



# State of Vermont

Workforce Investment Act  
&

Wagner-Peyser Act

5 year Strategic Plan

July 1, 2012, through June 30, 2017



**The Honorable Peter Shumlin  
Governor  
State of Vermont**

**Anne Noonan  
Commissioner  
Vermont Department of Labor**

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## A Summary of Vermont's 2012-2016 State Workforce Plan

The Vermont Department of Labor's mission is complex. In the recently adopted strategic plan for the Department, we examine our role and responsibilities in the following areas: To promote and assist the economic growth and vitality of Vermont employers; to help Vermont businesses retain, create and attract new jobs; to ensure that every Vermonter can have a permanent job with livable wages and benefits in a safe and healthy work environment; to educate and train Vermonters to be a skilled and ready workforce to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century workplace while fulfilling Vermont employers' hiring needs; to administer economic support, retraining and reemployment assistance to Vermonters who experience job loss or a workplace injury; and to provide vital and timely labor market information and analysis to the general public, employers, workers, job seekers, lawmakers, researchers and planners to assist them with strategic and successful decision-making.

The Vermont Department of Labor's Workforce Plan supports many of Governor Peter Shumlin's "Governor's 2011-2015 Statewide Strategic Plan" goals relating to economic and workforce development. The Governor outlines as his first priority, "to create a brighter economic future for Vermonters by raising incomes, growing jobs, improving job training and improving our quality of life". To achieve this goal, the plan calls for "strengthening the economy, protecting and enhancing our natural environment and focus on renewable energy, modernizing state infrastructures, reducing prison populations, improving the effectiveness of state government, holding down health care cost, and making Vermont the 'Education' state".

Included in the specific goals in the Governor's 2011-2015 Plan are key elements for workforce development. His plans calls upon the State to:

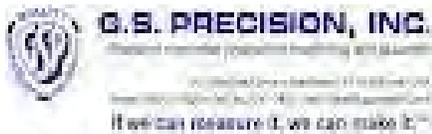
- Develop a statewide economic development strategic plan
- Encourage business growth through collaboration with in-state manufacturers
- Help workers achieve permanent jobs with livable wages and benefits, and engage in continuous learning to remain competitive for the jobs of the future, aligning with the workforce needs of Vermont employers (\*adopted from VDOL's strategic plan)
- Promote programs, policies and legislation that support economic growth and competitive advantage for Vermont business and job creation in Vermont (\*adopted from VDOL's strategic plan)
- Improve digital accessibility for Vermonters to improve economic opportunity
- Facilitate and improve life-long learning systems for Vermonters' economic success
- Increase the number of students who are career and college-ready in 'STEM' fields
- Provide program and economic support to unemployed Vermonters or those seeking new career opportunity, with a focus on populations who face employment barriers (\*adopted from VDOL's strategic plan)

- Promote and enforce policies and laws to ensure that Vermont's workplaces are safe, healthy and respectful (\* adopted from VDOL's strategic plan)
- Create new jobs and attract new workers in key business sectors in Vermont
- Increase economic, technology and workforce development systems to support Vermont businesses and workers
- Diversify business sectors
- Develop programs to promote high quality job opportunities
- Create technology infrastructure to foster innovation and entrepreneurial activities
- Foster a spirit of innovation to build strong Vermont-based businesses
- Engage employers to understand and respond to current and future workforce needs
- Bring key partners together to address barriers for populations with unique employment challenges
- Develop Vermont's reputation and leadership in green jobs industries and those that compliment high tech manufacturing
- Ensure access to programs for workers needing retraining in new skills and technologies
- Ensure that students who are not college-bound have access to meaningful and affordable post-secondary training and education
- Implement a coherent longitudinal data system across the education/learning spectrum
- Identify and target areas of the state where "at-risk" youth services are most needed to ensure successful transition to adulthood
- Decrease the lasting impacts of poverty on individuals, children and families in Vermont

The Governor has convened approximately 10 workgroups to develop and implement the action steps for the statewide strategic plan; with key partnerships between the departments of labor, economic and family services, education, libraries and commerce. In addition, VDOL initiated a joint effort between the Governor's Office, and Commerce and Labor which has been branded "Make Vermont Home: Live, Work, Play" -- an aggressive outreach to Vermont employers to discuss the current and future hiring needs and challenges. It includes collaboration with the state's Marketing Office and the Vermont higher education system including placement and alumni offices, VDOL Workforce Development Division and Council, Economic and Labor Market Information Division, and the Vermont business community. During the initial six weeks of this initiative, VDOL contacted the 2,000 Vermont employers who employ more than 20 workers, and were given 2,400 job openings to post and share with our career resource one-stop centers, with our veterans staff, and with our partners (vocational rehabilitation, office of veterans affairs, economic services, Vermont Associates/55+, and corrections).

Governor Shumlin's priorities for the workforce system focus upon creating opportunities and incentives for the workforce to grow and prosper in Vermont. They include coordination of the State's economic development, workforce development, and education systems;

increased state funding for post-secondary education and training through scholarships, loan repayment and workforce development grants; raising career awareness and exploration in schools and through internships; focus on a diverse economy through sectors that are proven to thrive in Vermont. Vermont is a great place to do business. Companies that have operations elsewhere have found their Vermont workforce to be superior in productivity and longevity. Vermont offers competitive business incentives, we are home to prestigious higher educational institutions, our public schools get tremendous results, and we're close to metropolitan markets including Boston, Albany, and Montreal. World class firms make their home in Vermont: IBM, GE, Goodrich, Energizer, Green Mountain Coffee Roasters, Mylan Technologies, Plasan Carbon Composites, Plasan North America, GS Precision, Weidmann, Concepts NERC, Ben & Jerry's, Cabot Cheese, Northern Power, NRG Systems, and BioTek are prime examples.



**The Vermont Department of Labor's Strategic Plan, Key Strategic Goals and Priorities, adopted in part into the Governor's Plan (as noted in the bulleted list on page 1), include the following measures:**

1. Help workers achieve permanent jobs with livable wage and benefits, and engage in continuous learning to remain competitive for the jobs of the future, aligning with the workforce needs of Vermont employers.
2. Promote programs, policies, information and legislation that support economic growth and competitive advantage for Vermont businesses and job creation in Vermont.
3. Promote and enforce policies and laws to ensure that Vermont's workplaces are safe, healthy and respectful.
4. Provide program and economic support to Vermonters who are unemployed or seeking new career options, with a focus on populations who face greater employment barriers.

**VDOL Outcome Goals Relating to the Key Priorities:**

- Provide opportunities for education, training and skill development for Vermont's students and incumbent workers that will prepare them to succeed in a knowledge-based economy, including those occupations in high demand and in emerging industry sectors.
- Help workers who are in low-wage or declining occupations develop skills to secure better jobs with good wages and benefits.
- Promote and assist business growth and job creation through VDOL funding and programs.
- Engage Vermont employers to determine hiring needs, ability to recruit and retain qualified candidates, including planning assistance through VDOL's Labor Market Information division.
- Assist in the education, training and skill development for workers to ensure a knowledgeable and ready workforce, including those in high demand and emerging industries.
- Review VDOL programs to determine their impact, positively or negatively, on Vermont employers to create and retain jobs, including Workers Compensation and Unemployment Insurance.
- Research and develop templates for effective workplace policies that will enhance employers' ability to recruit and retain workers.
- Assist business growth and development in Vermont, which will lead to job creation, increased opportunities, career and wage advancement, and a brighter economic future for Vermonters.
- Reduce workplace injury rates and time out of work from injury.

- Promote effective policies that will enhance safe, healthy and respectful workplaces.
- Strengthen and enforce legal protections for Vermont workers in areas under VDOL statutory authority and enforcement. Create greater opportunities for employment, career exploration and advancement for Vermonters.
- Increase VDOL's support for full and meaningful employment for Vermonters through utilization of available resources at VDOL, including all training and work experience funds.
- Decrease unemployment for Vermonters through effective One-Stop interaction, job development, referrals to training opportunities, increased OJTs, and integration with REA, JAS and other VDOL and partner agencies' services.
- Examine, analyze and work to find solutions to eliminate employment barriers for Vermonters including long-term unemployed, youth, low-income Vermonters, older workers, veterans, dislocated workers, persons with disabilities and minority populations.
- Develop integrated data systems for workforce and education systems.
- Increase the role and responsibilities of the Workforce Development Council and align activities with the local WIBs, regional workforce development councils and the education system.

