**Connecticut’s TAA/Title 1 Co-enrollment Steady Ascent to Success**

In the second quarter of fiscal year 2015, Connecticut’s co-enrollment rate between Trade and WIOA was an embarrassing 2%. This is the short version of the story of how they have worked to improve the coordination between the TAA Program and WIOA and to raise the rate.

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*by Joe Criscuolo - Connecticut Department of Labor*

Starting from the bottom: In the second quarter of fiscal year 2015, Connecticut’s co-enrollment rate between Trade and WIOA was an embarrassing 2%. With an ever increasing emphasis on the coordination of these programs by the US Department of Labor, steps were taken to make improvements in achieving at least the minimum target rate of 50%.

A major motivational factor for us to move forward with this initiative was in July of 2015, our commissioner received a letter from our USDOL regional administrator informing us that four grants, including TAA and WIA Dislocated Worker were “at risk”.

First, we started communicating with stakeholders (program staff, Job Centers Directors, partner staff leadership), about the importance of co-enrollment and why USDOL is making this a priority.  We held a series of meetings to discuss the barriers, the myths and ideas on the best way to approach this issue and make improvements.

Next, we developed a combined co-enrollment policy between Trade and WIOA, with each of our five comprehensive American Job Centers developing their own internal procedures with partner staff to accommodate the unique operation of each office.

From these efforts and with technical guidance and assistance from USDOL, we started to see some success, specifically in our Southwest region.  We shared some of the strategies they were using with our other offices and slowly but surely, our rates started to improve in most of the other regions.

In each quarter of fiscal year 2018, our rate continually increased and we finally hit the 50 percent mark in the second quarter of 2019.  Since then, we have exceeded the minimum acceptable rate in every quarter.

Although we have faced many challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, including the closing of all AJCs, it appears we still met the co-enrollment target by a slim margin in the March-June quarter.  Hopefully, as things start getting back to normal, we will continue to make strides in this area to the benefit of the clients we serve.