



**1,200+** That's how many students had one or more work-based learning experiences through ReadyCT programming. The idea is to prepare students for the workforce, regardless of entering it right after high school, after a credentialing program or a two- or four-year degree, or after some other experience, i.e., military service or pre-apprenticeship.

**950+** That's how many students participated in career readiness training opportunities through ReadyCT programming. Each year, 15+ unique options (from certificate workshops to mock interviews to career readiness bootcamps) give students meaningful exposure and access to the amazing career opportunities offered by Connecticut employers.

**400+** That's how many students had high-quality *paid* work experiences through ReadyCT programming. With 16 unique career pathway programs in ten high schools within four public school districts, ReadyCT's reach is broadening, much to the delight of CT employers who remain eager to develop -- and, later, tap into! -- a modern and well-prepared talent pool.

**100+** That's how many businesses have connected with ReadyCT to provide students with engaging, high-quality work-based learning opportunities. Although the business and education communities are natural allies, no real structures exist to support purposeful collaboration. *ReadyCT is focused on bridging this gap.*

CAREER PATHWAY PROGRAMMING IS GENERALLY THEMED ON CT'S HIGH-GROWTH/HIGH-DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS: **FINANCIAL SERVICES, HEALTHCARE, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, AND MANUFACTURING.**

## ReadyCT Summer Programs

For the fifth consecutive summer, ReadyCT offered students high-quality "learn and earn" opportunities, including the **Get Ready! Immersive Traineeship** (G.R.I.T.) experience.

G.R.I.T. matches students with businesses who then assign projects to student teams. The projects are real, i.e., they tackle actual issues facing the business partners.

In total, 75 students completed the paid six-week G.R.I.T. program, which also offers instruction in general career skills.

"Travelers had six student teams supporting projects across the enterprise, working on everything from AI to claims processing. They were well beyond their years in preparation, and we owe that to G.R.I.T.," said Tara N. Spain, vice president, Travelers Foundation.

In addition, over 80 students participated in other summer career prep programs, i.e., **First Responders Youth Academy**, a paid training opportunity themed on firefighting and law enforcement, and **STEM Immersion**, where younger students earn a stipend while developing career skills themed on STEM-based industries.



**There is no shortage of learning opportunities available to students in ReadyCT programming! Above, a student uses virtual reality to explore career options.**

## Student 5.0

Launched in 2020 to help seniors impacted by pandemic school closures, Student 5.0 secured support from the CT Office of Workforce Strategy in 2023, allowing ReadyCT to help 200+ students with postsecondary planning through 2025.

In Student 5.0, ReadyCT identifies students with little or no idea what to do after high school. Over an eight-week period, participants come to better understand their skills and interests and are then matched to aligned training and learning opportunities.

### a story

In April 2023, Francelis Rodriguez, then a senior at New Britain High School, started paying attention to ReadyCT; her cousin had worked with ReadyCT in a different capacity and, as a result, had a good job in healthcare.

Being unsure of her postsecondary options, but seeing her cousin's success, Francelis responded to outreach from the Student 5.0 team. Between what she learned in the workshop series and working with her career launch coordinator, Francelis became convinced that a nursing career would be a great fit.

In pursuit of that, Student 5.0 provided Francelis with two paid internships, further solidifying Francelis' commitment to a nursing career. She also received career skills training, a computer, and funds for books. Good thing! Francelis ultimately decided to pursue a nursing degree and is on her way to a career she knows she'll enjoy.

To her peers, Francelis says, "Don't think you're not capable. The beginning [with Student 5.0] might be hard, but if you stick with it you can do it, and *it's worth it.*"

**Francelis Rodriguez**



In 2022-23, ReadyCT operated 16 career pathways in 10 school buildings in four districts: **Bristol, East Hartford, Hartford, and New Britain**. Additionally, Student 5.0 operated in the four districts above as well as **Manchester**, and career pathway programming expanded to support 20+ schools in **eastern Connecticut**.



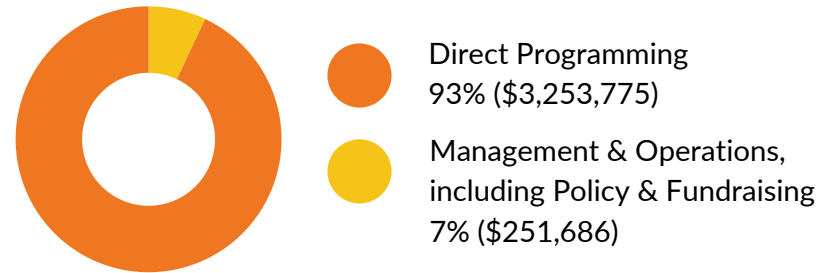
Above: Students from Hartford-area public schools visit Hartford Hospital to collect information for projects themed on healthcare.

## Financials

From an employer perspective, ReadyCT's work is a thoughtful blend of investment in corporate social responsibility and talent acquisition; the employers whose gifts power the work are mindful that they're investing in the people who will soon join the workforce. People they need, very much.

From a public perspective, ReadyCT's impact continues to capture attention as part of a statewide economic development strategy. Taken together, in FY 23, the organization's budget grew by 74% over the previous year.

## Expenses



Total Expenses: \$3,505,461, met fully with sufficient revenue.

## Revenue: Class



## Revenue: Source



## Policy Update

For 2022-23, ReadyCT focused the bulk of its policy efforts on the educator workforce. Or, more pointedly, the lack thereof.

At the end of 2022, Connecticut reported over 1,200 teacher vacancies. Over 71% of the vacancies were in Connecticut's Alliance Districts, the state's lowest performing districts with large populations of low-income students, disproportionately represented by students of color.

The onerous educator certification regulations, which haven't had a significant update in over 25 years, have contributed to the issue, making it difficult to attract college students, career changers, and out-of-state certified teachers to Connecticut classrooms.

As one would-be teacher said, "I have a chem degree in my back pocket, so what am I doing trying to get my teaching certification? Getting across the finish line is hard."

To this end, ReadyCT worked closely with other education organizations to bring this issue to the attention of lawmakers. As a result, lawmakers agreed that before any mandate on the matter, the CT State Department of Education (CSDE) should convene; accordingly, the Connecticut Council on Educator Certification (CCEC), **which includes a ReadyCT delegate**, was established.

The CCEC is currently working to modernize Connecticut's educator certification processes so that the state can attract and retain the highest quality professionals for employment in its public schools.

**Statewide** Working beyond individual districts, ReadyCT led a range of programs and events connected to career exploration and K-12 public education. In addition, ReadyCT worked across multiple collaborations and partnerships to help insure maximum impact.

### Career Manufacturing Roadshow '23

With events in Hartford, Hamden, Bridgeport, and Danbury, over **3,000 students** met with **200+ manufacturers** to learn about the digital and dynamic career options now available in manufacturing.

### Computer Science

Over **200 students** representing **22 school districts** entered the 4th annual Lt. Gov.'s Computing Challenge (LGCC). Their task: to apply code and computing to solve problems. Considering that **1 billion jobs** are expected to be transformed by technology over the next 10 years, this work remains more important than ever. Note: The LGCC has renewed for 2024!

