

## MANUFACTURING NEWS

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On October 21, Plymouth Spring was honored as the “Made in Connecticut Manufacturer of the Month” by CONNSTEP. CONNSTEP has worked with the company for over five years, primarily by helping it implement Lean manufacturing and other efficiency measures. According to company president Richard Rubenstein, CONNSTEP has enabled the firm to significantly increase productivity and reduce operating costs through Lean activities.

According to Bonnie Del Conte, president and CEO of CONNSTEP, Plymouth Spring was chosen for the honor based on its commitment to keeping its process local, including using local vendors whenever possible. CONNSTEP developed the Made in Connecticut Program to showcase the diversity of products and services of the Connecticut manufacturing industry – and to celebrate the companies who continue to “Make it in Connecticut.”

Plymouth Spring manufactures custom springs, fourslide parts, wire forms, and precision pins, and has proudly called Bristol home for 55 years. ♦



Plymouth Spring Proud to “Make it in CT”

## Step Up Program Connects Employers and Job Seekers

By Emily Oparowski

**T**he Subsidized Training and Employment Program (Step Up Program) is designed to promote job creation and worker opportunity for Connecticut small businesses and unemployed workers. The program has helped more than 875 employers who provided jobs for over 2,787 unemployed Connecticut residents. Businesses are refunded the wages for employees hired through the program. The average employer reimbursement is approximately \$10,800 per new employee, while the average hourly wage is approximately \$16.00.

According to Mohamed Chaouki, Step Up coordinator for Capital Workforce Partners, the program excels in helping those who are unemployed get back to work permanently, which is different from other programs that can only offer part-time or seasonal opportunities. “Most employees stay in their new positions, which is beneficial to them and their families.



The employers also benefit from bringing on long-term employees, particularly when one considers the high costs of constantly training new hires.”

Laurie Clairmont of Rowley Spring & Stamping Corp. (a Bristol business participating in the program) stated that the program is a “great opportunity to tap into a pool of potential candidates with the State’s support.”

To be eligible for the program, potential employees must be unemployed prior to hire, a resident of a municipality with an unemployment rate equal to or higher than the state rate, or live in a town with a population of 80,000 or more. Manufacturing candidates and veterans can be from any community. Employees’ adjusted family income rates must be equal to or less than 250% of the federal poverty level, and they must not be considered a temporary or seasonal employee by a retailer. For a business to be eligible to participate, it must have no more than 100 full-time workers, must have been registered to conduct business for at least 12 months, and must be in good standing with the payment of state and local taxes.

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*- Mohamed Chaouki*

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At Rowley Spring, program participants receive on-the-job training, learn trade skills, and have the opportunity to advance within the organization. Rowley Spring, in particular, “strives to provide advancement opportunities to [its] existing and new employees that demonstrate drive and the willingness to work hard.” The Step Up Program is helping Rowley Spring to achieve its goals in growing its business and could undoubtedly do the same for other eligible businesses.



To find out if you are eligible to participate in the program either as an employee or an employer, visit the Connecticut Department of Labor’s website where you can fill out an “Employer” or “Jobseeker” Inquiry Form. At that point, a regional coordinator in your area will contact you and address any questions you may have. ♦