers of commerce, businesses, and other key stakeholders across our state.

To translate the plan into action, the foundation recently launched subcommittees focused on two of our strategic pillars—Workforce and Education and Business Climate.

These subcommittees bring together diverse stakeholders to dive deep into the initiatives outlined in Opportunity Connecticut and develop implementation strategies.

Efforts from these groups, as well as the advisory board, will guide further research initiatives and policy recommendations.

And a generous grant from JP Morgan will support an in depth study of workforce education in grades 9–12. This research will build upon the findings in our action plan and provide crucial insights to inform the Workforce and Education pillar work. ■



# What's the Coolest Thing Made in Connecticut?

**G**eneral Dynamics Electric Boat's Virginia-class submarine was voted the winner of the new competition celebrating the state's manufacturing industry and its world-class workforce.

Featuring 16 Connecticut-made products, the single-elimination, bracket-style challenge allowed residents to vote on their favorite product.

The candidates ranged from defense vehicles to life-saving devices, food, and products that make our lives easier.

"We couldn't think of a better way to celebrate the wide range of products

made by one of the best workforces in the world," said CBIA president and CEO Chris DiPentima.

More than 115,000 votes were cast during competition, with Electric Boat narrowly edging out Sikorsky's Black Hawk helicopter.

"On behalf of the 24,000 shipbuilders of General Dynamics Electric Boat, thank you to the people of Connecticut," Electric Boat president Kevin Graney said as he accepted the award at the Oct. 2 Connecticut Manufacturing Summit, surrounded on stage by more than 30 members of the company's workforce.

"This highlighted the breadth and depth of manufacturing in our state—it's truly an honor to receive this recognition."

The CBIA Foundation hosted the Coolest Thing Made in Connecticut competition with the support of the Connecticut Office

of Manufacturing, CONNSTEP, and CliftonLarsonAllen LLP.

"The collaboration between CBIA, CONNSTEP, and the Office of Manufacturing on this initiative is just another example of how you can't spell Connecticut without Connect," said Connecticut chief manufacturing officer Paul Lavoie.

"The incredible products that were part of this competition, along with the thousands of others made here in Connecticut are a testament to the strength of our robust manufacturing industry," added CONNSTEP president and CEO Beatriz Gutierrez.

Each week, Fox 61 featured the competition on its morning news to showcase Connecticut's manufacturing industry.

"The manufacturing community rallied around this competition," DiPentima told Fox 61's Tim Lammers the morning after the summit.

"We could not be happier for the excitement and attention this competition brought to such an important industry for our state's economy."

In November, the Connecticut Science Center debuted a new exhibit celebrating the success of the competition.

"We hope to inspire our visitors with these remarkable innovations, crafted right here in Connecticut, and spark the imaginations of the next generation of makers and innovators," said center president and CEO Matt Fleury. ■



The team from Electric Boat celebrates after winning the first Coolest Thing Made in Connecticut competition





# Bus Tour Highlights Connecticut Manufacturing

**W**hat will you make? Those powerful words were a sight to see on Connecticut's highways and back roads in October.

Covered from front to back with industry widgets and a huge Made in Connecticut stamp, the manufacturing tour bus celebrated the state's robust industry and world-class, highly skilled workforce.

Dozens of private and public sector leaders climbed aboard Oct. 14 through Oct. 18 for the inaugural manufacturing tour, produced by the CBIA Foundation in collaboration with the Connecticut Office of Manufacturing and CBIA affiliate CONNSTEP.

"The importance of the manufacturing industry in Connecticut cannot be understated," said CBIA president and CEO Chris DiPentima.

Manufacturing is the second largest industry sector in the Connecticut

economy, with 4,800 manufacturers employing almost 160,000 people, adding \$38 billion to our economy.

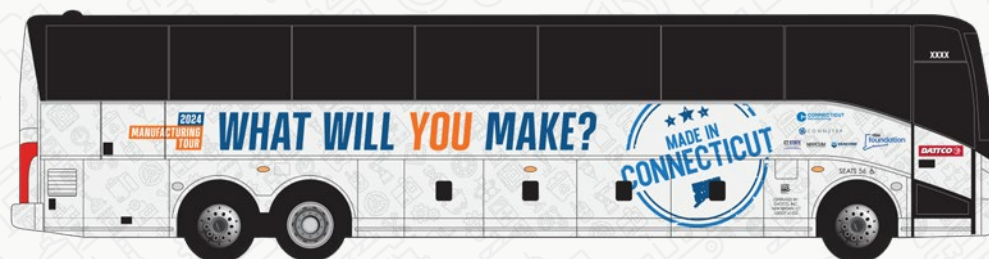
"This tour served as an opportunity to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of the sector's contributions to economic development and job creation and showcase some of the state's top manufacturing facilities," DiPentima said.

