



At-a-Glance

Commissioner, Bryan Cafferelli

Deputy Commissioner, Maureen Magnan

Deputy Commissioner, Shirley Skyers-Thomas

Established – 1959

Statutory Authority – Conn. Gen. Statute Chap. 416, Section 21a-1

Central Office – 450 Columbus Boulevard Suite 901, Hartford, CT 06103

Number of employees (All Funds)	345
Recurring Operating Expenses	\$31,750,456
General Fund Revenue	\$60,285,370
Transportation Fund Revenue	\$1,852,075

Organizational Structure

Office of the Commissioner; Regulation of Food, Standards, and Product Safety; Regulation of Drugs, Cosmetics, Adult-Use Cannabis Program, Medical Marijuana Program, & Medical Devices; Regulation of Alcoholic Liquor and the establishments that dispense it; Regulation of Occupational & Professional Licensing in the Trades and other areas; Regulation of Public Charities; Regulation of Gaming, Wagering, and Lotteries; Investigations Division; License Services Division; Legal Services Division; Communications Office; Education and Outreach Office; Administrative Services Office; Operations Division (Technical Systems Unit, Real Estate, Boards/Continuing Education, Complaint Center).

Mission

The mission of the Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) is to ensure a fair and equitable marketplace as well as safe products and services for consumers in all industries that it regulates:

- Managing licenses, permits, and registrations across many regulated industries.
- Enforcing regulations in the industries we oversee without overburdening businesses that abide by the law.
- Monitoring the marketplace to protect consumers from unfair, deceptive business practices and unsafe products.
- Investigating submitted consumer complaints.

Statutory Responsibility

The Department of Consumer Protection is a regulatory agency that protects residents from physical injury and financial loss that may occur because of unsafe or fraudulent products and

services marketed in Connecticut. The extent of the Department's regulatory oversight is unique in that its jurisdiction often overlaps with that of other state agencies. The Department is responsible for enforcing numerous significant consumer protection laws, including, but not limited to the Connecticut Unfair Trade Practices Act (CUTPA), the Liquor Control Act, the Connecticut Pure Food, Drug & Cosmetic Act, the Connecticut Weights & Measures Act, and the Connecticut State Child Protection Act. The Department also oversees legalized gaming, the Medical Marijuana Program, the Adult-Use Recreational Marijuana Program, and various occupational services. We can quickly mobilize staff and resources to address issues related to food, drug, product safety, or market crises that affect consumers and businesses in the state.

Public Service

The Department of Consumer Protection continues to fulfill its mandate to protect Connecticut consumers through numerous enforcement, outreach, and educational initiatives. Public service provided by the Department during Fiscal Year 2023-2024 included the following activities:

Regulating Alcoholic Liquor

- Through its Liquor Control Division, the Department worked to protect residents' health and safety by regulating all parties involved in the distribution and sale of alcoholic liquor. This included preventing sales to minors and intoxicated persons, as well as ensuring product integrity and compliance.
- Department staff conducted inspections and investigations to ensure adherence to state laws and regulations related to the manufacturing, importation, sale, and dispensing of alcoholic liquor.
- The Department investigated alleged violations of the State Liquor Control Act and consumer complaints involving alcoholic liquor. This included issues such as the sale of alcohol to minors and intoxicated persons, improper pricing and labeling, violations of regulations regarding live entertainment, trade practice violations, and purchases from prohibited entities. Additionally, the Department issued four summary suspensions for violations affecting public health and safety. The Department also enhanced a mobile inspection application to improve efficiency for agents conducting inspections.
- Department staff collaborated with state and local police and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) to strengthen the enforcement of underage drinking laws. This new partnership included alcohol checks using trained minors recruited by police and DMHAS. This collaboration with DMHAS facilitated detailed compliance checks at no additional cost to the state.
- The Department expanded its online services for permit holders and applicants. Individuals can now apply for new permits online and manage existing permits through self-service options. These updates make it easier for license holders to update their permits, check the status and timeline of their applications, and upload any missing information directly to the Department.
- The Department provided in-person and remote training and education to state law enforcement officers, liquor retailers, and community members, aiming to deter underage access to alcoholic liquor and prevent intoxicated driving.
- The Department streamlined its investigations into violations of the Liquor Control Act by adding a new Special Agent position. This role focuses on detailed investigations across the state involving liquor trade practices, covering various areas inside the alcohol beverage industry.

- The Department partnered with its sister Drug Control Division to implement new THC-Infused Beverage laws. This included collecting inventory fees and creating a new endorsement application for package stores. Liquor Control Agents received comprehensive training on state cannabis, hemp, and THC laws.
- The Department was one of three states selected to receive a grant from the National Liquor Law Enforcement Association to investigate third-party app delivery of alcohol to minors.
- The Department continued to work with the Governor's office and the legislature to simplify the liquor permitting process by updating statutes to reflect recent permit changes. Additionally, the Department streamlined the temporary charitable permit process, allowing charities to receive alcoholic donations from any industry member.

