



U.S. Senator Chris Murphy
Colt Gateway
120 Huyshope Avenue, Suite 401
Hartford, CT 06106

November 22, 2024

Dear Senator Murphy:

We hope this message finds you well. As you know, the [Hartford Foundation for Public Giving](#) is the community foundation for the 29-town Greater Hartford region.

We are pleased to express our support for Congress to make significant investments in federal programs that support opportunity youth in the FY 2025 appropriations bill. Opportunity youth need to be fully integrated into our education and workforce systems, allowing them greater access to career paths that will support their economic growth, their families, and their communities.

In Connecticut, there are approximately 44,800 young people between the ages of 16 and 24 who are not in school or working. This represents more than ten percent of the young people in our state, including 12.8 percent of all of Connecticut's Black youth, 10.3 percent of Latine youth, and nine percent of white youth. The recent report, [Connecticut's Unspoken Crisis: Getting young people back on track](#), sponsored by one of our philanthropic partners, Dalio Education, has helped to draw attention to one of the greatest challenges facing Connecticut, the tens of thousands of young people across the state in danger of becoming or already disconnected from school and the workplace. This has devastating consequences for the present and future of Connecticut. **Without adequate support, as you know, young people can struggle to secure the skills to participate in the workforce and our recovering economy. We are grateful that legislators recognize the need to act and address the needs of our youth to ensure a better future for them, their families, and our state.**

The Hartford Foundation's strategic commitment to dismantle structural racism and to advance equitable economic and social mobility for Black and Latine residents of Greater Hartford requires expanding our work with government, nonprofit and other public-private partners.

The Foundation's strategic priorities recognize that all residents of our region need access to training and employment options that provide a sustaining wage. Our efforts focus on increasing opportunities for education and training along with hiring and retaining residents with significant barriers to employment, including opportunity youth disconnected from school and work and people returning from incarceration. Our strategic outcome areas include addressing basic human needs, housing stability as well as high school completion and additional training, internship and quality job opportunities that build essential industry and soft skills that meet employer needs.

Together, we can build on our individual and collective efforts to increase stable employment and career opportunities for youth and young adults in our region facing multiple barriers. We look forward to working with you to expand public-private partnerships to meet the needs of opportunity youth in the



Greater Hartford region, which will build the momentum for reengaging disconnected and at-risk youth across Connecticut.

Through the Hartford Foundation's investments in education and workforce development initiatives, we have seen firsthand how the interplay across race, gender and where people grow up can have in compounding youth disengagement. This is a matter of racial equity and increasing engagement and opportunities for disconnected youth. There is a critical need to support youth in building basic and professional skills while providing wraparound supports they need to be successful.

Federal programs like the youth training programs of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, YouthBuild, Apprenticeship, and Job Corps serve this untapped talent pool, providing career navigation and training targeted to meet the needs of employers in their communities. Investing in these programs can address the concerns of employers often about a labor shortage, and of Connecticut jobseekers interested in building in-demand skills.

We urge you to do all that you can to provide increased funding for these programs in the final FY2025 appropriations bill.

Thank you for considering this request.

Judy McBride | Director, Strategic Partnership Investments

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