Each day, the tour visited three manufacturers and an education institution or workforce training program.

The visits highlighted not only the incredible products made in Connecticut, but the innovative workforces behind those products, and the ecosystem dedicated to growing the industry.

Chief manufacturing officer Paul Lavoie called the tour, part of National Manufacturing Month, "a fantastic example of the collaboration and partnership that exist in Connecticut's manufacturing sector."

"This bus tour is a great way to show Connecticut residents the diversity of our state's manufacturing sector," added CONNSTEP president and CEO Beatriz Gutierrez. ■



# Your Competitive Edge

**T**hriving in today's business environment requires more than just resilience—it takes a strategic partner to help you navigate challenges, seize opportunities, and amplify your voice where it matters most.

That's where CBIA comes in—CBIA membership isn't just a resource, it's a toolbox designed to help your business succeed.

From shaping policies to delivering essential services, here's why businesses across the state rely on CBIA to drive their success.

## Strong Voice for Business

CBIA stands as a trusted advocate for Connecticut businesses, taking action to influence policies that drive economic

growth, foster innovation, and create a favorable business environment.

Through our advocacy efforts, members benefit from a powerful ally that monitors and responds to issues impacting their industries.

With regular policy updates, expert analysis, and tools for engaging with lawmakers, CBIA empowers businesses to stay informed and involved. This connection ensures you're not just adapting to change but helping shape it.

## Solutions That Streamline Operations

Running a business means balancing priorities, managing resources, and staying compliant. CBIA simplifies these tasks with a range of support services:

- ▶ **Employee benefits:** Access a flexible suite of medical, dental, vision, and other programs tailored to your workforce.
- ▶ **Energy savings:** Optimize energy use and reduce costs with competitive pricing and sustainability solutions.

- ▶ **HR expertise:** Tap into professionals who provide timely, practical advice on employment laws and compliance.

These solutions save you time, reduce operational headaches, and allow you to focus on growing your business.

## Events That Build Connections

CBIA events connect you with peers, thought leaders, and industry experts. From roundtables to conferences, these gatherings provide insights into workforce trends, policy updates, and emerging opportunities.

Whether you're networking with like-minded professionals or showcasing your expertise as a sponsor, CBIA events foster the relationships that drive success.

## Resources That Deliver

CBIA members benefit from a curated library of tools and services designed to cut costs and improve efficiency.

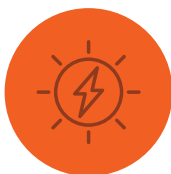
Discounts on essential business needs—from office supplies to training programs—help you reinvest savings into growth.



**Advocacy**



**Employee  
Benefits**



**Energy  
Purchasing**



**HR, Employment  
Law, Safety**



**Events**



**Member  
Resource  
Center**

CBIA’s Member Resource Center is also an invaluable hub for guidance on key areas such as finance, HR, and marketing. These practical solutions support businesses in every phase of development, from startups to established enterprises.

**Smart Investment,  
Big Rewards**

CBIA membership delivers measurable returns by empowering organizations with resources, advocacy, and connections that drive success.

CBIA Membership Provides	You Save
<b>Free HR, safety, &amp; compliance advice</b> (Versus three calls to other HR resources @\$200 hourly)	<b>\$600</b>
<b>Affordable solutions with Energy Connections</b> (Assuming 250,000 KWh per year and a one-year contract vs. utility price)	<b>\$7,935</b>
<b>Advocacy efforts at the state Capitol</b> (per employee, based on 2024 legislative session)	<b>\$671</b>
<b>Discounts on Staples office supplies</b> (Assuming \$600 annual office supply expenses)	<b>\$243</b>
<b>Savings on events &amp; professional development</b> (Assumes two events versus nonmember prices)	<b>\$120</b>
<b>Employee training for under \$200</b> (Versus nonmember price; for companies with fewer than 100 employees)	<b>\$2,200</b>
<b>Total Annual Savings</b>	<b>\$11,769</b>

From exclusive cost-saving programs to expert guidance on compliance and workforce development, members access tools that boost operational efficiency and reduce expenses.

Key benefits include:

- ▶ **Insurance and benefits solutions:**  
Save on premiums and provide competitive benefits packages
- ▶ **Advocacy and policy influence:**  
Stay ahead of legislation and shape business-friendly policies
- ▶ **Free HR, safety, and compliance advice:** Get expert guidance to navigate workplace challenges and regulations
- ▶ **Networking and learning:**  
Build relationships and access industry-leading training to strengthen your team

Every dollar invested in a CBIA membership yields savings, insights, and opportunities that enhance your organization’s bottom line. Join a community that helps businesses grow stronger and more competitive in today’s market.

**Part of a Broader Mission**

Membership with CBIA isn’t just about what you gain—it’s also about what you contribute.