Regulating Drugs, Cosmetics & Medical Devices

- The Department's Drug Control Division worked to protect the health and safety of Connecticut residents by regulating all persons, firms, and actors involved in the distribution and sale of drugs, cosmetics, and medical devices in the state.
- The Department investigated alleged diversion of controlled substances by practitioners in pharmacies and healthcare facilities. It conducted pharmacy inspections and responded to consumer complaints regarding prescription errors. In collaboration with the federal Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Department investigated the sale and distribution of controlled substances.
- Department staff assisted local law enforcement, the Connecticut Attorney General's Office, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Food and Drug Administration, the Connecticut Office of the United States Attorney, and the DEA in investigating and adjudicating drug fraud cases in Connecticut.
- Staff performed compliance inspections for all licensees and registrants, including opening, routine, special, and closing inspections. The Department continued to operate and upgrade the Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP), which protects public health by requiring prescribers and pharmacists to access a patient's prescription history. This helps identify patterns of misuse, diversion, and abuse. Law enforcement and regulatory personnel also have access to the program to assist with investigations related to doctor shopping, pharmacy shopping, and fraudulent activity. The program also conducted education and outreach initiatives on prescription drug abuse, safe storage, safe disposal of prescription medication, and proper medication use.
- Staff monitored compliance agreements for pharmacists in a probationary program due to drug addiction concerns. Additionally, the Department oversaw the compliance of police departments' canine labs, which involved licensing the labs and assisting with the canines used for drug detection.
- Legislation passed in 2023 allowed qualifying pharmacists and pharmacy interns to participate in the Health Assistance InterVention Education Network (HAVEN), a confidential program supporting healthcare professionals with debilitating conditions, including mental illness and substance use disorders. The Division works with HAVEN to monitor participating pharmacists and interns and meets with HAVEN regularly throughout the year.
- In its regulatory and operational oversight of the Medical Marijuana Program (MMP), the Department implemented online registration procedures for patients, physicians, and caregivers, and conducted all compliance and investigative functions of the program.
- The Department conducted presentations to professional and community organizations and presented at state and national pharmacy conferences and seminars.

- The Department continued to expand the Drop Box Program, which has been in operation for several years. Currently, 117 drop boxes are active in municipalities across the state, and pharmacies have recently begun participating in the program. From 2012 through 2023, more than 377,000 pounds of medication have been destroyed through this initiative.
- The Division's Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) oversees the Connecticut Prescription Monitoring and Reporting System (CPMRS). This system collects information on controlled substance prescriptions, patient demographics, CPMRS registration, utilization, and interstate data sharing. There are currently 41,198 registered users who review information related to controlled substances, naloxone, diabetic medications and devices, and gabapentin. The PMP analyzes and interprets data from the CPMRS, providing quarterly updates through a newsletter and the Open Data portal. The PMP also collaborates with the Division's Data Stewardship team to enhance compliance and enforcement efforts and to improve provider outreach and education.
- Department staff continued to assist the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Connecticut Department of Public Health in managing the CHEMPACK program for hospitals and first responders. The Division also assisted the FDA in disseminating drug recall notices to prescribers, pharmacists, and pharmacies via an electronic list.
- The Department continued to house the Board Administrator for the Commission of Pharmacy and the Medical Marijuana Board of Physicians, successfully transitioning to a virtual platform that was well-received.
- The Division implemented the registration process for Pharmaceutical Marketing Firms, as passed in last year's legislative session. The Division registered 311 pharmaceutical marketing firms in the state and collected the required marketing activity reports for their registration renewal.
- The Division updated the Connecticut Comprehensive Drug Law resource, commonly known as the "Law Book." This resource provides relevant state statutes and regulations related to pharmaceuticals in a centralized and accessible format.
- This year's legislative session saw significant changes for the Drug Control Division, including:
 - New product categories, such as THC-infused beverages and moderate-THC hemp products, along with new license types for vendors and manufacturers of these products.
 - A registration process for advanced pharmacy technicians and clerks.
 - Requirements for compliance packaging for prescription medications
 - The establishment of a new task force to address unannounced pharmacy closures.
 - A mandate for the Department of Consumer Protection to collaborate with the University of Connecticut to study drug shortages and potential strategies to mitigate their impact.
 - Authorization for licensed micro-cultivators to sell cannabis seedlings to adults over the age of 21.
- Since the inception of the Adult-Use Cannabis Program through the end of this fiscal year (June 30, 2024), adult-use cannabis retail sales have totaled nearly \$240 million. To date, there are 63 licensed cannabis establishments and 83 provisional license holders in Connecticut.
- The Division continued to manage the state's seed-to-sale cannabis tracking system, working to implement updates based on legislative changes and Department policies. The system tracks

cannabis from seed to sale, helping prevent diversion and providing real-time data on the state's cannabis market. Data from the seed-to-sale tracking system is available online monthly on the Open Data portal, including information on total cannabis retail sales, average product prices, and types of products purchased. This year, the Division began reporting the average price per gram of usable cannabis sold to consumers.

