

# the 2-1-1 Barometer

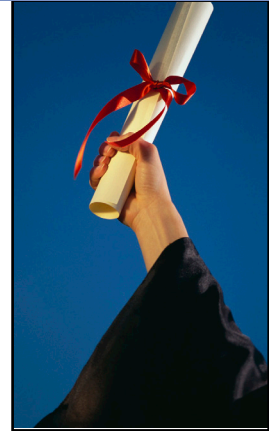


November 2009

## EDUCATION – THE KEY TO SUCCESS

*The 2-1-1 Barometer utilizes 2-1-1 data and other information to explore issues affecting Connecticut residents. United Way 2-1-1 handled over 480,000 service requests from people seeking information and referrals in fiscal year 2009. 2-1-1 tracks the type of information callers are looking for and the referrals that are made, creating a database that serves as a gauge of the needs present in the state.*

Education is a key to success for individuals and communities. For individuals, education is the primary route to gainful employment that can provide personal fulfillment, good income and health care. For communities, an educated workforce attracts and maintains good employers thus helping to create and sustain economic stability and social well-being. How does Connecticut fare in terms of educational attainment and what supports are needed for Connecticut's people to be successful? This report will review some of Connecticut's education statistics, the assistance United Way 2-1-1 provides to those seeking educational and developmental resources and educational initiatives currently promoted by the state and by the United Way.



### WHAT'S HAPPENING IN CONNECTICUT

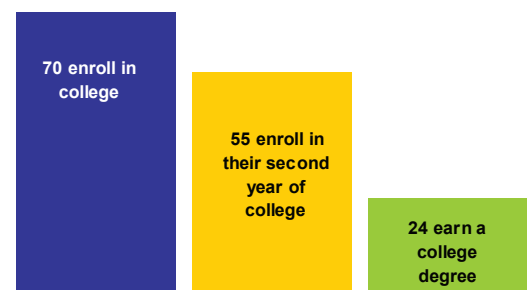
Educational attainment levels are good predictors of economic and personal success. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, on average, people with a bachelor's degree earn \$50,900 a year, while those with only a high school diploma earn \$30,700 a year, and those who drop out of high school earn \$22,150 a year. It is estimated that the lost lifetime earnings from the class of 2008 who dropped out of high school in Connecticut will amount to nearly \$2.5 billion.

The increase in educational attainment of Connecticut's citizenry plays a direct role in the well-being of the state's economy and in the overall social well-being of its people. To be sure, achievement of higher educational levels leads to better opportunities and outcomes for individuals and their families. But improved educational attainment also leads to an improvement in the quality of life for communities, regions and the state.

In 2000, Connecticut led the nation in both educational attainment and in per capita income. The percent of college educated residents increased from 31% in 2000 to 34% in 2007. However, since 2000, three other states – Massachusetts, Colorado and Maryland – have already surpassed Connecticut in educational attainment. Further, a recent regional analysis by the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, *New England 2020*, is predicting that demographic shifts could lead to a decline in Connecticut's educational attainment by 2020, when only 30.5% of the state's population is expected to be college educated.

These statistics call for innovative programs that work to ensure that students will be successful in school, will graduate from high school and will be prepared to enter post secondary education. It is expected that fewer than one in four of Connecticut's current ninth graders will go on to earn a college degree. In Connecticut, the high school graduation rate has risen slowly through this decade. However, there is a wide disparity between the graduation rates in the state's more wealthy rural and

**24 of every 100 9th graders will earn a college degree**



suburban areas and in its major cities. In Bridgeport, for example, the high school graduation rate is currently 71% compared to 92% statewide. Students in all of the state’s major cities also fall behind the state average on Connecticut’s Academic Performance Test (CAPT) for grade 10 in reading.

Creating a better educated citizenry and workforce is not simply the responsibility of the K-12 system, but a shared responsibility among early childhood care providers, K-12, higher education, employers, workplace training providers, non-profits and, of course, Connecticut residents. A recent Child Poverty and Prevention Council Report also identified successful education and training interventions for parents as one of the most effective strategies to reduce child poverty in Connecticut. Ensuring people get the education needed to meet the employment challenges and opportunities of the 21st century requires that we come together to provide the best services and supports for individuals, families and systems.

## EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES IN CONNECTICUT

### UNITED WAYS

United Ways have developed and invested in programs that support children and their parents and caregivers from birth to adulthood. In the earliest years, the United Way supports Born Learning and Success by Six to promote early childhood development and family supports. United Ways have also partnered in the development of community “blueprints” to improve outcomes of children ages 3 and over, and many United Ways are supporting dropout prevention and workforce development strategies.

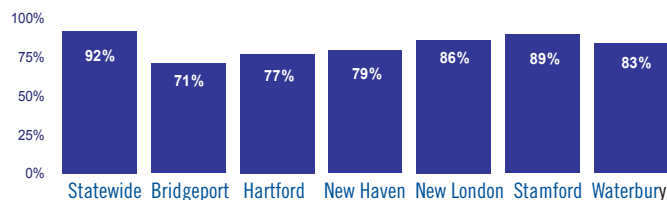
### CONNECTICUT’S P-20 COUNCIL

The Connecticut Commission for the Advancement of 21st Century Skills and Careers, referred to as the P-20 Council, was established to support collaboration among four systems – early childhood, K-12, higher education and workforce training – to create an effective education and career pipeline that maximizes the number of skilled people in Connecticut with a postsecondary degree or other credential. The Council will achieve this goal by improving the state’s existing, or initiating new, policies and programs. The Council is tasked to:

- Develop a public policy framework for state leaders that increases collaboration across the systems at their current and potential points of intersection.
- Explore how the systems can work more effectively together to deliver services.
- Realign existing activities and operations in a way that makes the education pipeline more responsive to the diverse needs of students.

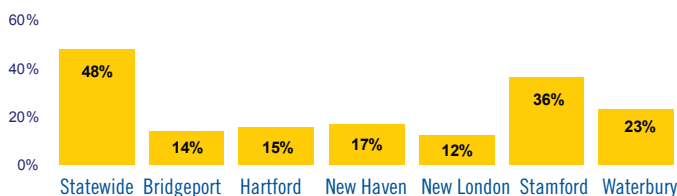
The P-20 Council’s membership includes representatives from early childhood, K-12, higher education and the workforce system, as well as state agencies, businesses, and philanthropic and community-based organizations. United Way also has a representative on the Council. The P20 Council is staffed by the Community Results Center of the United Way of Connecticut. Visit <http://www.ctdhe.org/P20> for more information.

**High School Graduation Rate  
Connecticut and Major Cities, 2005 to 2007**



Source: Connecticut Department of Education

**Connecticut Academic Performance Test – Grade 10  
Reading, % at or above State Goal – Statewide and Major Cities, 2009**



Source: Connecticut Department of Education

## UNITED WAY'S COMMON GOOD FORECASTER

The United Way has developed the Common Good Forecaster™, a tool that can help a community understand how the educational level of a community impacts ten social, health and economic indicators. These indicators include life expectancy, birth weight, murder rates, obesity, income, poverty, unemployment, reading proficiency, voting and incarceration. Data is available at the state and county level and quantifies the impact of educational attainment on each of those areas. Research behind the development of the Forecaster finds the following:

- On average, the more education people have, the longer they live.
- Infants born to less-educated mothers are more likely to have low birth weight, which is associated with developmental delays and infant death.
- Education is the single most important factor in the determination of a person's poverty status: almost 24% of the adult population without a high school diploma is poor, compared to 11% of those who are high school graduates and only 3.6% of college graduates.
- The less education a person has, the more likely they are to be unemployed. A high school dropout is four times more likely to be unemployed than a college graduate.
- Nearly three-quarters of state prison inmates did not complete high school; fewer than 3% completed college or more.

Visit [www.liveunited.org/forecaster](http://www.liveunited.org/forecaster) to view the Common Good Forecaster.

### HOW CAN UNITED WAY 2-1-1 HELP?

United Way 2-1-1 maintains a database of hundreds of programs that can enrich the lives of school age children and help ensure success in school and beyond. This database also provides information on many resources to support educational achievement for adults, young and old. The programs listed in the 2-1-1 database focus on education and development issues from birth to adulthood. Just visit [www.211ct.org](http://www.211ct.org) or Dial 2-1-1 to find programs in your area.