You’re part of a movement that champions economic progress, supports workforce development, and strengthens Connecticut’s business community. ■

# Resources and Savings

Running a business means juggling competing priorities while finding ways to improve efficiency and reduce costs. CBIA’s Member Resource Center offers practical solutions to help you overcome challenges and operate more effectively.

## How the Member Resource Center Supports Your Business

CBIA’s Member Resource Center provides:

**Financial solutions:** Access tools and partnerships for payroll services, payment processing, accounting, and telecom needs, designed to streamline operations and save money.

**HR support:** Get expert advice on hiring, compliance, benefits, and workplace safety through the HR Hotline. Members also benefit from discounted background checks, outsourced HR services, and specialized employee training programs.

**Office savings:** Take advantage of exclusive member discounts on office supplies, shipping services, computer equipment, and more.

**Safety programs:** Enhance workplace safety with consulting, training, and resources to address regulatory requirements and create a safer environment.

**Sales and marketing tools:** Strengthen your business presence with access to website design services, SEO resources, lead management tools, and sales training.

**Employee perks:** Members can extend these benefits to their workforce, offering discounted cell phone plans, travel deals, and technology products to enhance employee satisfaction and retention.

## Competitive Advantage

The Member Resource Center is more than a collection of discounts—it’s a strategic asset for navigating today’s business challenges.

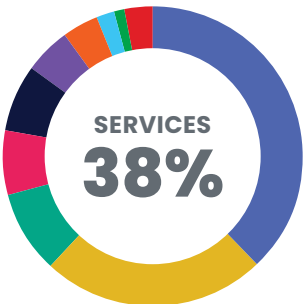
With access to cost-effective solutions and expert support, CBIA members are better positioned to achieve their goals and thrive in a competitive environment. ■

## CBIA Member Demographics



### Employee Size

- 1-5 (24%)
- 6-10 (22%)
- 11-25 (22%)
- 26-50 (14%)
- 51-100 (7%)
- 101-300 (4%)
- 301-1,000 (2%)
- 1,001-3,000 (1%)
- Unknown



### Industry Sectors

- Services (38%)
- Manufacturing (24%)
- Construction (9%)
- Finance, insurance, & real estate (7%)
- Retail trade (7%)
- Wholesale trade (5%)
- Transportation, electric, gas, sanitary services & communications (4%)
- Not classified (3%)
- Agriculture, forestry & fishing (2%)
- Public administration (1%)



## Save on Energy Costs

**E**nergy is one of the most critical and costly inputs for any business. Managing energy costs and risks requires a comprehensive and proactive approach that considers the complex and volatile energy markets, the evolving regulatory environment, and emerging technologies and opportunities.

Energy prices are on the rise, with Connecticut utilities announcing a steep 22% increase in standard service rates.



For businesses relying on these services, the financial impact is significant. CBIA Energy Connections offers a way to protect your business from market volatility and ensure cost stability.

### Why Choose CBIA Energy Connections?

For over 25 years, CBIA Energy Connections has gone beyond offering savings—

we provide confidence in your energy strategy. Here's what sets us apart:

**Expert supplier vetting:** We pre-screen suppliers for quality and reliability. When they bid for your business, you can trust you're seeing the best options from reputable providers.

**Clear contract terms:** We don't just show you numbers. We highlight key contract terms so you understand differences in cost and provisions, helping you make informed decisions.

**Flexible pricing options:** Choose between fully fixed rates for predictability or index pricing for flexibility, depending on your business needs.

### Ready to Take Control?

Don't let rising energy costs impact your business. Whether you're seeking cost stability, better pricing, or a partner to navigate your next contract renewal, CBIA Energy Connections has the expertise and solutions you need. Join the ranks of Connecticut's leading companies that trust CBIA Energy Connections to deliver energy savings and peace of mind. ■

### Already in a Contract?

We'll handle your next renewal, timing it to align with favorable market conditions.

### Small Business?

CBIA's unique aggregation program groups smaller businesses to combine energy usage, securing better rates typically available to larger companies.

### Multi-State Operations?

We provide energy procurement services across all deregulated states, simplifying energy management for companies with locations outside of Connecticut.

### Want Budget Certainty?

Market volatility makes energy costs unpredictable, but with CBIA Energy Connections, you can lock in pricing that fits your budget. This stability enables you to focus on your business instead of worrying about fluctuating energy rates.



# Comprehensive Healthcare Solutions for Small and Midsize Businesses

**C**BIA Health Connections is addressing the challenges small and medium-sized businesses face in Connecticut's health insurance market with an innovative program launched in 2024.

Designed for businesses that want to offer competitive healthcare options, this solution combines affordability with broad coverage and advanced support services.