- To better support adult-use cannabis registrants, the Division developed several training materials, including guides and videos. These resources cover how to use the state's seed-to-sale cannabis tracking system and how to register cannabis brands in eLicense. The materials have been well-received, and the Division continues to create additional resources to support registrants.
- As of June 30, 2024, there were 39,695 qualifying patients, 3,671 caregivers, and 1,824 certified providers registered with the Medical Marijuana Program. Qualifying patients benefit from a wider variety of cannabis products, larger transaction limits, and tax-free purchases.
- The Division continues to use mobile inspections which were first successfully implemented in 2022. These highly complex forms have been a significant enhancement for inspectors and credential holders.

Regulating Food, Standards and Product Safety

- Through the Food, Standards, and Product Safety Division, the Department enforces packaged and manufactured food and product safety laws, with a specific mandate to protect public health in food and product commerce. The Division also enforces weights and measures laws in Connecticut to ensure a fair, honest, and transparent marketplace.
- As part of this goal, the Department administered the grant-funded quality improvement program for food safety inspections, known as the "Manufactured Foods Regulatory Program Standards" (MFRPS), in collaboration with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). This program focuses on ensuring that food safety inspections conducted by state inspectors are equivalent to those performed by FDA inspectors, thereby protecting consumers in Connecticut and those consuming food products produced in the state from food-related injuries or illnesses.
- The Department also received an FDA grant to host a Rapid Response Team (RRT) for food emergencies in Connecticut. The RRT is an interagency workgroup designed to promote cooperation and quick response times during food emergencies.
- Staff conducted inspections of food-processing plants, warehouses, retail food stores, bakeries, nonalcoholic beverage plants, frozen dessert plants, vending machine locations, and apple juice and cider plants. The Department is working diligently to fulfill its inspection mandate under the State's Uniform Food and Drug Act to protect public health in food commerce.
- The following milestones for Food, Standards and Product Safety are listed below for Fiscal Year 2024:
 - The Department responded to 655 consumer complaints related to food, weights and measures, and product safety.
 - The Department responded to 33 traffic and highway accidents involving food and beverage products. Inspections were conducted to ensure that contaminated or adulterated foods were not distributed to the public.
 - Staff inspected gasoline stations, heating oil dealers, and all weighing and measuring devices used in commerce, including retail store scales, motor truck scales, petroleum meters, and home delivery truck meters.

- The Department checked the packaging, labeling, unit pricing, price accuracy, and advertising of food and other consumer commodities, such as produce sampling, restaurant menus, advertisements, and gasoline station price signs, to ensure that contents, prices, and quality were accurately represented.
- Pursuant to a Cooperative Agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Division conducted Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) inspections. Last year, over 30 such inspections were completed.
- The Department maintained a cooperative agreement with the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) to conduct effectiveness checks for CPSC recalls. Over 20 effectiveness checks were issued to ensure recalled items were removed from store shelves.
- Staff collaborated with the Departments of Motor Vehicles and Public Safety on the Commercial Vehicle Safety and Inspection program, ensuring the accuracy of portable truck scales used in highway safety enforcement programs to prevent overweight trucks from threatening public safety and state infrastructure.
- The Department supervised inspections performed by municipal sealers of weights and measures in Waterbury, Danbury, New Haven, Bridgeport, Norwalk, and Stamford.
- The Department has faced challenges maintaining recognition from the U.S. Department of Commerce and the National Institute of Standards and Technology for the State Metrology Laboratory following the departure of the division's last metrologist. A new metrologist has been hired and is working diligently to regain national recognition for Connecticut.
- Staff from the Division participated in the Connecticut Fuel and Generator Task Force and the Traffic Incident Management Task Force.
- Nationally, the Department participated on the boards for the Manufactured Food Regulatory Standards Program Alliance and the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO).
- Product Safety is responsible for enforcing regulations related to furniture and bedding sales and the State Child Protective Act, which governs toy products for children. The increasing importance of bedding and furniture is linked to the resurgence of bed bugs and concerns about the toxicity of fire retardants.
- Staff continued to maintain a list of toxic substances that should not exist in children's products in cooperation with the Department of Public Health, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, and Trinity College. The list is published on the DCP website.