Progress has been made in many areas. As a summary, the following information was collected in VDOL's quarterly report to the Governor's Office on our strategic plan measures, to wit:

**Goal #1: Help workers achieve permanent jobs with livable wage and benefits, and engage in continuous learning to remain competitive for the jobs of the future, aligning with the workforce needs of Vermont employers.**

- Unemployment Insurance Division (UI): Applied for and received additional federal grant money to extend the REA (Reemployment Eligibility Assessment program) in all of our district offices, which provides intensive, one-on-one counseling to unemployed Vermonters, thus matching them with training and education programs to which they may be entitled, job development and counseling, and job placement.
- Converted an existing department vacancy into a trainer position who now engages in training of UI and WDD staff on all state and federal program provisions, 'nuances', and resources to help Vermonters achieve successful employment.
- Integrated the REA, RES and JAS (federal reemployment assistance programs) into coordinated efforts, and crossed divisional lines to engage UI and Workforce Development Division (WDD) staff.
- VDOL advocacy, programs and policies have helped reduce the number of Vermonters on unemployment.
- Increased job inventory work through direct contact/cold calls to all Vermont employers.

- Increased the use of Job Fairs to connect job seekers with Vermont employers.

**Goal #2: Promote programs, policies, information and legislation that support economic growth and competitive advantage for Vermont businesses and job creation in Vermont.**

- Rewrote the criteria of the Workforce Education and Training Fund (state-funded money to VDOL) to ensure that the monies allocated are spent to “create a job, save a job (from outsourcing or layoff by helping train workers to enable business competitiveness or expansion), or increase an incumbent worker’s skill set to make the worker more competitive and recession-proof through increased knowledge, skills and abilities. All grants must now demonstrate that they meet one of the criteria.
- Established a collaborative/cooperative framework for the Vermont business and union labor communities to mutually support broad-sweeping reforms on critical issues such as workers compensation, unemployment insurance, and wage and hour protections, through H.762.
- Secured language in 2012 session Budget Bill for the (now State-funded) STC program to be cost-shifted to the Federal government, saving costs to the UI Trust Fund and Vermont business community.
- Granted over \$1M to Vermont businesses for workforce development/training and education.
- WDC: revamped frequency of meetings, established key priorities for the Council, including assessing Vermont employers’ hiring needs/skill gaps, and assessing employment barriers for Vermonters.
- VDOL applied for and received 3 federal grants for disaster impacted businesses and workers, and infused \$3.6M in wage supports for Vermonters.
- Introduced Self Employment Assistance language during the session, after first securing federal support of the plan design, and engaged with Vermont Small Business Development to agree to a partnership on the project; pending legislative approval.
- VDOL’s LMI and WDD have engaged in business outreach activities, and have assisted with sector analysis and reports.
- The State of Vermont, Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) offers an economic incentive for business recruitment, growth and expansion. The Vermont Employment Growth Incentive (VEGI) program can provide a cash payment, based on the revenue return generated to the State by prospective qualifying job and payroll creation and capital investments, to businesses that have been authorized to earn the incentive and who then meet performance requirements. The VEGI program provides incentives from the State of Vermont to businesses to encourage prospective economic activity in Vermont that is beyond an applicant’s “organic” or background growth and that would not occur, would not occur in Vermont, or would occur in a significantly different and less desirable manner, except for the incentive provided. The economic activity can be generated by a Vermont company or a Vermont division adding new qualifying employees, a company that is

considering Vermont as the place to locate a new business or division, or start-up business activity. Once authorized, the incentives can only be earned and installments paid if performance requirements are met and maintained. The Vermont Global Trade Partnership (through ACCD) is Vermont's center for international business assistance. These programs help all of our "Best in Class" Vermont businesses succeed in international markets by providing international trade related educational seminars, trade show participation, technical assistance, and one-on-one consulting services. In many areas ACCD also provides grants and funding for a business to obtain the exposure and necessary infrastructure to make an international transaction possible. Vermont's entrepreneurial community is robust and offers a tremendous networking resource for any entrepreneur to explore concept and pursue funding.

Vermont is a participant in the national Startup America initiative sponsored by the Case and Kauffman Foundations. Startup Vermont is a great resource that we recommend to any Vermont entrepreneur. The Vermont Center for Emerging Technologies (VCET) is a leading-edge technology incubator serving all of Vermont under a mandate to increase technology startups and accelerate next generation job creation for this generation of Vermonters. VCET offers a targeted business incubator program designed to foster the success of high opportunity technology firms by providing firms with substantive business mentoring along with traditional incubator services such as low cost, flexible office space, shared resources, capital, networking, training, etc. VCET is an independent 501 c (3) public benefit corporation in affiliation with the University of Vermont and partners with Norwich University, Middlebury College, Champlain College and the five Vermont State Colleges.

Incubator without Walls at Lyndon State College is the leader in developing the skilled work force that powers Northeast Kingdom economic growth. We provide a wide array of programs and services designed to prepare individual students and businesses for success in the workplace and the regional economy. Each year Vermont hosts a student entrepreneurship competition in high schools around the state. This event provides students with a chance to develop their own business plan and present that plan to a panel of judges. The Vermont Procurement Technical Assistance Center (VT PTAC) exists to help Vermont businesses succeed in obtaining government contracts. The center offers free counseling services to Vermont businesses and provides assistance on how to bid on government contracts at the federal, state and local levels.

**Goal #3: Promote and enforce policies and laws to ensure that Vermont's workplaces are safe, healthy and respectful.**

VDOL's Programs, including Project WorkSafe; VOSHA/VPP/STAR; Wage and Hour/Employment Practices Unit; Workers Compensation and Misclassification; engaged in education, training, enforcement and litigation to further this goal.

During the 2012 session, VDOL was involved with (offered expert testimony, or assisted or initiated) legislative proposals on issues relating to safe and healthy

workplaces including credit check, wages for laid-off workers, worker compensation, line of duty injuries, workplace bullying, speeding up the timeframe for vocational rehabilitation referrals for injured workers and no union avoidance with State money.

- VDOL Legal Division participated and assisted with the work on human trafficking prohibitions, investigation and enforcement.
- VDOL was assigned the lead role in implementing the work plan established in S.52 – workplace civility/non-bullying, non-retaliation. VDOL conducted the majority of the research and helped to draft some proposals for the legislative committees' review, and has established the workgroup and set the meetings for the work on this issue.
- Increased enforcement and litigation in cases of misclassification; established penalty and debarment provisions.

**Goal #4: Provide program and economic support to Vermonters who are unemployed or seeking new career options, with a focus on populations who face greater employment barriers.**

- Engaged members of the disability community in Vermont in a review of VDOL UI policies with a focus on opening up greater options for utilization of vocational services, training waivers, and part-time employment options to enable persons with disabilities to maintain UI support during transitions to employment.
- Provided a \$37K workforce training grant to the Association of Africans Living in Vermont to prepare their constituents for health care jobs in Vermont.
- Working with Vermont Technical College to develop 4 programs targeted at Vermonters who are "Long Term Unemployed" to assist them find meaningful employment.
- Working with Vermont Associates (who represent Vermonters age 55+), including supporting their recent grant award from the USDOL.
- Provided \$137K in SEO grant money to 13 Vermont organizations serving "at risk" youth in Vermont (grants awarded in June 2012).
- Established focus group to discuss diversity and cultural competency issues (hiring, training, outreach, inclusion) within VDOL and our regional offices.
- Funded Community college of Vermont \$187K to work with Vermonters with low skills, minimal education or sporadic work history, for a (nationally recognized) Career Readiness Certificate.
- Revised entire VDOL Veterans Reps Program to ensure better service to Vermont Veterans approved by US DOL Veterans' Employment and Training Service.
- Engaged the undocumented workers advocacy groups in projects to promote workplace safety and enforcement of Vermont's wage and hour laws.
- Researched and determined greater flexibility and use of federal WIA money for low-income Vermonters (adult and at risk youth), dislocated workers (business closing), and trade impacted workers (jobs shipped overseas).
- Funded a child care provider training, which will assist a primarily female-dominated industry with skill development, credentialing and wage increases.

- Funded a joint training program with union and non-union businesses for women in the construction trades.

### **Evolving Initiatives:**

- Continued discussion with USDOL about flexible approaches to utilization of federal funds.
- Marketing: Revamping VDOL website (received \$30K matching funds from federal OSHA).
- Redesigning VDOL's Job Link system, including consulting with our federal support staff from Boston regional office of USDOL about how to use our federal funding to rebuild the entire system.
- Establishing VDOL training programs/seminars/webinars on the areas of regulatory programs, employment practices and labor laws that we oversee and enforce.
- Align existing workforce funding streams across State agencies, and facilitate leveraging.
- Expand the use of social media tools and mobile applications to better connect unemployed job seekers with employment opportunities. Examining the options to use skill matching to generate job leads, regularly updated and with output to the job seekers; making new technologies available to our workforce training and development partner agencies.