## Key Features

**Self-funded plan model:** Employers benefit from level-funded plans, with protection through stop-loss coverage. Any surplus claims dollars are returned annually, enhancing cost savings.

**National provider network:** Employees gain access to a broad network of healthcare providers, ensuring convenience and quality care.

**Advanced pharmacy solutions:** Through a partnership with Ventegra, the program offers innovative strategies to lower prescription drug costs, reducing pharmacy expenses by over 20% compared to national averages.

**Enhanced member services:** Employees and their dependents can access a single point of contact for benefits and claims navigation, simplifying their experience.

Small and medium businesses can now offer healthcare benefits comparable to larger employers, helping attract and retain top talent.

“

We’ve developed a next-generation solutions package focused on getting people to the right care at the right time, leading to better outcomes and lower costs for both the individual and the employer plan.

Ken Comeau  
President, CBIA Service Corp.

”

## Comprehensive Coverage Options

- ▶ **Medical plans:** HSA and PPO options with a national provider network
- ▶ **Dental and vision plans:** Affordable options for complete care
- ▶ **Supplemental benefits:** Disability, life insurance, and voluntary add-ons ■



Medical



Dental



Life & Disability



Vision



Identity Theft



Supplemental Health



Workers' Comp

# Workers' Compensation for Connecticut Manufacturers



**M**anaging workplace safety and controlling insurance costs are critical challenges for manufacturers in Connecticut.

CBIA's Workers' Compensation Program offers a tailored solution, delivering competitive coverage and specialized support for metal, plastic, and electronics manufacturers.

## Key Program Benefits

### ► Loss-sensitive dividend :

Helps reduce costs for businesses with strong safety records

### ► On-site risk management:

Identify and address workplace hazards with professional guidance

### ► Training and planning:

Access resources to strengthen workplace safety initiatives.

By prioritizing prevention and proactive risk management, the CBIA Workers' Compensation Program enables manufacturers to:

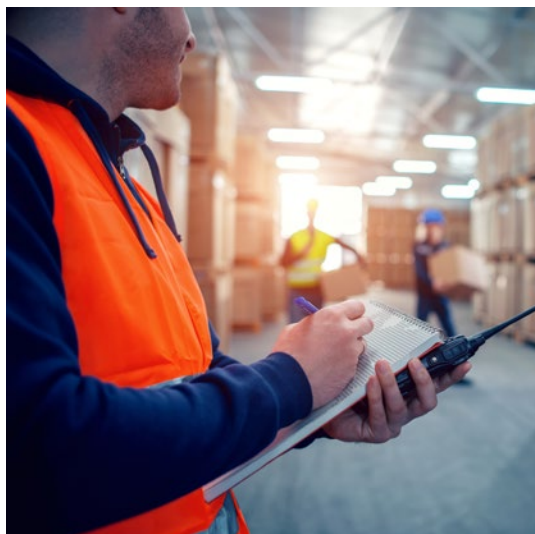
### ► Minimize costly incidents.

### ► Create a safer environment for employees.

### ► Lower overall insurance expenses. ■

**“** CBIA Workers' Comp rates have always been very competitive. And their managed care and onsite loss control services have been valuable tools for us! **”**

Rachel Albanese | Controller  
Carpin Manufacturing, Inc.





## NETWORKING & EVENTS

Our events keep attendees up-to-date on the latest economic, business, policy, tax, employment law, and HR trends while connecting them with their peers through invaluable networking opportunities.

Whether you're looking to get HR credits, stay current on the latest laws and trends in tax, employment law, and safety, our programs and events are designed to help you.

Event sponsorships are available and are a valuable opportunity for a business to increase its brand awareness and reach new customers.

