



Connecticut leaders looking to fill job openings with better skills training

Brian Spyros, News 8 Reporter

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Students and Porter & Chester Institute working on a HVAC system (WTNH)

ROCKY HILL, Conn. (WTNH) — Connecticut leaders are looking to fill job openings around the state, and part of that is making sure potential workers have the training they need for the job.

News 8 spoke with Jim Bologna, President of Porter & Chester Institute, to explain why there is such an effort to close the skills gap in the state.

“We’re just responding to employer’s needs. We get employers calling us every day from various industries, whether it be healthcare, skill trades, we need electricians, we need folks to keep our places that we work and live in cool and warm. All of the electronics systems that we have in place right now. We need to monitor those and install those.”

Connecticut has a tremendous need to fill these skilled jobs. Bologna explained going the trades route might be a better path than going to a four-year college. It's all about the preference of the person.

"Basically, in about a year's time you can come to our program. You get the actual knowledge of the program, as well as practically applying it in an industry modeled environment. It's more like going to work than going to school, because we're truly trying to get them prepared and integrated into the community."

Berkley Little, the HVAC Program Director at Porter & Chester Institute, reiterated the need for qualified HVAC technicians in Connecticut.

"There's quite a need out there. We all need our heating and air conditioning systems installed, updated, and repaired. Some of the older generation are starting to retire, so we need to replace them with new guys."

When asked how long does the HVAC program take, Little said, "The day program is one year, the night program is a year and a half. To get through it, they become an apprentice. After that, they go into a company, and they work through their apprenticeship towards their license."

Dental Assisting is also a popular route for some people.

"Today we have graduates that are ready," said Donna Puzycki, education supervisor at PCI. "Our employers are raving and now they call us."

The bottom line is that there are jobs out there in Connecticut, and people just need to get the skills to get them.

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