Performing Investigations, Protecting Against Fraud and Resolving Complaints

- Through the work of the Investigations Division, the Department investigated a range of cases, resulting in criminal, civil, and administrative actions under various statutes, including the Connecticut Unfair Trade Practices Act, the Home Improvement Act, the Homemaker Companion Act, the Solicitation of Charitable Funds Act, and regulations concerning occupational and professional licensing, health and martial clubs, and more. This included 86 referrals to the Office of the Attorney General for criminal violations of the Home Improvement Act and 6 cases referred to the Office of the Chief State's Attorney for criminal violations of occupational licensing statutes.
- Investigators continued to work cooperatively with the Department of Public Health and the

Department of Social Services' Protective Services for the Elderly to ensure homemaker companion agencies were properly executing contracted services and not exceeding the scope of their registration. Through this multi-agency collaboration, elderly clients who were victimized by unscrupulous caregivers were able to receive continuous care and remain in a safe environment. The Division and representatives from the Department of Social Services held monthly meetings on Microsoft Teams to facilitate this enforcement. Additionally, the Division participated in informational sessions for owners of homemaker and companion agencies to discuss and answer questions related to recent changes in the law.

- Occupational Trades inspectors increased the number of construction site inspections statewide. These inspections ensured that workers were properly credentialed for their tasks. As a result of license compliance checks, inspectors issued 89 Assurance of Voluntary Compliance settlements. Inspectors and the Department of Labor's Wage and Workforce Unit conducted 6 joint site inspections of large commercial construction sites in the state.
- Consumer Fraud investigated 16 store closings, 20 credit card surcharges, and numerous refund and exchange complaints. Investigators received training on cybercrimes and elder fraud scams from the National White Collar Crime Center. They learned to conduct cyber investigations, process digital evidence, and investigate network intrusions. Resources and investigative tools for these investigations were provided by the National White Collar Crime Center.
- The Home Improvement Unit assisted several law enforcement agencies in resolving storm-chaser scams, chimney repair scams, driveway paving scams, solar complaints, and other contractor fraud. Homeowners who paid deposits to unscrupulous contractors often found that no work was performed. Investigators also dealt with fraudulent solar sales tactics, failed or unperformed repairs, and difficult-to-terminate contracts, including firms that went out of business or filed for bankruptcy. The Home Improvement Unit issued 42 Assurances of Voluntary Compliance for violations of the Home Improvement Act and referred 138 cases to the Office of the Attorney General for criminal violations of the Act.
- The Public Charities Examination Unit conducted audits of registered charities and investigated 74 complaints under the Solicitation of Charitable Funds Act. These complaints included allegations of misappropriation of funds, questionable financial transactions, deceptive fundraising tactics, and failure to register as a charitable organization. The unit also supports the Investigations Division by examining financial records and billings to verify allegations. Additionally, the Charities Examination Unit is investigating 28 cases in a Donation Bin Project to ensure compliance with Connecticut law.
- The Board of Accountancy Unit investigated complaints against Certified Public Accountants (CPAs) and individuals falsely claiming to be CPAs. The unit investigated 69 violations of the Connecticut Accountancy Act, including professional misconduct, practicing without a license, unauthorized use of the CPA title, improper tax filings, failure to undergo peer review, and fraud or deceit in obtaining credentials.
- A special investigator serves as the agency's State Agency Liaison Officer to the Connecticut Intelligence Center (CTIC). CTIC is Homeland Security's Intelligence Fusion Center which is focused on counter terrorism and intelligence gathering in the state.
- Investigators inspected 197 Mobile Home Park communities for licensing and regulatory compliance. The Department began issuing tickets to park owners with outstanding violations.
- The Real Estate Appraisal Unit was audit by the federal government's Appraisal Subcommittee, receiving a passing grade of A for FY 2024. Staff members attended a training conference hosted by the Association of Appraiser Regulatory Officials in May 2024.
- To address emerging challenges in fraud detection and prevention, Division staff received

training from the International Association of Financial Crimes Investigators (IAFCI), the National White Collar Crime Center (NW3C), the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (ACFE), the New England State Police Information Network (NESPIN), and the Association of Certified Anti-Money Laundering Specialists (ACAMS). Investigators maintain their certifications by earning continuous educational credits.

Real Estate and Appraisal

- The Department's Real Estate unit addressed over 200 new complaints about real estate brokers, salespeople, and community association managers, significantly reducing its backlog of open cases by more than 100. New laws in real estate mandated ongoing education for licensees and education providers. The Appraisal Unit conducted a comprehensive audit of continuing education programs for all licensees.

Complaint Center

- The Department's Complaint Center handled 11,377 phone calls and responded to 3,952 written consumer complaints during the year. Through these efforts, the Complaint Center helped recover over \$447,000 in value for consumers. The most common complaints involved home improvement contractors, licensed tradesmen and professionals, telecommunications and cable companies, utility companies, general retail stores (both online and in-store), warranty providers, funeral homes, medical bills, homemaker-companion agencies, health clubs, and various types of scams.