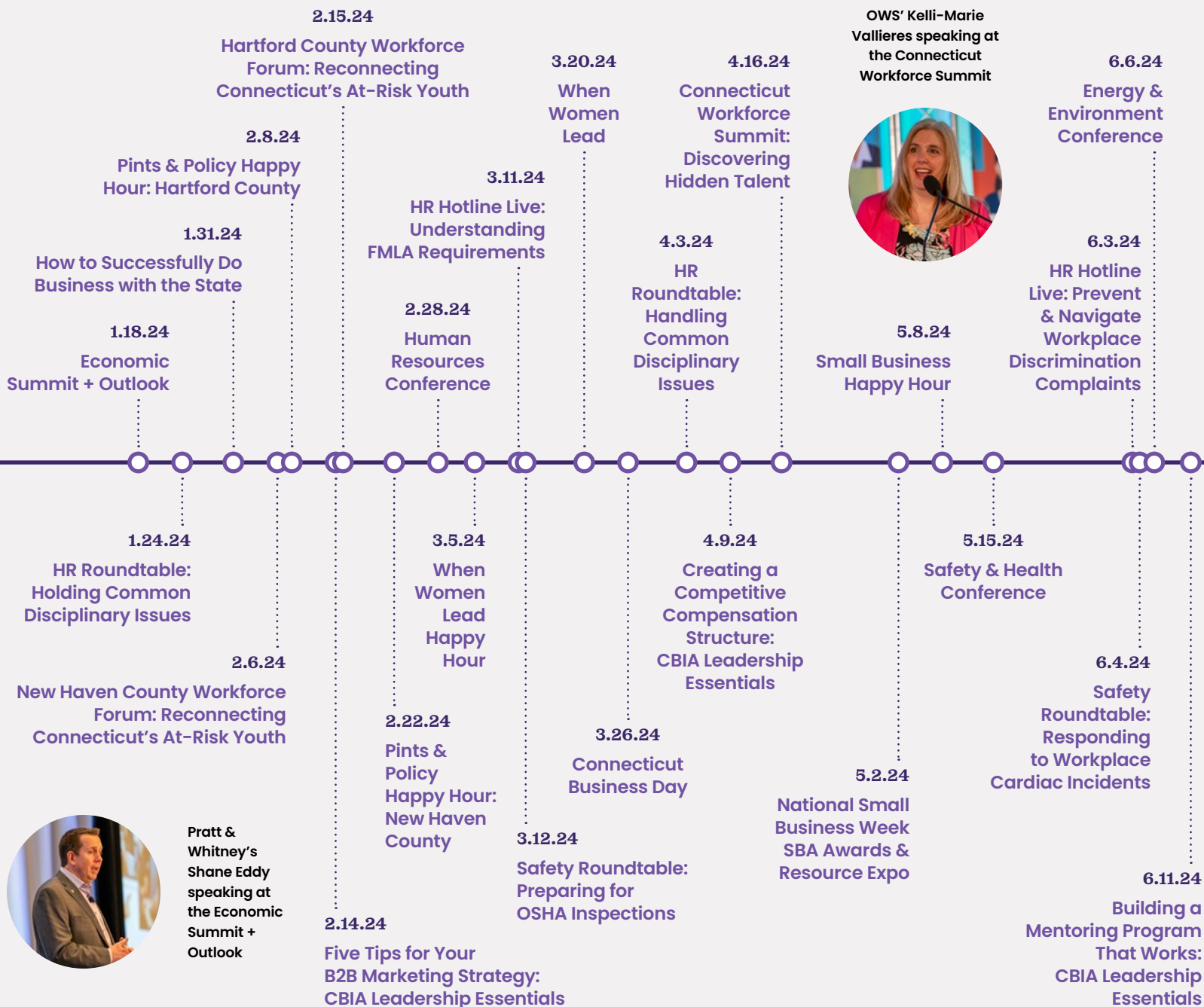
CBIA events exceeded all expectations in 2024, setting new attendance records for a number of conferences and programs, including Connecticut Business Day, When Women Lead, the Connecticut Workforce Summit, Made in Connecticut: 2024 Manufacturing Summit, and the Annual Meeting & Reception. ■