The Center for Enterprise Development's 2010 Annual Report Card of the States gives Vermont an "A" for overall ranking. Vermont is one of the leading states employing high-tech workers. With 52 of every 1,000 workers employed in the computer and electronics industry, the state ranks ninth in the nation. In addition, the state ranks sixth in the nation for Ph.D. scientists and engineers in the workforce. With 25 institutions of higher learning, Vermont ranks in the top 7 for graduates with bachelor's degrees or higher. Vermont has an excellent public education system. There are 358 public schools in 258 districts. According to the U.S. Department of Education, Vermont has the lowest teacher-student ratio in the country and has one of the highest number of citizens with a Bachelor's degree per capita. Vermont ranks 2nd in 8th grade reading proficiency and 3rd in 8th grade math proficiency. Vermont ranks 5th in high school graduation rates. Vermont has the highest high school completion rate in the United States, and ranks in the top ten states nationwide with regard to SAT scores. Student teacher ratios are approximately 13:1. 99% of Vermont schools have Internet access with ratios of less than 4:1 for students per computers in the school. In addition, as of September 2012, Vermont has the 5<sup>th</sup> lowest unemployment rate in the nation. In other positive economic news for Vermont, just announced this month was that Vermont was the only state in the country to see median household income go up last year. And it's the first time any state has seen an increase since 2009. The new figures from the U.S. Census Bureau show Vermont's median income for a family of four rose from \$50,707 in 2010 to \$52,776 in 2011. That's a 4 percent increase. This comes at a time when 18 states saw drops in income and other states remained flat.

## Vermont Department of Labor Structure

The Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) is an independent department in State government, with a Commissioner that reports directly to the Governor. VDOL has over 300 employees, with approximately 150 staff working from our central office located in Montpelier. VDOL also has 12 regional offices - Career Resource Centers that offer job-seekers and businesses recruitment and placement assistance, including job fairs, Vermont Job-Link, career counseling and job development; enhanced services for youth, veterans, economically-disadvantaged and long-term unemployed persons; and information and application assistance for federal and state programs and benefits such as On-the-Job Training, Apprenticeship, Summer Youth programs, Internship programs, Veterans services, and hiring incentives and credits. Department staff from our Vermont Occupational and Safety, Project WorkSafe, Workers' Compensation misclassification, and Unemployment Insurance audit programs also work from our various regional office locations.

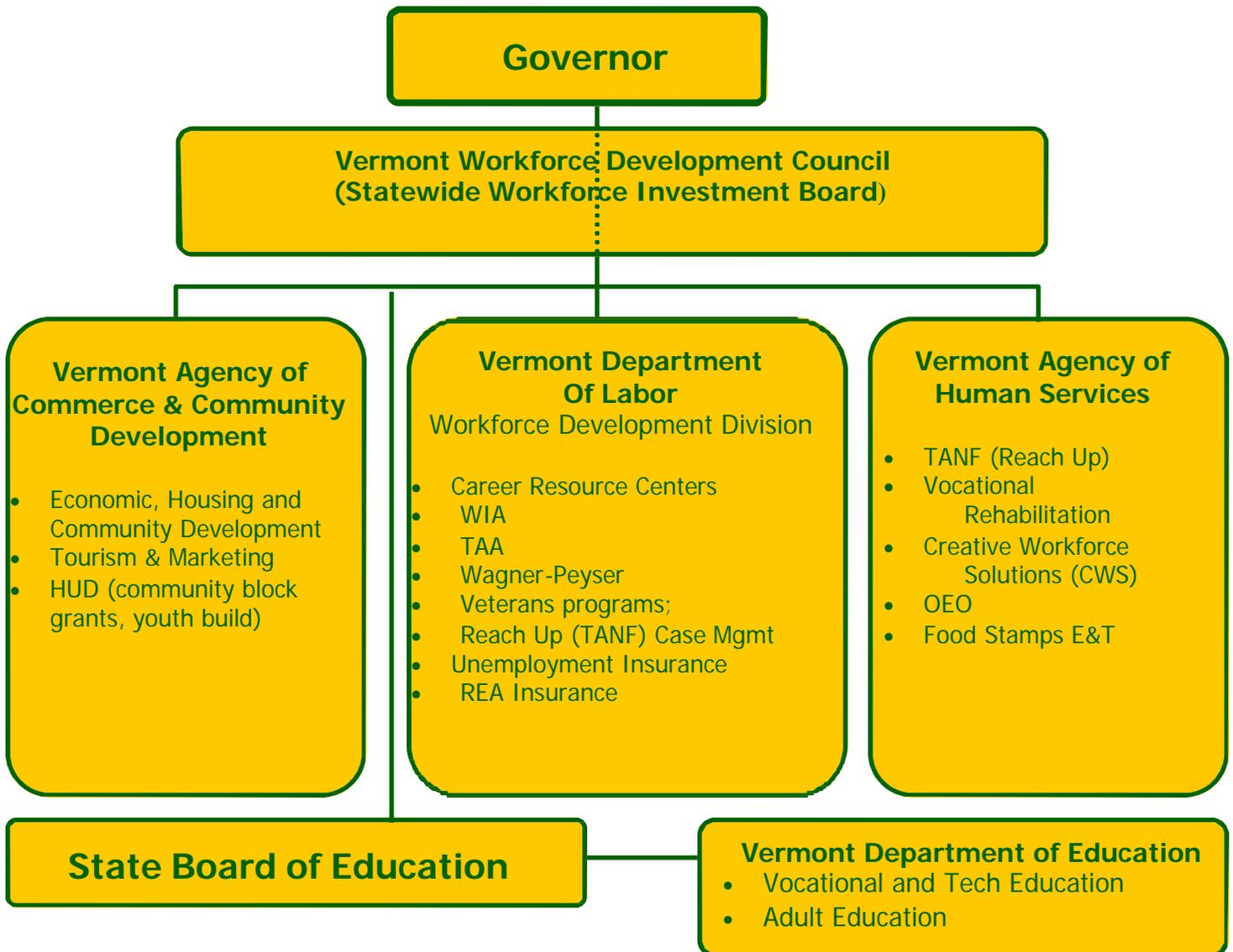
### **The Department of Labor consists of the following divisions/organizational units:**

- Unemployment Insurance and Wages
- Workforce Development
- Workers' Compensation and Safety/(VOSHA & Project WorkSAFE)
- Economic and Labor Market Information
- Workforce Development Council (statewide workforce investment board), supported by liaison staff from the VDOL Commissioner's Office
- Fiscal, Operations, and Information Technology (3 units, supporting VDOL's daily operations)

### **The Department of Labor has statutory responsibility for the following Councils and Boards:**

- Vermont Employment Security Board
- State Apprenticeship Council
- State Workforce Development Council, including the WDC staff liaison (including some funding under the "Next Generation" program that supports initiatives including the Workforce Education and Training Fund (WETF) grants, Vermont Adult Technical Education Centers, Vermont Career Internship Program, and Regional Workforce Development incentives).
- Department of Labor Advisory Council
- Vermont Occupational Safety and Health Review Board
- Passenger Tramway Board
- Unemployment Insurance Fund Study Committee

# Organizational Chart for Vermont's Public Workforce System



The agencies whose programs are listed above formally collaborate through the agencies and departments and the Workforce Development Council (Vermont's workforce investment board). The WDC works to ensure that issues relating to workforce and economic development are addressed in the most comprehensive, efficient and collaborative/cross-agency manner. In some cases, such as TANF, there are formal contracting arrangements for co-case managing across the programs.

## **Vermont's Workforce Development Council:**

### **Commissioner's Objectives for the Workforce Development Council:**

Commissioner Annie Noonan and Jim Pratt, CEO of world-marketed Cabot Cheese co-chair the Workforce Development Council (that is what Vermont calls its SWIB).

The section on the WDC was co-authored by Commissioner Noonan and Chairman Pratt, with input from members of the WDC. The WDC Executive Committee meets monthly and the full Council meets quarterly, as well as for special committee meetings (such as working with Vermont Associates on their Successful Aging Initiative and for a discussion on Career Pathways with the Vermont Agency of Education and Tech Ed Center Directors).

In addition, the Commissioner has required VDOL to actively engage WDC member involvement as readers and grant team members in our state funded Workforce Education and Training Fund (WETF) grant process (WDC members sat on the Internship Awards, the Regional Workforce Partnership grant awards, the Adult Tech Ed/Career Center grant awards, the Vermont business community grant awards).

In addition, the Commissioner has required VDOL to actively engage WDC members in the reading and awarding of grant applications for WIA Summer Employment Opportunity grants.