Regulating Gaming

- The Gaming Division is responsible for regulating legalized gambling in the State of Connecticut which includes lottery, casino, off track betting, sports betting, and sealed ticket commerce that collectively generated revenue of \$723,652,664. This was accomplished through a rigorous program of monitoring, inspecting, auditing, investigating, and licensing safeguards designed to ensure the integrity of the gaming process and protect the interests of players and the public at large.
- Lottery Operations: Monitored lottery commerce for compliance and integrity in all aspects of operations to include instant and terminal based games, drawing operations, promotions, multi state games, technical testing, and building relationships with gaming system and ticket printing vendors. This comprehensive program of regulation resulted in a transfer of approximately \$407,000,000 to the general fund.
- Casino Operations: Monitored slot machine and cage operation integrity through detailed audit and technical inspection of video facsimile slot machines, resulting in a contribution to the General Fund which was approximately \$213,403,418.
- Off Track Betting (OTB)/Pari-Mutuel Operations: Monitored OTB operations across 9 locations throughout Connecticut as well as authorized online wagering and out of state hub operations that coordinated racing events all over the world. Collected and disbursed OTB contributions totaling \$2,131,141 to the general fund.
- ADW – Advance Deposit Wagering: Collected and transferred ADW funds to the General Fund in the amount of \$4,517,903. This includes back payments collected from Xpressbet for \$3,091,027.
- OTB/Municipal Contributions: In addition to General Fund disbursement, the Gaming Division also collected and disbursed OTB shares to municipalities hosting OTB facilities - \$1,358,551.

- **Keno/Tribal Contributions:** The Gaming Division served as conduit to monitor and ensure compliance of Keno share distribution to Tribal casinos, which in FY 2024 amounted to \$10,781,466.
- **Sealed Tickets Operations:** DCP Gaming regulates, licenses, and monitors the sealed ticket industry by vetting ticket prize structures, labeling, and truth in advertising and design. Additionally, background investigations are conducted as part of suitability inquiries for licensing of printers and distributors. These efforts yielded approximately \$215,116 in annual contribution in the form of license fees and taxes to the general fund.
- **Lottery Retailer/OTB Facility Inspections:** Gaming Division completed 6,608 gambling regulation inspections and visits to ensure compliance with all state statutes and regulations related to gaming, and to educate agents on state statutes and regulations related to Lottery.
- **During this reporting period, the CLC lottery drawing studio was relocated from Hartford to a newly constructed, secured, and larger studio within the CLC's headquarters located in Wallingford.** This monumental tasking included the recalibration and recertification of all drawing scales and drawing machines, the weighing and inspection of all lottery balls, revising and approving new drawing procedures, establishing security protocols with a new security vendor, and instituting mock drawings as well as training.
- **Lottery Drawing Operations:** DCP Gaming Lottery Drawing Officers and Gaming Regulation Officers managed 2,550 lottery drawings to ensure the integrity of the games.
- **Lottery Change/Modification/New Game vetting and approval:** The Gaming Division evaluated and approved changes or modifications to wagering systems and related equipment to ensure the integrity of lottery games and operation of Off-Track Betting.
- **Casino Employee Gaming License Investigations:** The Department assured that only suitable individuals worked in Connecticut's gaming industry by coordinating and conducting appropriate background checks before licensing, registering, or issuing permits to individuals, organizations, and vendors to be employed by, or contracted with, gaming licenses or permittees within Connecticut, including businesses authorized to sell lottery tickets. Through these efforts, the Department processed 8,580 active licenses for Connecticut's tribal casino operations. These included 3,031 for Foxwoods Casino and 5,549 for Mohegan Sun Casino.
- **Gaming Enforcement Investigations:** The Gaming Division conducted a total of 300 investigations and monitored gaming operations to ensure that all gambling activities were consistently conducted in a fair and honest manner, and to detect and prevent fraudulent gaming activity. These efforts resulted in 6 arrests.
- **Site Visit/Inspections:** Gaming Investigations conducted site inspections of instant ticket printing and services of the IGT plant facility and the SG plant facility in Lakewood, Florida and Alpharetta, Georgia, respectively. These site inspections evaluate specific operational and physical security compliance procedures at the site according to the contractual agreement.
- **Chronic Gamblers Support:** The Department supported treatment and rehabilitation for chronic gamblers through public awareness activities and by ensuring that funding for such programs is provided pursuant to the Conn. Gen. Statutes Sec. 17a-713(b).
- **Retail Sports Wagering:** 15 RSW locations have been allocated for Connecticut. Currently, there are 11 locations operating, 8 locations are now managed by Sportech and 2 locations are managed by CLC (XL Center and Total Mortgage Arena), and CLC HQ which only cashes tickets. All facilities were inspected and found to be following the Department's regulations concerning Online Casino Gaming, Retail and Online Sports Wagering, Fantasy Contests,

Keno, and Online Sales of Lottery Tickets. Retail Sports Wagering payments to the state for this period totaled \$1,405,979.