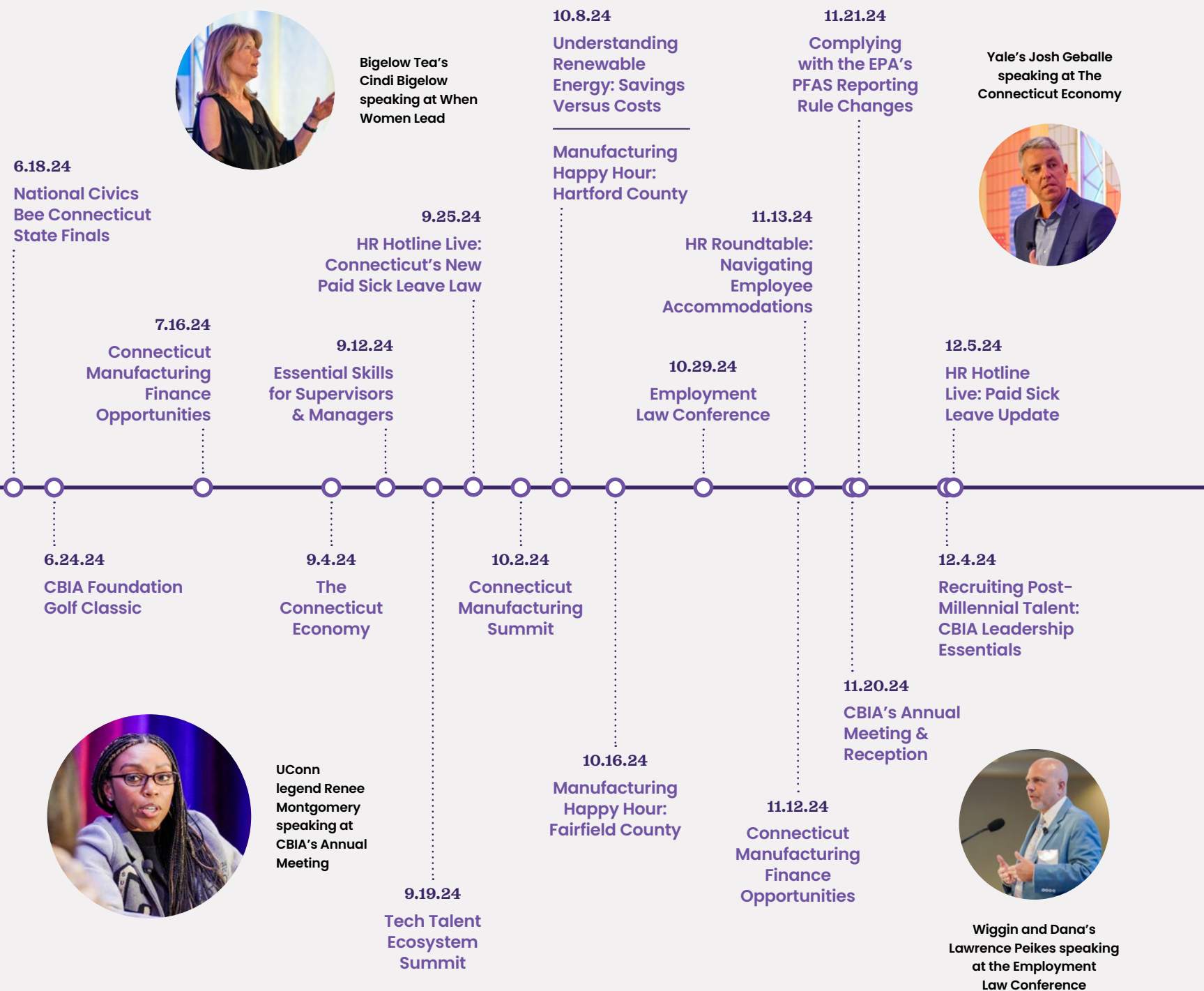




## NETWORKING & EVENTS







## MEDIA CENTER

# Making Headlines

**C**BIA's communications activities again focused heavily on member companies in 2024, leveraging messaging platforms to feature member news and stories and introducing new video features such as Opening Doors and Inside the Capitol.

We also drove broad media coverage of critical business policy, and economic competitiveness issues throughout the year, supplementing that coverage with the growing reach of our website and social media platforms.

Our outreach efforts, including media releases, briefings, editorial board meetings, op-eds, and interviews, generated 1,650 media mentions during the year.

CBIA's website hosted 711,000 visitors in 2024—up 24% over the previous year—with more than 1.9 million pageviews, while site engagement improved 12% for the year.

Social media platforms also played an important role in our communications activities, with followers increasing 20% and engagement rates rising 22% across all accounts. ■



Chris DiPentima discusses the 2024 legislative session on NBC Connecticut's Face the Facts with Mike Hydeck.

CBIA Foundation's Dustin Nord highlights the 2024 Manufacturing Tour on News 12 Connecticut.



CBIA's Amanda Marlow speaks with KeyBank's Elona Shape about empowering and supporting women in business.

Chris Davis joins This Week in Connecticut with Dennis House on WTNH to talk about the state of Connecticut's economy.





New CBIA program will help CT small businesses offer health plans

## Hartford Courant

CT economy mixed as businesses look toward 2025 to fill jobs amid high electric rates and housing costs

## The Day

At-risk youth commission ends public forums with a packed New London audience

## ctpost

What's the coolest thing made in Connecticut? This \$4 billion Electric Boat submarine



Advocates release a roadmap to improve CT business climate

## Bloomberg

Connecticut Offers Longer Tax Window for Losses to Lure Biotech



Advocates, Employers Discuss Childcare Crisis in New London County



Amid decarbonization efforts, New England's energy demand expected to increase 23% over next decade

## CBIA's 2024 Media Impact

1,650

media reports

711,000

website visits

1.9M

website pageviews

1.19M

LinkedIn impressions

22%

increase in social media engagement

# Elevating Internships & Career Opportunities

**W**e decided to work with ReadyCT as part of our talent acquisition strategy," said Marc Ulan, owner of Z2 Motorsports in New Britain.

He's not alone. Last year, ReadyCT more than doubled the number of businesses it works with to deliver career-connected learning to high school students across the state. Specifically, in collaboration with over 250 Connecticut employers, for 2023-24 ReadyCT directly impacted nearly 6,400 public school students; nearly 2,700 students had structured career readiness training, and over 20% of those students had high-quality paid internship experiences.