## 2-1-1 RESOURCES

*2-1-1 is open 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Simply dial 2-1-1\*.*

### RESOURCES TO HELP YOUNG PEOPLE SUCCEED

- Academic Counseling
- After-School Programs
- Graduation Requirements Programs
- Homework Help Programs
- Leadership Development
- Mentoring/Tutoring Programs
- Summer School Programs
- Youth Enrichment Programs

### RESOURCES FOR PARENTS/ADULTS

- Adult Basic Education
- English as a Second Language Programs
- Family Literacy Programs
- Family Resource Centers
- Home Based Parenting Education
- Literacy Instruction
- Parent to Parent Networking
- School Supplies

### RESOURCES FOR THE COLLEGE BOUND

- Student Financial Aid
- Parent Support Groups
- Mentoring for the College-Bound

### FINDING SUCCESS FROM THE START

- 2-1-1 Child Care
- Child Development Information
- Educational Testing
- Head Start
- Home Schooling
- Parent Support Groups
- Parenting Education
- Public Preschools
- School Readiness Programs
- Special Preschools

*\*United Way 2-1-1 can also be accessed by dialing 1-800-203-1234.*

# UNITED WAYS RESPOND

## UNITED WAY OF MERIDEN AND WALLINGFORD

The United Way of Meriden and Wallingford (UWMW) partners with the Workforce Alliance, southern Connecticut's workforce development board. In addition to having youth representatives on the Workforce Alliance Youth Council, United Way funds two agencies in concert with Workforce Alliance programs. At the Women and Families Center, UWMW funds job training programs for young people who are entering targeted careers for the first time (such as Medical Assistant). At the Boys and Girls Club of Meriden, UWMW funds a program for young entrepreneurs that has succeeded in establishing a youth-run satellite Dunkin Donuts, a program that has won a national award. Both programs combine appropriate education interventions with job skills training that result in jobs for the participants. ([www.unitedwaymw.org](http://www.unitedwaymw.org))



## UNITED WAY OF COASTAL FAIRFIELD COUNTY

United Way of Coastal Fairfield County's (UWCFC) Academic Achievement initiative is focused on ensuring that all high school students in the region graduate "college-ready and prepared to succeed in life." Among the initiatives are: The Schools of Hope, which has registered success in the numbers of students who have improved their reading skills, the Mentoring Institute of Coastal Fairfield County, which is working to build capacity of mentor programs and Wi-mentor, which allows professionals the opportunity to mentor a young adult over a secure site on the internet through a series of curriculum based emails. UWCFC also partners with Sikorsky to provide opportunities for high school students to take prep courses at Housatonic Community College before they graduate from high school. ([www.unitedwaycfc.org](http://www.unitedwaycfc.org))

## UNITED WAY OF GREATER WATERBURY

The United Way of Greater Waterbury is a community partner in the Bridge to Success initiative, which is creating an integrated family-centered service system for Waterbury families that will help youth overcome challenges and eliminate the barriers that keep them from achieving their potential. The initiative has identified five strategic areas: Family Engagement, Child Health and Development, Early Care and Education Services, Positive Youth Development and Workforce Development. These strategies were developed through a process that involved community stakeholders and parents. Bridge to Success was created to show how schools, parents, business and the community can work together to ensure the successful development of youth and families. ([www.unitedwaygw.org](http://www.unitedwaygw.org))

## UNITED WAY OF GREATER NEW HAVEN

The United Way of Greater New Haven (UWGNH) is focusing on the education disparity that exists in that region. Children in wealthier towns have higher rates of preschool attendance, academic achievement, and on-time graduation than students in lower-income communities. One program UWGNH is supporting to address this disparity is Experience Corps of Greater New Haven. The program trains adults ages 55 and older to tutor and mentor elementary students, with an emphasis on reading skills. Experience Corps of Greater New Haven is a partnership between UWGNH and the Agency on Aging of South Central Connecticut and is currently operating in Hamden Public Schools, as well as in Wintergreen Interdistrict Magnet School and Highville Charter School. Experience Corps is a national model currently operating in 23 U.S. cities. ([www.uwgnh.org](http://www.uwgnh.org))

*The mission of the United Way of Connecticut is to help meet the needs of Connecticut residents by providing information, education and connection to services.*

*To access other issues of the 2-1-1 Barometer online go to: [www.ctunitedway.org/barometer.asp](http://www.ctunitedway.org/barometer.asp)*

*2-1-1 is supported by the State of Connecticut and Connecticut United Ways.*