The WDC Executive Committee plans agendas, examines program ideas, discusses legislative issues, assists the Governor with Workforce Development issues and initiatives, and is specifically required by statute to recommend the expenditure allotments of the State's Next Generation WD funds. Commissioner Noonan and Chairman Pratt testify extensively throughout the session on matters relating to workforce education, training and initiatives.

WDC members meet regularly with the Commissioner or the Chairman, (often in smaller groups or one-on-one) to discuss workforce issues.

The Commissioner was presented with significant challenges in filling the WDC Executive Director. First, the Vermont Legislature voted to abolish the position in May 2011. This action was spearheaded by the then-head of the Senate Economic Development Committee. Commissioner Noonan responded by moving the incumbent to work directly under the Commissioner's Office as a 'special assistant to the Commissioner', and allowed him to continue with WDC work. He continued to work with the Department full-time until his retirement in April 2012, and then served as a contractor for several months. He still works on an 'as needed' basis at the call of the Commissioner. Our VDOL LMI Director Mat Barewicz, our WDD Director Rose Lucenti, our Deputy Commissioner Erika Wolffing, our WDC Chair Jim Pratt, and our Administrative Support Staff Nancy Parsons, have assisted with WDC work and tasks in recent months, as the position vacancy has existed. We hope to post and recruit this Spring; however,

the Vermont legislature has the authority and ability to control position numbers within every department in state government, and ensuring that the position number was not rescinded has been challenging. In fact, Vermont DOL lost seven positions in a recent job rescission. The Commissioner believes that she will receive approval to fill the position when posted, but the Administration is seeking to pull 75+ positions from state agencies and departments to address position needs in other parts of state government. Secondly, the position of WDC Executive Director was charged ½ to WIA and ½ to a grant from Vermont Technical College, and that grant is scheduled to terminate on June 30<sup>th</sup>. Lastly, the position may be filled on a part-time basis until we determine its funding, workload and projects – and this decision was made with the input of the WDC Executive Committee. We believe the Commissioner will receive authority to post after May 15<sup>th</sup>.

The VDOL WIA 5 year plan will be resent to our WDC (SWIB) for additional review and comments. It appears that some of the members were more active in their review than others, so we will attempt to ensure that they take a more active role in the review.

## **Vermont's Workforce Development Council**

The Workforce Development Council (WDC) was established in State law in 2006 as the successor to the Human Resources Investment Council, originally established in 1993. The mission of the Council is to ensure that Vermonters have the skills they need to get and keep good jobs, and that Vermont employers have the skilled workers they need to compete in a rapidly changing economy. The Council advises the Governor on the development and implementation of a comprehensive, coordinated, and responsive workforce education and training system. The Council is also designated as the State and Local Workforce Investment Board under the Federal Workforce Investment Act.

The WDC is a business majority council, appointed by the Governor, with members representing all sectors of the economy and all geographic regions of the State. In addition, Council membership includes top officials from State agencies and higher education institutions, representatives of labor and the low income community, and members of the Senate and House. The Chair is appointed by the Governor from the business membership.

### **Strategic Vision**

Vermont's long-term economic vitality is clearly tied to our ability to effectively link our workforce development resources to our economic development strategies. We must build a comprehensive and integrated workforce development system with the goal of enhancing Vermont's economy and providing our citizens with high-wage, knowledge-based jobs. Creating a highly skilled workforce goes beyond the work of a single organization, and will require the active participation of WDC member organizations including State government, businesses, higher education, labor, and non-profit education and training providers.

### **Challenges include:**

- Workforce demographics that include the retirement of many skilled workers and a shrinking cohort of young workers.
- Skills gap between the requirements of many jobs and the current skills of the workforce.
- Difficulty in developing and sustaining productive education and training partnerships between employers and education and training providers.

**Goals:**

To address these challenges, Vermont must strengthen its commitment to workforce development and lifelong learning for all workers in all economic sectors. The system must be responsive to employer needs, foster innovation, create entrepreneurs, prepare new workers, and re-skill incumbent workers.

**Strategies:**

- Engage employers and public entities as active partners in identifying skill gaps; developing, funding and sustaining innovative workforce training programs; outreach efforts to students, unemployed, underemployed, and displaced workers.
- Support and encourage the efforts of Vermont's public education system, as well as workforce education and training providers, to respond to the need for skilled workers and life-long learners.
- Foster collaboration across all programs and institutions to create and enhance educational pathways in high demand/career areas.
- Identify successful workforce education and training innovations and support their statewide implementation.

**Workforce Initiatives:**

2011 saw continued implementation of a number of innovative workforce programs that responded to the lagging economy, the challenging employment environment, and the end of the Recovery Act programs. Across the workforce education and training system, providers responded the needs of employers for skilled workers and helped Vermonters meet ever increasing skill requirements. Mainstays of the State's workforce development efforts such as the Workforce Education and Training Fund (WETF), the Vermont Training Program (VTP), the VSAC Non-Degree Program, the Workforce Investment Act, programs at the Regional Technical Centers, and the Learning Works High School Completion Program continued to provide essential education and training services. In spite of the poor economy, employers continue to apply for assistance from the WETF and VTP, and in most cases employers match these grants with private funding. Fewer new jobs were created this year and consequently these training programs are also investing in up-skilling and cross-training for incumbent workers in order to raise wages and to prevent lay-offs.

The Department of Labor and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation served greater numbers of individuals in 2011 through on-the-job training and classroom-based training. The Creative Workforce Solutions program under the State's VR division offers a work opportunity of up to six weeks for employers and job seekers with disabilities to work together toward a successful job match. Programs such as the WETF Internship Program, the Workplace Readiness Credential (CRC) classes conducted by Community College of Vermont, and the Dual Enrollment Program continue to help Vermonters prepare for employment. Each of the agencies and institutions that deliver these programs will provide detailed reports on their activities.

Workforce education and training innovations at the local level are supported by Regional Workforce Partnerships comprised of employers, chambers of commerce, regional development corporations, regional technical centers, colleges, and local non-profit organizations.

### **New Strategic Approaches to Workforce Development:**

This year, the WDC member agencies continue to support and expand several exciting initiatives. Among these is an effort by the Department of Education to develop statewide standards that will enhance work-based-learning opportunities for secondary students, and expansion of the Department of Labor's Vermont Internship Program.

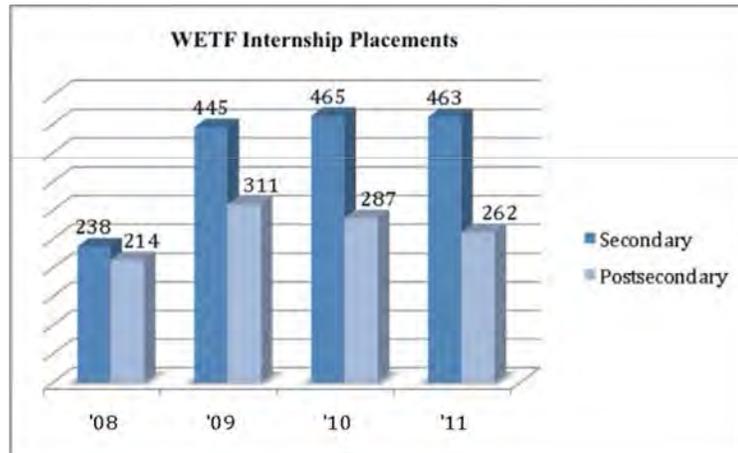
This year, the Council released its Report on careers in the Hospitality sector in partnership with the State Chamber of Commerce, the Department of Education, and the New England Culinary Institute. The report points to the career opportunities in this sector, and the important role the Hospitality sector played as a provider of jobs through the recent recession, particularly in the more rural regions of the state. This and other sector reports are available on the WDC website. In addition, we are seeing success with a number of innovative programs that have been developed in recent years. Three of these programs that have shown a high degree of effectiveness are identified below.

Also in 2011, Vermont Green, a diverse statewide public-private partnership funded by a competitive Recovery Act grant from the US Department of Labor to Central Vermont Community Action completed its second year preparing hundreds of workers for a variety of green jobs including; energy-efficient construction and retrofit, renewable electric power production, recycling and waste reduction, and energy efficient and advanced drive train vehicle production.

### **Vermont Internship Program:**

In 2008 the legislature passed an internship program as part of the Next Generation Workforce Education and Training Fund operated by the Department of Labor (VDOL). In the 2011 Legislative session the name was changed to the Vermont Internship Program. VDOL makes competitive grants to colleges, trade associations, nonprofits and businesses for the operation of internship programs. The goal is to provide meaningful work experiences for promising students that will strengthen their skills, make them better informed about job opportunities in the State, and help them establish professional networks. More than 2,600 students have been placed in internships since the program began.