And, take note: ReadyCT interns get hired.

"It's amazing the skills that we see in interns prepared by ReadyCT," said Amanda Rodriguez, program director at YMCA of Greater Hartford.

"When we first agreed to work with ReadyCT, we were told interns would be ready to work on Day One, and they were. It's why we stay with the partnership.

"Bringing on ReadyCT interns and then hiring them is just a great way to get good people on your team."

From healthcare to manufacturing, and from information technology to public service, students served by ReadyCT can secure industry-recognized credentials, making them among the most valuable entry-level hires available.

They also source inspiration from their ReadyCT experience.

One such inspired student is Rhianna Swaby, Hartford Public High School '24, SCSU '28.

After two internships with Pratt & Whitney/RTX as part of the NAF-powered engineering/green tech pathway learning supported by ReadyCT, today Swaby is a first-year college student studying computer science and on the verge of earning a Python coding credential; she has her sights set on returning to the RTX campus in East Hartford as part of the data analysis team!

"I learned so much with ReadyCT and my internships," said Swaby. "I can't talk too much about my Pratt & Whitney internship projects because of confidentiality, but I can tell you I worked on sustainable energy and compression system teams where I learned how to be professional, manage my team, ask for help, and even be someone who gives help!

"Being part of a career pathway [as a high school student] helped me figure out what I want to do. I don't have to stand and wonder about it."

Pratt & Whitney is one of the 250+ employers partnering with ReadyCT to elevate and diversify their workforce with students following trajectories similar to Swaby. With a growing number of early career job openings in Connecticut, it's no wonder some of the state's most prominent employers remain invested

in ReadyCT career pathway programming. "Internships are a way to increase young people's

interest in the STEM fields," said Haritha Namduri, MRE manager, engineering support to operations at Pratt & Whitney, "and it's definitely a part of our talent acquisition strategy.

"Ninety percent of our interns tell us that they like what they see at RTX, the culture, and that they want to come back and work with us. An internship helps a student come to see that a lot of the tech jobs we have are not impossible to get to."

Businesses of all sizes—from sole proprietorship to large multinational corporations—are invited to explore partnership with ReadyCT. ■





Rhianna Swaby, Hartford Public High School '24, completed two internships with Pratt & Whitney. Those experiences helped her to narrow her interests; today she studies computer science at SCSU ('29). Her goal: secure an offer to return to the RTX campus and join the data analytics team.

**“Students are learning essential skills that not only prepare them for their personal and professional careers but also empower them to bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world applications.”**

Flora Padro, Principal,  
Hartford Public High School

## ReadyCT's 2023-2024 Impact

**250**

Connecticut employers delivered career-connected learning to high school students

**6,400**

public school students were directly impacted

**2,700**

students had structured career readiness training

**20%**

of those students had high-quality paid internship experiences



# Connecticut's Trusted Advisor for Manufacturers

**C**ONNSTEP has been Connecticut's leading manufacturing consulting firm for over 25 years.

A nonprofit organization, CONNSTEP is committed to supporting the growth and success of small and medium-sized manufacturers through customized solutions and unwavering support.

CONNSTEP provides consulting and training solutions in supply chain management, technology adoption, workforce development, business growth, continuous improvement, quality, cybersecurity, environmental health and safety, and human resources.

As Connecticut's Manufacturing Extension Partnership Center representative, CONNSTEP brings the strength and resources of a nationwide network to its clients. Supported and partially funded by the U.S. Department of Commerce and the State of Connecticut, the MEP network's shared mission is to help manufacturers thrive.

In 2024, CONNSTEP began a transformational journey to better align with market changes. "We are evolving

our mission and our organization to better serve and meet the needs of Connecticut manufacturers."

A redefined mission statement was launched to support these changes:

*To help Connecticut manufacturers reach their goals by serving as their trusted advisor and resource for all things manufacturing.*

CONNSTEP has aligned its organizational structure and leadership team to deliver on that mission. Committed to providing exceptional products and services, CONNSTEP invested in its team by hiring new talent, promoting from within, and bolstering its business development, marketing, and data analysis capabilities.



## CONNSTEP

*Grow. Improve. Succeed.*

Understanding the challenges they face, **CONNSTEP.help** was launched as a dedicated

resource to assist manufacturers by offering a simple way to request help or share their problems via text, email, phone, or a help form.

In recognition of CONNSTEP's relevance in the manufacturing ecosystem, CONNSTEP president and CEO Beatriz Gutierrez was honored as a Woman of Distinction by the American Manufacturing Hall of Fame for her pivotal role in shaping Connecticut's manufacturing industry.