- DCP Gaming Regulators attended both the G2E and the GLI 2024 Regulators Roundtable Conference, NAGRA, National Council of Legislators from Gaming States (NCLGS), the SBGA North America Summit, and participated in the high-level discussions encompassing next-generation technologies and the evolution of gaming. Discussion included: AI in Gaming, convergence of digital opportunities and risks, iGaming and iLottery, Next-Gen Casino Management Systems, Sports Wagering Platform Partnerships, Mobile Expansion on Tribal Lands, and Regulated Gaming in the Cloud. Through these conferences, the attending DCP Gaming Regulators were able to establish valuable networking relationships within the regulating community.
- Online Sports Wagering: There are three (3) Online Gaming Operators providing revenue to the state of Connecticut (FanDuel, DraftKings & Rush Street Interactive) for Online Sports Wagering. Online Sports Wagering payments to the state totaled \$21,232,658
- New On-line Gaming Operator: The Sports Wagering Unit facilitated the exit of an on-line gaming operator, Rush Street Interactive (RSI), and successfully completed the introduction of another, FBG Enterprises CT LLC, (Fanatics). This unprecedented changeover of operators was achieved within an 8-week period.
- On-Reservation Online Casino: Collected \$176,545 from the operation of online casinos on the Mashantucket and Mohegan tribal reservations.
- Daily Fantasy Contests: There is currently one licensed provider of Daily Fantasy Contests operating in the State of CT (DraftKings). The payments to the state for Daily Fantasy Contests totaled \$461,722
- Online Casino Gaming: There are two (2) Online Gaming Operators providing revenue to Connecticut for Online Casino Gaming (FanDuel & DraftKings). Online Casino Gaming payments to the state totaled \$71,749,631.
- The DCP Gaming Division has received 1288 online casino game submissions from FanDuel and DraftKings. 1190 are currently approved and 30 have been denied/rejected. Additionally, the DCP Gaming Division evaluated more than 1194 transactional changes with Gaming Operators and On-Line Service Providers regarding Release Notes, Client Changes, and Change Logs for modifications to existing games.
- Newly implemented license class for the Live Gaming Employee License received 420 applications, 384 were approved and 36 were denied. Gaming Key and Gaming Occupational Employee License credentials, which currently consists of 342 and 2166 active and renewed licensees, respectively.
- Fantasy, Retail Sports, and Online Sports and Casino Gaming Operations: DCP Gaming GROs conducted 153 investigations in matters related to various aspects of gaming, such as: OGSP employee theft of gaming equipment, online slot launched with 0% RTP, deceptive marketing/promotion practices, licensing, cease and desist notices to unlicensed offshore casino operators, game integrity, auditing OGSP's for prohibited players, prohibited NCAA wagers offered, upholding patron payouts on an operator void request, operator disabling MFA, etc. One investigation resulted in patrons being paid \$151,000 on a void request. Sixty-Four (64) of these investigations have been referred to DCP Legal for administrative action. DCP Gaming GROs reviewed 228 patron complaints filed relating to Online Sports and iCasino Gaming.

Issuing Licenses, Permits and Registrations

- In FY 24, the License Services Division efficiently and accurately processed over 263,000 licenses, permits, and registrations across 207 different categories, generating more than \$63 million in revenue.
- In July 2023, the Division transitioned the occupational trade application process from its contracting exam vendor back to the Department. With the introduction of online applications and a streamlined approval process, the Division significantly reduced review, approval, and exam scheduling times. Approval times decreased from 3–4 weeks to 3–4 days in most cases. Following this success, the Division implemented a similar transition for real estate applicants in February 2024. This initiative drastically reduced the timeframe from application to exam and licensure and has been extremely well received by customers.
- In February 2024, the Division updated processes to accommodate new real estate law changes effective April 1, 2024. Changes included shifting real estate salesperson and broker licenses from annual to biennial terms, implementing an associate broker designation, introducing late continuing education penalty fees, and revising real estate team registrations. Updates were made to applications (both online and paper), website content, fee structures, licensee notifications, and workflow processes.
- In April 2024, the Division introduced a new online process for real estate salespeople to obtain their initial licenses. Previously, candidates who passed their exams needed a sponsoring broker's signature and had to mail their exam results and fee for licensure. The new online process allows candidates to complete these steps digitally. Automated notifications from the exam vendor alert prospective licensees, who can then log into the Department's online system, select their broker, update their contact information, pay the initial license fee, and receive approval the following day. These changes reduced license issuance time from 3–4 weeks to 2–3 days, enabling candidates to retain their original exam results and complete payments online.
- In May 2024, the Division launched an online process for licensees to request license verifications. This new service is available to real estate professionals and all occupational tradespeople, with plans to expand to professional license holders and accountants. The online process expedites verification requests, which can be used for applications in other states, and ensures that all requests are routed efficiently to the appropriate staff for accurate fulfillment.