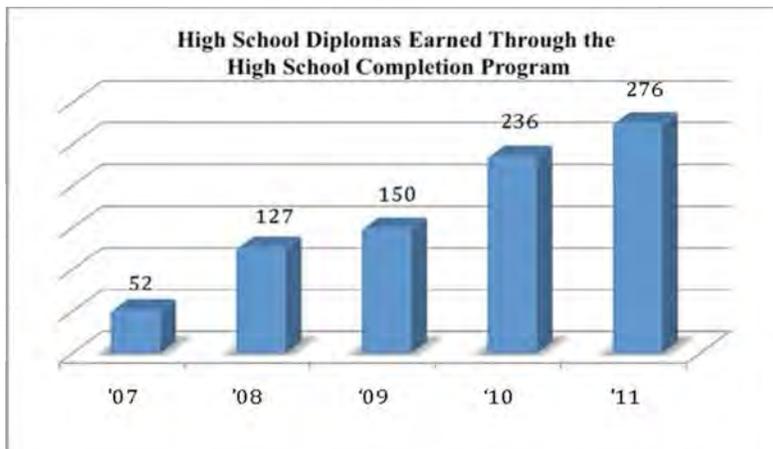
This program has become well established in spite of a decline in state funding and very challenging economic environment. In 2011 the secondary program was operated through six Regional Workforce Partnerships and four local non-profits, and reached 24 high schools and signed on more than 400 business sponsors. The postsecondary program has shown a slight decline from its peak. We attribute this to overall economic conditions and the fact that companies with laid-off workers generally do not take on paid interns. Over time, the providers and employers have become more familiar with the program and administrative efficiencies have been achieved lowering average the cost per intern.



Future plans call for expanding the program to reach all regions of the state by working in partnership with the Department of Education, Voc Rehab, Regional Workforce Partnerships, and additional colleges.

### Act 176 High School Completion Program:

The High School Completion Program (HSCP) has received national attention for its innovative approach. The most unique aspect of the program is that students participate in the development of an individual learning plan that is customized to respond to their needs, interests, and learning styles. This plan can include a wide variety of alternative learning opportunities including basic skills instruction and tutoring, independent study, classes at their high school or regional technical center, adult education and college courses, or participation in an internship. Once the goals in their plan are successfully completed, students may participate in graduation ceremonies at their home high school and receive a diploma. HSCP was developed by the Learning Works statewide adult education system (formerly Adult Basic Education) and the Department of Education, and was supported by the Council throughout the legislative



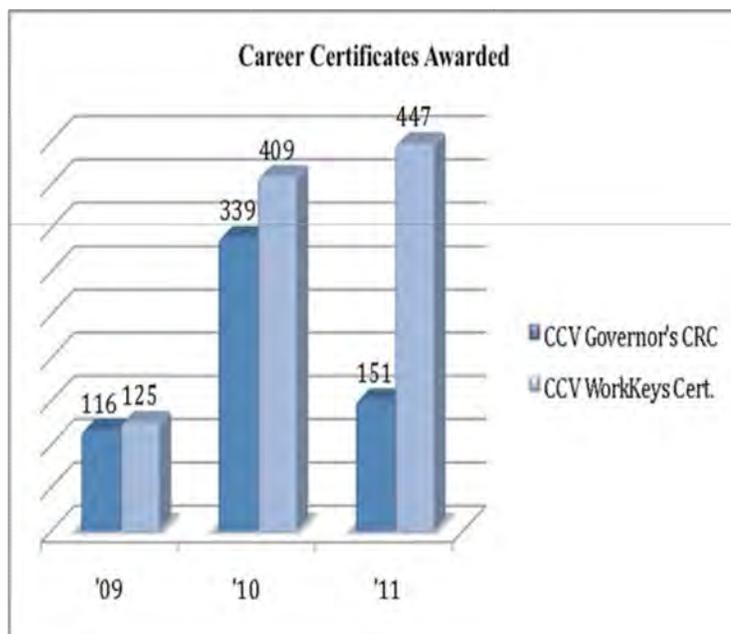
process. It was passed by the Legislature in 2006. The Council estimates that between 1,000 And 1,200 students leave Vermont's public schools each year without a diploma. This is an important workforce development issue because Vermont has a shortage of young workers, and those lacking basic skills are unable to meet today's entry level job requirements. 1,808 students have enrolled and developed graduation plans and 841 students have earned their diplomas from the beginning of the program through June

of 2011. Another 337 achieved other positive outcomes including earning a diploma through the Adult Diploma Program, earning a GED Certificate, or returning to school. 2011 was the second year that the program was able to also serve students still enrolled in high school, graduating 141 of these students. Enrollment of in-school students is growing rapidly, accounting for 26% of participants.

### CCV Governor's Career Ready Certificate:

The Community College of Vermont, in partnership with the Vermont Department of Labor has implemented a program to help Vermonters improve their work readiness skills. The program, which is offered statewide at no cost to participants, was developed in response to needs that were identified in a series of employer focus groups. The Governor's Career Ready Certificate Program (CRC) focuses on generalized skills needed for any workplace. CRC students have found work in higher education, medicine, manufacturing, electronics, construction, hospitality, and public administration. Demand continued, but fluctuations in grant sources reduced the availability of the certificate program at various times in the last year.

The program consists of six modules that help unemployed and underemployed workers enhance their skills. Each module is a short, integrated course of study in areas of skill need, including business professionalism, basic computer skills, teamwork, and job search skills. Those who successfully complete all six modules earn a CCV Governor's Career Ready Certificate. In addition, students can sit for the ACT National WorkKeys Skills assessment and those who score a level 3 or higher on also receive a National



Career Readiness Certificate <<http://www.act.org/certificate/index.html>> as well as the Governor's Career Ready Certificate. As CRC and WorkKeys students spread out into workplaces across the state, employers are beginning to understand the benefits of these certificates. An increasing number of employers consider these credentials when filling positions including; Cabot Cheese, Energizer, Green Mt. Coffee, Rutland Regional Hospital, Vermont Country Store, Green Mountain Coffee Roasters, and Central Vermont Medical. In addition, a number of employers have contracted with CCV to make these programs available to their employees.

## **Regional Workforce Partnerships:**

As a result of legislation passed in 2010 and 2011, four of the Regional Technical Centers accepted responsibility for regional workforce development activities, accountability expectations were increased, and funding was put on a competitive basis. These eleven regional volunteer boards are the local component of the system, working closely with employers, schools, colleges and community organizations to identify needs and implement training solutions. Under legislation passed in 2010, the Regional Workforce Partnerships are to focus their efforts in two areas; working with employers to assess existing worker skill gaps and training opportunities, and improving the effectiveness and efficiency of local education and training delivery. To carry out these tasks the partnerships engage employers, regional development corporations, local chambers of commerce, tech centers, colleges, state agencies, and local non-profit organizations.

Regional Workforce Partnership activities in 2011 included; assisting individual employers, and organizing local groups of employers to apply for training grants from the Workforce Education and Training Program (WETF) or the Vermont Training Program (VTP), organizing Job/Career Fairs for youth and adults, and implementing the WETF Internship Program.

## **Challenges for 2012 - 2013:**

Significant progress in preparing the State's workforce has been made over the past year, however the underlying trends remain a concern:

- The size of the workforce in Vermont has shown little growth in recent years and will begin to shrink in 2012, continuing to decline in size over the next decade.
- Census data continues to show a decline the 20-34 year old population in the State.
- Vermont's workforce is older than the average in most other states, and as the baby boomers retire, a large number of skilled workers will leave the workforce.
- There will be an 18% decline in Vermont's high school population over the next ten years.

In addition, much higher skills are required to get and keep a good job than in the past, and even with the current high rates of unemployment, employers report that workers who can fill skilled positions are difficult to find;

- Good jobs that were once available to workers with limited academic skills now require strong skills in reading, communication, math, and the use of computers.
- More than 1,000 Vermont students leave high school each year without a high school diploma
- Workers with a high school diploma, on average, earn only 65% of the US average wage, while those with a bachelor's degree (or other industry specific credentials) earn 131%.
- Employers invest more in skilled workers. Half of college graduates receive training on the job, but fewer than 20% of school dropouts receive such training.
- Of the top ten fastest growing jobs in Vermont, seven require two year college degrees or more for entry, and two others require specific post-high school training.
- Science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) skills are in high demand in sectors as diverse as healthcare, energy, engineering, and manufacturing.
- Specialized information technology, software, and computer skills are required in 95% of jobs in banking/insurance, graphics/printing, and healthcare.

To address these challenges, we will focus on education and training strategies to increase worker productivity, provide the training necessary to help underemployed Vermonters move up into better jobs, and to meet the needs of employers for skilled workers.