Cybersecurity consultant Anna Mumford was named one of six finalists in the Corporate Innovation and Leadership-Small/Medium Sized Business category at the 19th Annual Women of Innovation

“

**The most exciting part of this successful strategy was the efficiency of the CONNSTEP process guided by their expert consultant who understood our needs in detail and knew the best manufacturing solution to meet our challenge.**

**Dr. Marien J. Zanyk  
ZANEEZ® Health & Fitness**

”

Awards ceremony hosted by the Connecticut Technology Council.

As part of Small Business Week, CONNSTEP embarked on a week-long Small Business Appreciation Tour visiting manufacturers throughout Fairfield County in recognition of their hard work, innovative spirit, and impact on Connecticut communities.

## CONNSTEP Initiatives, Grants, Programs

**SCOIN grant:** Through the SCOIN program, CONNSTEP has bolstered Connecticut's supply chain by providing educational courses, assessments, and a dedicated platform (CONNEX) that facilitates connections between manufacturers and new opportunities. These initiatives emphasize outreach, skill development, and practical solutions that empower local manufacturers to enhance their network and resilience statewide.





CONNSTEP president and CEO Beatriz Gutierrez attends the Space Workforce Roundtable at the White House hosted by the National Space Council.

CONNSTEP Business Development team members Phoebe Gonzalez and Doug Narins visit Homa Pump Technology in Ansonia as part of Small Business Appreciation Week.

**CONNEX Connecticut:** CONNSTEP ensures that the state's manufacturers get the most out of the platform by helping them: build and optimize their profile, create their capability statements, post and respond to exchange center opportunities, onboard internal users, and more.

**MBD grant:** Connecticut, with its wealth of defense contractors, is part of that program and has implemented the Digital Model Initiative, a pilot to identify

and capture lessons learned and best practices for SMM in the defense industrial base. A Guide to Digital Transformation supports manufacturers as they adopt model-based definition processes, related technologies, and workforce strategies.

**New training workshops:** CONNSTEP launched CMMC Bootcamp to prepare manufacturers and businesses in the defense industrial base for the required Cybersecurity Maturity Model Certification.

Supervisor Bootcamp is designed to equip leaders with the skills and knowledge to become effective and successful supervisors.

**FORGE Connecticut:** Helps innovators scale their physical products locally by providing product development, manufacturing, and supply chain resources and connections. ■

## CONNSTEP partners with Connecticut manufacturers to achieve measurable results.

**\$226M**

new & retained sales

**\$30M**

cost & investment savings

**\$39M**

new investments

**978**

new & retained jobs

*As reported in NIST client surveys in 2023.*

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ReadyCT

## TEAMWORK

We are one team, working in a fun, positive environment where open communication and empathy drive successful collaboration.



## INNOVATION

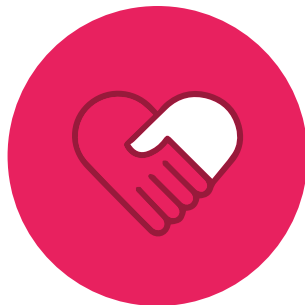
We embrace challenges and opportunities with open minds, encouraging creative new ideas to develop solutions and accomplish goals.



## CORE VALUES

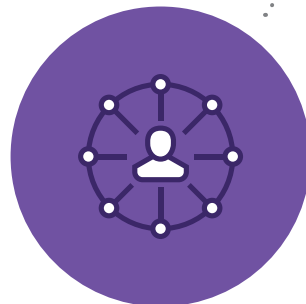
## RESPECT

We value the diversity of all stakeholders across all roles, ensuring all voices are heard, all ideas are valued, resulting in success for all.



## CUSTOMER FOCUS

We work for our members and do what it takes to exceed their expectations.



## INTEGRITY

We are honest and accountable—taking ownership of our actions and results, trusting and supporting our colleagues to do the same.



## Phillip Montgomery: 1960-2024

**P**hillip Montgomery, CBIA director of compensation and benefit services, passed away Sept. 5, 2024 at the age of 64.

For more than three decades, Montgomery supported member companies with workplace safety and compensation advice and resources.

"Over his nearly 32 years at CBIA, Phillip touched the lives of so many colleagues and members and was a true friend to many," said CBIA president and CEO Chris DiPentima.

"His contributions to CBIA, the business community, and Connecticut are immeasurable."

CBIA human resource counsel Diane Mokriski said Montgomery was extraordinarily empathetic, and approached everything he did with integrity, compassion, and authenticity.

"He intuitively understood the human side of the issues he tackled, and recognized that members craved not just the right answer, but the one that would work for them," Mokriski said.

"At CBIA, colleagues confided in him, trusted him, relied on his wisdom, and above all, cared about him.

"Working with him made me happy. What a gift." ■





CBIA & Affiliates | 350 Church St., Hartford, CT 06103-1126 | [cbia.com](http://cbia.com) | [connstep.org](http://connstep.org) | [readyct.org](http://readyct.org)