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Health jobs get a $1.5 million boost

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The Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board said Friday it has received a $1.5 million Health Profession Opportunity Grant to help low-income people enter the healthcare field.

The federal Department of Health and Human Services grant is in addition to a $6 million federal Workforce Innovation Fund grant the state Department of Labor and the workforce board won earlier in the week to help boost local manufacturing job hiring.

The health jobs grant will allow the board, which runs job centers in the region, to partner with similar groups in New Haven and Waterbury to help keep up with the statewide demand in medical fields. About 150 will be trained annually in each of the next five years.

"Our goal is to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete," said Susan Hibbard, chairwoman of the workforce group's board of directors.

Training will be offered at community colleges and adult education programs starting next year. Job centers in New London, Norwich, Willimantic and Danielson will screen applicants.

According to the workforce board, demand will be high in patient care, nursing, emergency medicine, community health, patient navigation and health information management. The grant help train such skills.

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