#### **Plans for 2012 - 2013:**

- Work closely with the Washington delegation to make sure the re-authorization of the WIA includes the right policies and provides adequate resources for Vermont.
- Monitor the implementation of the Act 46 Next Generation programs to increase accountability, make recommendations for future funding priorities, and continue efforts to streamline administrative processes.
- Continue to expand the WETF Internship program toward the goal of providing statewide access.
- Continue to invest in the CCV Career Readiness Credential program and make the Work Keys assessment available at DOL offices and through other local providers.
- Expand partnerships with leading business and trade associations to build consensus on strategies to address worker skill shortages in the STEM jobs in key economic sectors across the State.
- Continue to respond to the emerging workforce needs of the Healthcare sector with new and innovative training solutions.

## **Strategic Vision:**

Vermont's long-term economic vitality is clearly tied to our ability to effectively link our workforce development resources to our economic development strategies. We must build a comprehensive and integrated workforce development system with the goal of enhancing Vermont's economy and providing our citizens with high-wage, knowledge-based jobs. Creating a highly skilled workforce goes beyond the work of a single organization, and will require the active participation of WDC member organizations including State government, businesses, higher education, labor, and non-profit education and training providers.

## **Challenges:**

- 1) Workforce demographics that include the retirement of many skilled workers and a shrinking cohort of young workers.
- 2) Skills gap between the requirements of many jobs and the current skills of the workforce.
- 3) Difficulty in developing and sustaining productive education and training partnerships between employers and education and training providers.
- 4) Increasing competition from national and international entities in many economic sectors.

To address these challenges, Vermont must strengthen its commitment to workforce development and lifelong learning for all workers in all economic sectors. The system must be responsive to employer needs, foster innovation, create entrepreneurs, prepare new workers, and re-skill incumbent workers.

## **Goals:**

- 1) The skills of the Vermont workforce will meet the needs of employers.
- 2) Vermont enterprises in all economic sectors will succeed because of the quality of the Vermont workforce.
- 3) The capacity of Vermont's workforce education and training system will be enhanced.
- 4) Education and training programs will prepare Vermont's workforce for good jobs.

## **Strategies:**

- 1) Engage employers and public entities as active partners in identifying skill gaps; developing, funding and sustaining innovative workforce training programs; outreach efforts to students, unemployed, underemployed, and displaced workers.

- 2) Support and encourage the efforts of Vermont's public education system, as well as workforce education and training providers, to respond to the need for skilled workers and life-long learners.
- 3) Foster collaboration across all programs and institutions to create and enhance educational pathways in high demand/career areas.
- 4) Identify successful workforce education and training innovations and support their statewide implementation.

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**  
**RESPONSIBILITIES IN VERMONT LAW**

1. Advise the Governor on Vermont's workforce education and training system.
2. Coordinate planning and services for Vermont's workforce education and training system, and oversee its operation.
3. Establish and oversee workforce investment boards
4. Establish goals for and coordinate the state's workforce education and training policies.
5. Receive annual reports from the legislative joint fiscal office on the workforce education and training revenues and expenditures of agencies and institutions which are members of the council.
6. Annually review and comment on workforce education and training revenues and expenditures of member agencies and institutions.
7. Negotiate memoranda of understanding between the council and agencies and institutions involved in Vermont's integrated network of workforce education and training in order to ensure that each is working to achieve annual objectives developed by the council.
8. Carry out the duties assigned to the state workforce investment board, as required for a single-service delivery state, under P.L. 105-220, the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and any amendments that may be made to it.

## Workforce Development Council

09/14/12

*Chair Jim Pratt	Cabot Creamery Coop. Inc.
*Vice Chair Frank Cioffi	GBIC & Cynosure Inc.
<b>Business Members</b>	
Gregory Akiki	IBM Corp.
Julie Atwood	Seventh Generation Consumer Goods
Paul Biebel	Biebel Builders
Rudy Chase	MSA Gallet Helmets
Diane Davis	Killington Ltd.
Dan DiBattista	General Electric – Aviation
Neil Gruber	Helen Porter Healthcare and Rehab. Ctr.
Renee Kilroy	Northern Counties Health Care
Mary Lintermann	PC Construction Company
Chris Loso	Loso's Professional Janitorial Svcs. Inc.
Stephen Marsh	Community Natl. Bank
Maynard McLaughlin	Bread Loaf Corp.
Teresa Miele	Plasan Carbon Composites
Jeff Nolan	Dinse, Knapp & McAndrew
Eric Sokolowski	Knowledge Wave Training
Grant Spates	Spates Construction
Tom Torti	Lake Champlain Regional C of C
David Townsend	Small Planted Inc.
*Fran Voigt	New England Culinary Institute
Jeffery Wright	VT Electric Coop.
<b>Low Income</b>	
Hal Cohen	Central VT Community Action Council, Inc.
<b>Governor's Office</b>	
Governor Peter Shumlin	Governor's Office
<b>Agency/Higher Ed</b>	
Clarence Davis	UVM State Relations
*Tim Donovan	Vermont State Colleges
Pat Elmer	VT Associates for Training & Development, Inc.
Dennis Lamberd	Northlands Job Corps. Ctr.
Lawrence Miller	Agency of Commerce & Community Development
Stuart Mitchell	PathStone Services

<b>Agency/Higher Ed (continued)</b>	
*Annie Noonan	Vermont Department of Labor
Doug Racine	Agency of Human Services
Susan Stitely	Assoc. of VT Independent Colleges
Karen Mitchell Taylor	Governor's Institutes of VT
Vacant	Abenaki Self Help
*Armando Vilaseca	Department of Education
<b>Labor</b>	
Michael Blair	AFSCME Council 93
Ron Rabideau	Teamsters Local 597
Lynn Vera	Center for Technology, Essex (CTE)
Jeff Wimette	Intl. Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 300
<b>Legislators</b>	
<b>House</b>	
Representative Kathleen Keenan	St. Albans City
Representative Michelle Kupersmith	Rutland 1-2
<b>Senate</b>	
Senator Kevin Mullin	Rutland
Senator Hinda Miller	Chittenden

**\*Executive Committee Member**

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Revised 09/11/12

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<p>Nancy Slater Cobden, WIB Coordinator          Hannaford Career Ctr.          51 Charles Ave.          Middlebury, VT 05753          (H) 802-388-1571          Email: ncobden@pahcc.org</p>	

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## North Country Career Center WIB

<p>Richard Hoffman, Director          N. Country Career Ctr.          PO Box 725          209 Veterans Ave.          Newport, VT 05855          (W) 802-334-5469 ext. 1          Email; rhoffman@ncuhs.org</p>	
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## Rutland Region Workforce Investment Board

<p>Glen Traverse, WIB Chair          GE Aviation          Wind Crest Rd.          N. Clarendon, VT 05759          (W) 802-773-9121 Ext. 1537          Email: glen.traverse@ae.ge.com</p>	<p>Lyle Jepson, WIB Vice-Chair          Director, Stafford Technical Ctr.          Rutland, VT 05701          (W) 802-770-1030          Email: ljepson@rutlandhs.k12.vt.us</p>
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## Green Mountain Economic Development Corp.

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<p>Kathi Terami                  Executive Dir.                  Upr. Vly. Education &amp; Business Partnership                  PO Box 350                  Hanover, NH 03755                  (W) 603-643-3431 Ext. 2902                  Email: kterami@uvbep.org</p>	

## Windham Workforce Investment Board

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## The Vermont Economy:

### Historical Context

The Green Mountain state has a rich history of hard work – whether in the name of Independence as with the Green Mountain Boys or farmers working the land in agricultural endeavors associated with dairy or maple or more recently coming together as a state to rebuild post the devastation of natural disaster. Some say the Vermont work ethic stems from the old Yankee attitude; others attribute it to harsh winters where only the strong survive. Whatever the cause, the simple truths about the collective Vermont workforce can be summed up by the following three characteristics: experienced, educated and hard-working.

**Experienced** – with a median age of 41.2, Vermont has the second oldest population in the country [2010 US Census]

**Educated** – Comparison of Educational Attainment:

	Vermont	United States
High School Graduates	90.6%	85.0%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	33.3%	27.9%

\*US Census, based on % of persons age 25+, 2006-2010 estimates

**Hard-working** – Vermont's labor force participation rate of 69.6% is significantly above the national level of 63.5% [LAUS, August 2012]. In addition, Vermont has a high incidence of multiple job holders (fifth highest in the country). As a percent of total employment, Vermont's 2010 measure of multiple job holders of 8.7% was well above the US average of 4.9%. [BLS]

This, however, does not ensure economic prosperity. As a small state, the Vermont economy faces some unique challenges or opportunities depending on the perspective.