Regulating Boards, Commissions, and Councils

The administrative functions of the Boards, Commissions, and Councils are carried out by the Operations Division for the following:

- State Board of Accountancy
- Plumbing and Piping Work Examining Board
- Heating, Piping, Cooling and Sheet Metal Work Examining Board
- Electrical Work Examining Board
- Elevator Craftsman Work Examining Board
- Fire Protection Sprinkler Work Examining Board
- Automotive and Flat Glass Work Examining Board
- Home Inspector Licensing Board
- Architectural Licensing Board

- State Boards of Examiners for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors
- State Board of Landscape Architects
- Real Estate Commission
- Real Estate Appraisal Commission
- Mobile Manufactured Home Park Council

Legal, Information Technology, Communications, and Outreach/Education Functions

- Through its Legal Division, the Department enhanced the enforcement of consumer protection laws by effectively resolving issues of concern with the persons and establishments it regulates. These initiatives included 354 compliance meetings, 41 formal hearings/administrative complaints, 62 formal hearing decisions, 168 Settlement Agreements, 24 Consent Decrees and Stipulations, 3 Assurances of Voluntary Compliance, 7 subpoenas/civil investigative demands, and 0 Declaratory Ruling were issued for FY 2023-2024.
- The Department processed and provided monetary restitution to consumers who were financially damaged in the areas of home improvement, new home construction, real estate, and health club closings. More specifically, 127 consumer claims were processed from the Home Improvement Guaranty Fund, resulting in \$1,589,629.94 paid; 4 claims processed from the New Home Contractor Guaranty Fund with \$45,000.00 ordered paid; 65 consumer claims were processed from the Health Club Guaranty Fund with \$40,406.02 ordered paid; and 1 consumer claim was processed from the Real Estate Guaranty Fund with \$4,990.00 ordered paid. In addition, in FY 2024, the Guaranty Funds collectively contributed a total of \$2,145,577.07 to the State's General Fund. Throughout the year, the Agency's new vehicle arbitration ("Lemon Law") program ordered restitutions to (approximately) 143 consumers, resulting in \$6,765,808.00 in restitution to consumers.
- The Department's Education and Outreach office sponsored its seventh Annual Cross-Cultural Communications Symposium, drawing over 200 attendees from various sectors. This symposium aims to educate and inform those serving underserved and marginalized communities, ensuring that all Connecticut residents have access to state and nonprofit services.
- Staff continued to write a bi-monthly consumer column for *Tribuna*, the state's only Spanish and Portuguese newspaper. They also contributed a monthly consumer awareness column to the state's largest Polish language newspaper and a new Spanish language newspaper, *La Vision*.
- The Education and Outreach team also represented the Department on several commissions and boards that address issues related to underserved and marginalized communities. Staff represented the Department on the Emergency Support Function (ESF)-15 for Public Communications within the state's Unified Command Structure and in the ESF-15 Diverse Communities Task Force to understand and address the needs of underserved residents, this year acting as the co-chair of the ESF-15 Task Force on Diverse Communities. This task force was activated to address the discrete communication needs of underserved and non-English speaking communities in the state regarding health and safety for COVID-19 and vaccine hesitancy. Staff also served on the Trafficking in Persons Council, Jump \$tart Board, the Lt. Governor's Council on Women and Girls, the Financial Literacy sub-committee, and the Coalition for Elder Justice Steering Committee.
- The Department continued to inform and educate the public by developing print and web materials on numerous issues related to consumer protection, and to the industries the Department regulates. This includes an updated and comprehensive Career in the Trades Guide and an updated DCP General Brochure.

- The Department's news releases and announcements about its initiatives, investigations, recalls, and scam alerts resulted in over 10,000 unique print and broadcast news stories in local, statewide, and national publications. Most of the news stories simultaneously appeared online, on local, state or national news media websites, thus remaining accessible to the public.
- The Department continued to be a leader in efforts to address specific consumer scams directed at immigrants and refugees in the state. In addition, the Department worked on a regular basis with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to bring federal programs to the state level. We expanded our work to include other governmental organizations in our efforts to communicate to all underserved audiences. We also expanded our education and outreach partnerships with other state agencies. The Department also worked with the Department of Banking to co-chair the Financial Literacy Working Group for the Governor's Council on Women and Girls.
- As a member of the Coalition for Elder Justice in Connecticut, the Department collaborated with other public and private stakeholders to address issues of financial fraud and other abuses affecting elderly residents in the state.
- The Department is a member of the Trafficking in Persons Council, collaborating with other state agencies, law enforcement, and nonprofits to develop laws and policy that protect vulnerable populations that may be targeted by traffickers.

