

Bridging the Gap

Alex Johnson of Capital Workforce Partners works to pair employers with the skilled employees they need

By Cara McDonough

Alex Johnson wants to change the narrative about jobs in Connecticut.

In political discourse and casual conversations, residents often hear that companies are leaving in droves, or that finding employment is impossible, he said, but “that could not be further from the case.”

Johnson is president and CEO of Capital Workforce Partners, an organization that helps close the gap between skills and business hiring needs through youth and adult programs, and promotes partnerships with local employers in north central Connecticut. And so he understands the reality: there are hundreds of jobs right here in Connecticut, he said, and many more on the horizon.

Companies just need the skilled workforce to fill them. And that’s where Johnson and his dedicated team come in.

“We have to make sure that we are lining up our workforce development to support our evolving economy, though helping adults but also investing in schools,” he said.

Guided by a consortium of the region’s elected officials and a board of directors comprised of local business, education and labor leaders, Capital Workforce Partners helps both adults and young people develop the skills necessary to thrive in the state’s job market, and helps direct employers to the talent they need.

“Right now is a critical moment,” said Johnson of the current economic climate in Connecticut, with plentiful jobs available to the right candidates. “We are really trying to seize this opportunity and at the same time enable individuals who haven’t benefited from the success of the economy, including ‘returning citizens,’ like ex-offenders or those on public assistance.”

Johnson pushes for inclusive initiatives that generate real results, making him an incredibly effective leader, said Capital Workforce Partners Chief Strategy Officer Jim Boucher.

“He has really built a lot of strong partnerships in the workforce development communities and has worked hard with local employers to clarify where their needs are,” Boucher said.

For Johnson, the role is a natural fit.



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“I’m a product of the Hartford community, and also an individual who lived in public housing. I was fortunate to have the opportunity to go to college and it helped me change my life’s path. I recognize that opportunity is what separates some of us and I believe I was a beneficiary of that. I need to pay it forward,” he said.

Johnson, who holds a Bachelor of Science degree and a Master of Public Administration degree from the University of Connecticut, has worked in education, employment and job training for most of his adult life, including almost 18 years with Capital Workforce Partners.

He said he’s “fortunate to be able to have a job that is rewarding, giving people opportunities to help change their circumstances.” No matter

what their challenges, he added, with a little help and the right opportunities, “I truly believe people can be successful.” ●