They include:

- Demographics – old, low birth rate, lack of diversity
- The uncertain outcome of Health Care Reform
- Location and the rural, mountainous terrain and the resulting impacts on infrastructure
  - energy dependence --- gasoline and heating fuel
  - movement of goods in services --- limited access to population centers
  - creation and maintenance of infrastructure including roads, cellular telephone service, transmission lines, etc.

All of the above are complicated by unpredictable weather patterns including potentially long winters.

## Where to start? Where we are...

Vermont is tiny with a population of 626,431 [2011,

[US Census]. The former ranks Vermont as 49<sup>th</sup> highest in population with the combination of statistics resulting in a ranking of 30<sup>th</sup> highest in population density. Built into Vermont state laws are strict parameters on development and land use designed to “keep Vermont green”. In many ways, the developed infrastructure currently in place is akin to what will be in place in the future --- barring legal changes, the development of property consistent with current law (which appears to occur at about the same rate as property attrition) or the mass refurbishment project designed to restore a dilapidated property.

For many areas of the country our statewide population of the 626,000 wouldn't even rank as a state's largest city. In fact, there are 20 US cities with greater population than the state of Vermont [2011 US Census]. Vermont's largest city is Burlington with a population of 42,645. The location of Burlington and the surrounding economic activity creates an anchor in one corner of the state. One-third of the Vermont population is concentrated in this northwestern corner. Adding to the mix, Burlington plays host to a large student population - both undergraduate and graduate. Of additional economic note, Burlington is home to an international airport (which also houses US Air Force {Vermont Air National Guard} fighter jet base) and a hospital with a level one trauma center. Attached to this medical center is the University of Vermont's School of Medicine.

As discussed, Vermont's labor force has educational attainment levels above the national average, but with a small population - heavily concentrated in the northwestern corner of the state - the nearest metropolitan area of significant size is in Canada (French speaking Montreal). While the international border provides stable federal employment, the nature of Canada being a separate country makes the free exchange of employment and workers more difficult --- as conversely would be the case with Boston and southern New Hampshire for example. Vermont is in many ways isolated due to the natural borders combined with an international border --- a self-contained economy with arguable less economic ties to surrounding areas as other more heavily populated areas with greater access to mass transit [interconnected highway system (which moves effectively both east and west as north and south), rail, air and freight service]. The mountains down the center of the state can make east to west travel long and potentially seasonally dependent.

People like to joke that Vermont leads the country in per capita statistics. Here are a few which have economic or workforce related ties:

- most breweries per capita
- most farmers' markets per capita
- most colleges and universities per capita
- Highest rate of military participation
- Highest concentration of green jobs [BLS]

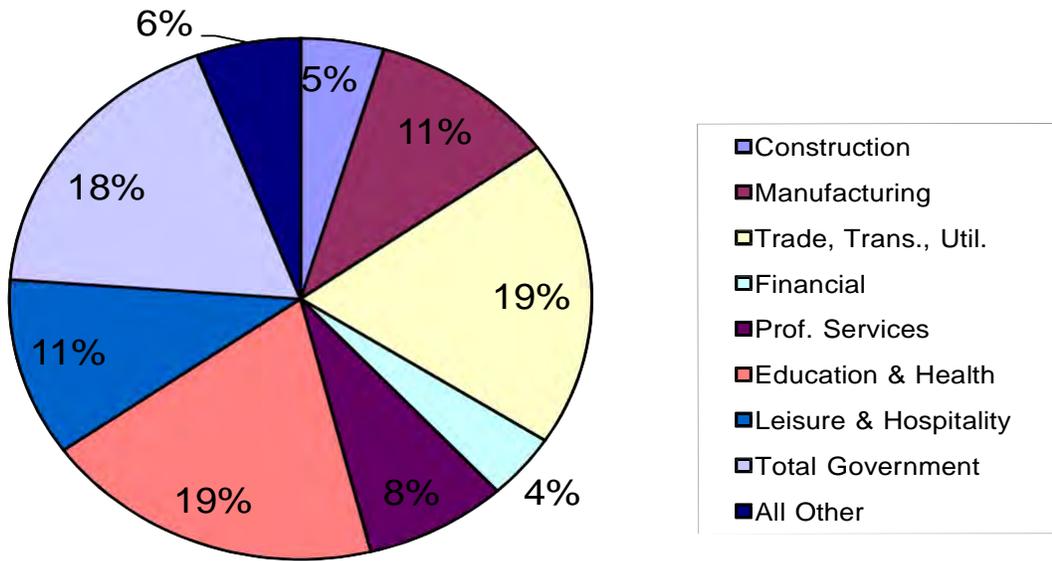
Despite these inherent issues economic opportunities to the north do manifest. Speaking French is a positive in northern Vermont as a trend has emerged where Quebec firms have set up satellite offices in Vermont to establish a US presence while remaining close to their headquarters. In addition, due to business expansion, Canada is Vermont's largest trading partner. In 2007, the state did \$4 billion in trade with Quebec. In addition, travels from north of the border are an important part of the Vermont's travel and tourism industry's customer base comprising approximately 10% of Vermont's tourism pie. Canada has acted as an economic stabilizer during US downturns for the state of Vermont especially during this recent US recession. The Canadian economy has been booming the last couple of years which has strengthened the Canadian dollar to be on par with the US dollar. This coupled with the "Great Recession" in the US has made Canadian investment in Vermont more attractive and Canadian travel to Vermont more affordable.

Going forward, Vermont is projected to have minimal population growth in the coming years. This has been the case for the past decade. Vermont has the third lowest birth rate in the nation. This presents a challenge as the "Baby-boomer" generation transitions out of the labor force into retirement. The current "aging" workforce – Vermont has the second oldest population in the US – will need suitable work for mature workers. In addition, as a state it will be necessary to work on the up-skilling and preparing of young people for the opportunities that exist in the state. As a small state, it may not require much of a shift to dramatically improve outcomes. Many times, a well-organized "door-to-door" campaign can suffice. In the case of young people, this means going to schools and getting in front of students with a consistent message delivered in a meaningful way. Or this can be done through technology and the cost effective means of communication via social media. However, these two solutions will not address the issue of the maturing workforce or communicate with this important segment of the workforce. More traditional means, such as newsletters with partner organizations or public outreach through age-targeted television and radio programming, will need to be implemented.

### **Analysis of Employment Trends by Industry**

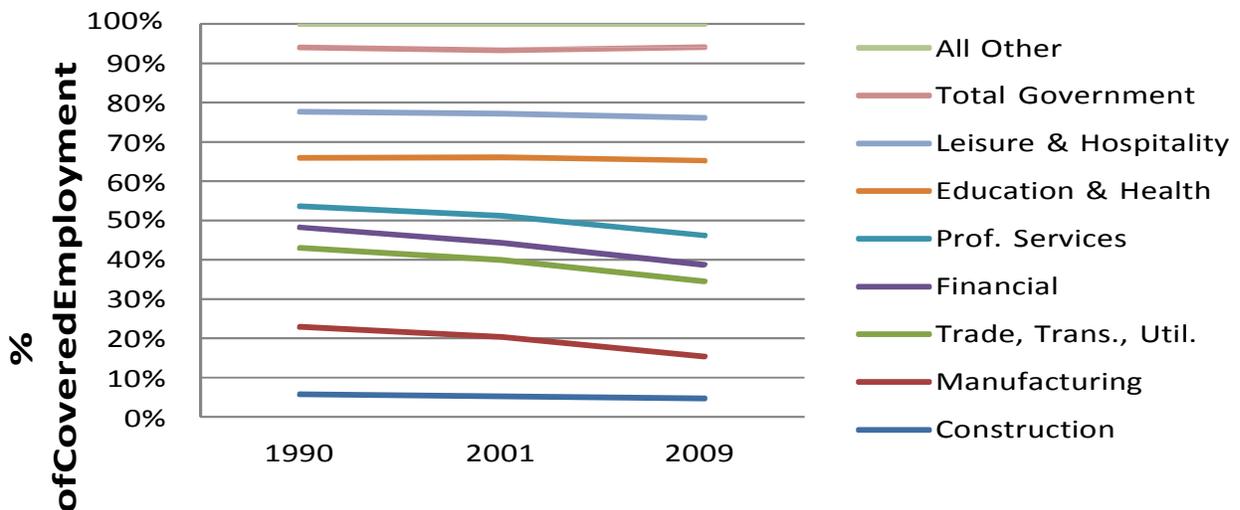
Relative to the nation, the economic make-up of Vermont can be classified as diverse and stable. The Vermont economy is not dependent on any one major industry. Instead, there is a rich medley of employing industries which acts much like a governor in a car. During times of economic expansions, the Vermont economy does not get too hot. During economic downturns, Vermont does not fall as far. Examples of this seen in other states: California and technology companies or New York and finance. These states have seen greater booms and busts. Vermont more closely resembles Florida and Nevada for its reliance on tourism and housing yet not to the same degree. Vermont's economy is more resilient to the economic winds due to the diversity of industries.

