A BETTER CONNECTICUT INSTITUTE

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CONNECTICUT MUST AIM HIGHER ON HIGHER EDUCATION

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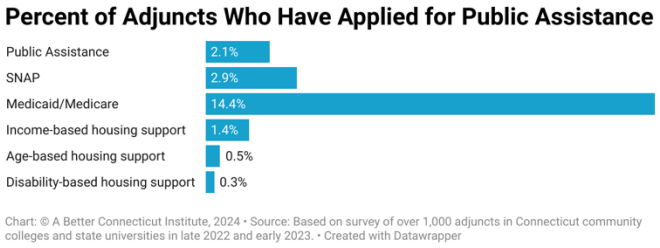
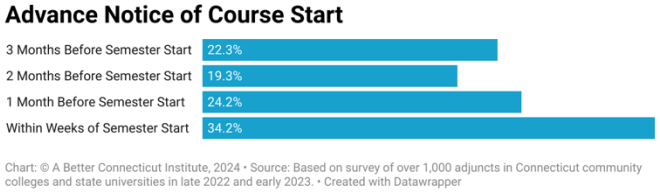
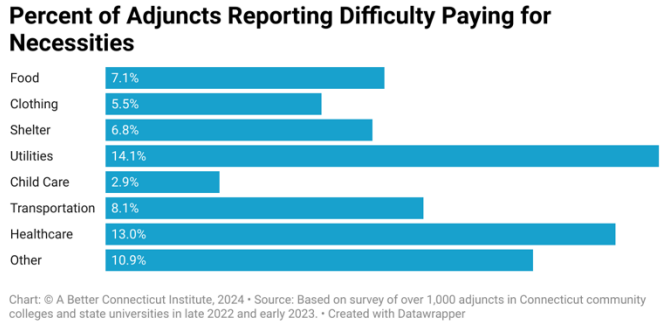
A recent survey of adjuncts in the Connecticut State Colleges and University (CSCU) system paints a picture of a higher education system in a crisis. Because of their status, part-time adjunct professors cannot fully participate in the academic community of the Connecticut State Colleges and University (CSCU) system, even though they make up fifty percent of the instructional workforce at state universities and seventy-five percent at our community colleges.



With no guarantee of employment and often receiving a contract at the start of the semester, it is not surprising that twenty-eight percent of the responders expressed difficulty in affording necessities. Utilities and health care top the list of extreme costs. Fifteen percent apply for and depend on government benefits programs, including HUSKY and SNAP. Educators are using credit cards and bank loans, depleting savings and, worse, borrowing against their future retirement funds to survive.



For a system to truly prioritize equity, it must care for those educating its students. Sixty percent of respondent adjuncts report a failure of CSCU to provide sufficient supplies to teach their course(s), leaving them to use their funds to support students' academic needs. Fifty percent of responders report struggling financially throughout the year, with the most challenging financial times being summer and midwinter when there are limited to no campus classes. Sixteen percent of respondents report being unable to provide the food they prefer to give their families, while some report not having enough in their homes. Alarmingly, ten percent report housing precarity, with 11% behind rent or mortgage payments.



Our unions know that our adjunct workforce consists of those teaching after retiring, those who teach to supplement a full-time job, and others struggling to work full-time by working at multiple institutions simultaneously. This workforce reports that regardless of experience and consistent work for CSCU, they need long-term job security, benefits, and permanent full-time employment opportunities. Increasing the number of full-time instructional positions will stabilize the workforce and bring educational stability to students.

NOTES

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A Better Connecticut Institute (ABCI) is an independent, non-profit organization researching social and economic inequalities in Connecticut to inform the development of policies that will create a better Connecticut for all residents.

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