Improvements/Achievements 2023 – 2024

During Fiscal Year 2023-2024, the Department of Consumer Protection realized numerous improvements and achievements.

- The Department developed the framework for the recently created adult-use cannabis marketplace, including the launch of an online licensing system for the nine different business types that can participate in the market and drafting comprehensive policies and procedures for regulating the newly created industry. The market launched in January 2023, and experienced steady growth in the first 6 months as new businesses continued to open.
- The Department continued to increase its use of online services for liquor permittees and applicants, expanding the number of self-maintenance options available online. These improvements allowed license holders to make their own updates to permits and automatically provide needed notifications to the Department through online portals.
- Education and Outreach continued to represent the agency on the Governor's Council on Women and Girls, the state's Elder Justice Coalition, and ESF-15.
- Representatives from all divisions spoke or presented at dozens of events and speaking engagements. Furthermore, the agency reached out to the business community through a series of webinars presented by division directors.
- The division continues to publish consumer columns in three ethnic newspapers, representing the Polish, Spanish, Portuguese- speaking communities in the state.
- The Department continued to enhance its ability to provide important consumer education via social media platforms like Facebook, X, LinkedIn, and Instagram. By maximizing our use of the Sprout platform, the Communications office increased LinkedIn and Instagram engagement by 243.4% and 53.1%, respectively for FY 2024.
- The Communications Office, in conjunction with the Commissioner's Office and the Education/Outreach Officer, started authoring and publishing monthly newsletters about hot-topic scam schemes, consumer protection stories, and educational tips to keep consumers and businesses safe from deception. The first newsletter was created for September 2024 and will continue each month for this fiscal year to increase the Department's outreach efforts.
- The Department implemented a new credential for Real Estate Teams which has already

resulted in the registration of over 450 teams of real estate professionals.

- The Department has continued to increase the use of the State's eLicense system. Several additional credentials, reports, or other features were added to the online system, including the ability to file well-drilling reports online, initial applications for accountants, and several upgrades in the liquor permitting area. These enhancements have been well-received by credential holders. After it began emailing liquor renewal notices, for example, the Department saw an increase in the number of timely renewals and saw the overall online renewal submission rate increased from 54% to 78% in the first 6 months.
- The Department continues to host interns from colleges and universities all over the country in its intern program, bringing in students to learn from and contribute to the Department's mission and goals.

Equal Employment Opportunity Reporting Requirement

The Department of Consumer Protection is firmly committed to the principles and objectives of equal employment opportunity for all individuals. The Department's full-time Human Resources Associate-EEO, Caesar Valentin, coordinates and monitors the Department's programs and ensures compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Title II and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, the Fair Employment Practices Act, state Affirmative Action regulations, Contract Compliance laws, and other applicable laws.

The Department of Consumer Protection is an Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity employer and has undertaken numerous steps this past year to effectuate equal opportunity in its hiring, promotions, trainings, and other employment-related duties, as well as in the provision of the programs and services that fall under the Department's authority. Information concerning these activities would be too voluminous to relate here but are detailed in the Department's recent Affirmative Action Plan approved by the CT Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities. The Department did not knowingly do business with any bidder, contractor, sub-contractor, supplier of materials, or licensee who discriminates against members of any class protected under Conn. Gen. Statute Sec. 4a-60 or 4a-60a.

The DAS Equal Employment Opportunity Unit partners with our participating client agencies to assure that agency programs are fair and equitable, provide equal employment opportunity, and comply with state and federal laws and guidelines. These assurances are fulfilled by: preparing and implementing affirmative action plans; collaborating in the selection and hiring process; providing a process for complaints of discrimination; and educating staff of their rights and obligations in affirmative action laws.

The Human Resources Associate-EEO serves as DCP's Equal Employment Opportunity Officer reporting directly to the Agency's Commissioner, Bryan Cafferelli, and is responsible for the Agency's Affirmative Action Plan. The Human Resources Associate-EEO directs and administers all aspects of DCP's EEO/AA program, including developing strategic affirmative action programs; interpreting and administering pertinent laws and regulations; investigating complaints of discrimination and reporting findings to the Commissioner and or designee; offering remedies on any discriminatory conduct that occurs; and counseling staff on equal employment opportunity matters. In addition, the Human Resources Associate-EEO prepares materials and conducts trainings to heighten knowledge of equal employment opportunity laws and affirmative action goals and serves as the agency's ADA coordinator.

As of March 1, 2024, 61.2 percent of the Department's employees were female, and 38.8 percent of the employees were male, with the following composition: 62.7 percent White, 19.2 percent Black, 10.8 percent Hispanic, 6.5 percent Asian, and .8 percent Two or More Races.