### Vermont - Employment by Industry CY2010



Also interesting related to the diversity of the Vermont economy is the relative stability of these industries over time. As the graph below depicts, the employment mix across industries has been consistent. The three time periods highlighted were meant to approximate national business cycles to standardize the period of analysis and decrease potential noise associated with varying stages of economic expansion and contraction. Within the graph, the big deviations from the composition of employment by industry are between Manufacturing and Private Education & Health. As employment opportunities in manufacturing have declined, opportunities in Private Education & Health have abounded.

### Vermont - Industry Employment as %



Untraditionally, Vermont's private education and healthcare services act as 'base industries' in that the state imports dollars in exchange for these services. With a high concentration of private education institutions, Vermont imports students (and their tuitions). Similarly, the state also imports patients seeking medical treatment from upstate New York and Canada. The Fletcher Allen Hospital in Burlington is a Level 1 Trauma Center and the only one in the surrounding area. Attached to the hospital is a medical school which is affiliated with the University of Vermont (UVM) – Vermont's largest university. Both the medical school and UVM have been growing as their reputation has grown. The hospital and the university are significant Vermont employers.

Vermont is not insulated from broader economic phenomena such as the contraction of employment within manufacturing. While the decrease to manufacturing looks significant, Vermont's decline has not been as severe as the national decline. Nationally, for the last several decades, employment in Manufacturing has been on the slide. However, it is important to note that manufacturing output has never been higher. Firms are finding ways to leverage technology and produce more with fewer workers. It is a popular misconception that US manufacturing is ailing. It only appears so because this industry no longer has the employment base it once had. Additionally, manufacturing was a part of the "American Dream" in that with a strong work ethic and only limited education, one could make a good living and provide for their family. These opportunities within manufacturing are becoming more scarce. With scarcity comes increased competition which highlights the need for greater specialization and education to obtain these positions. It is no longer a default path towards economic independence. It requires greater focus and determination to get in and stay in manufacturing employment.



Regional economic analyses look for base industries through relative strength indicators. On the right is a table comparing Vermont to the nation for relative concentrations (location quotients) of employment by industry. Location quotients or LQs indicate relative strength when the number is greater than one. An industry is considered a base industry or export industry when the LQ is greater than 1.1. Conversely, LQs less than one indicate the local regional economy is lacking those goods and services relative to the national economy and therefore may have to import them. Economists look for LQs below 0.9 as potential opportunities for economic development for the local regional economy. By developing the under-represented industries, there is potential to reduce the need for imports.

This table further highlights the importance of Manufacturing (1.17), Educational services (1.64), and Health care and social assistance (1.26) to the Vermont economy. All three have LQs above 1.1 indicating relative strength of employment in the Vermont economy in these industries. Again, this shows that the state is able to export some or much of what is produced in these industries. Other industries of notable relative strength include: Utilities (1.46), Retail (1.15), Construction (1.14) and Accommodation and food services (1.13). Utilities is related to a large nuclear power facility within the state.

The last three are interrelated in that they are tourism related. The Vermont economy offers a diverse selection of shopping, eating and lodging options – including full service resorts with deluxe amenities. Construction

<b>LQ Analysis: Vermont v. United States, CY2011</b>	
<b>Industry</b>	<b>Vermont -- Statewide</b>
<b>Base Industry: Total, all industries</b>	1.00
<b>NAICS 11 Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting</b>	1.00
<b>NAICS 21 Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction</b>	0.37
<b>NAICS 22 Utilities</b>	1.46
<b>NAICS 23 Construction</b>	1.14
<b>NAICS 31-33 Manufacturing</b>	1.17
<b>NAICS 42 Wholesale trade</b>	0.77
<b>NAICS 44-45 Retail trade</b>	1.15
<b>NAICS 54 Professional and technical services</b>	0.79
<b>NAICS 55 Management of companies and enterprises</b>	0.33
<b>NAICS 56 Administrative and waste services</b>	0.55
<b>NAICS 61 Educational services</b>	1.64
<b>NAICS 62 Health care and social assistance</b>	1.26
<b>NAICS 48-49 Transportation and warehousing</b>	0.74
<b>NAICS 51 Information</b>	0.82
<b>NAICS 52 Finance and insurance</b>	0.72
<b>NAICS 53 Real estate and rental and leasing</b>	0.69
<b>NAICS 71 Arts, entertainment, and recreation</b>	0.90
<b>NAICS 72 Accommodation and food services</b>	1.13
<b>NAICS 81 Other services, except public administration</b>	0.87
<b>NAICS 99 Unclassified</b>	0.00
Location Quotient: Ratio of analysis-industry employment in the analysis area to base-industry employment in the analysis area divided by the ratio of analysis-industry employment in the base area to base-industry employment in the base area.	
Source: US BLS	

is a function of the tourism industry due to the concentration of second homes within the state and number of tourism related development projects.

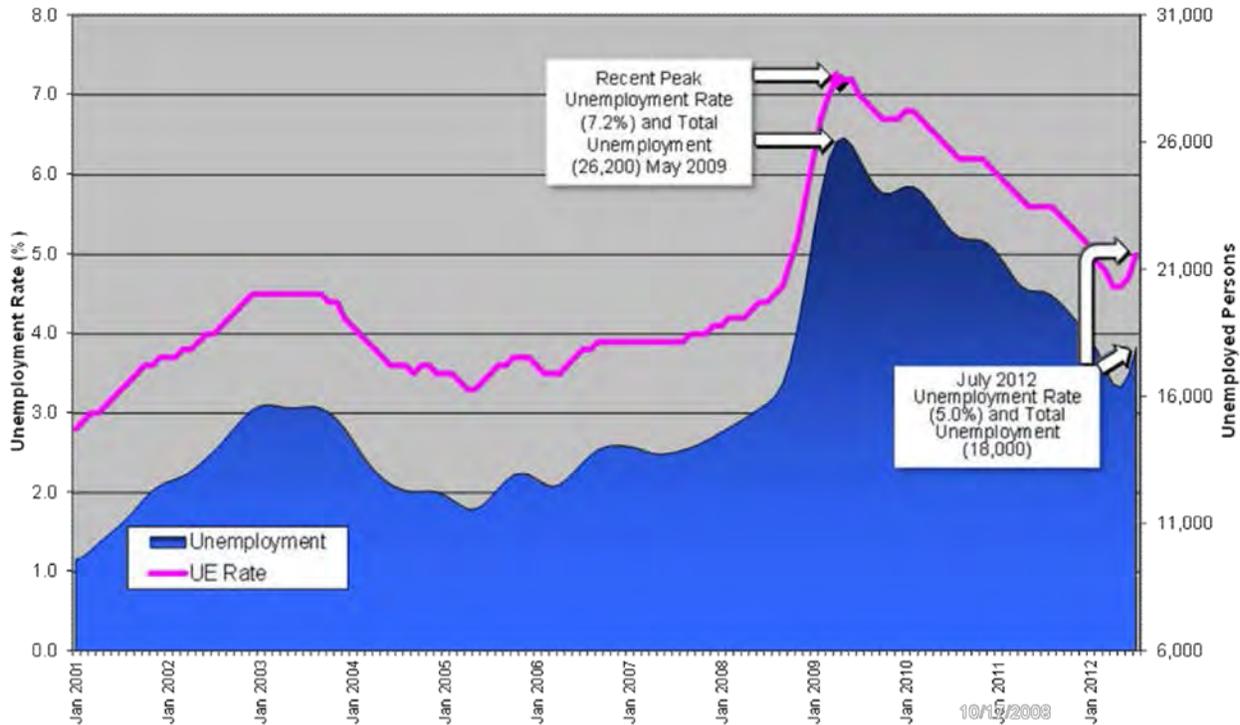
The LQ table also highlights Vermont's industries which are relatively weak as employment opportunities relative to the national concentrations. Many are a function of our geographic location and our rural, low-population characteristics. Examples of these include Mining (0.37) and Transportation and warehousing (0.74). Mining is related to the natural resources bestowed upon your geographic area. Similarly, Transportation and warehousing is heavily influenced by the 'transportation' portion of this industry sector which is dictated by access to major water ways, like ports, and major airports which makes little sense for a small state like Vermont located in the corner of the country. It is not cost effective to target these areas as potential economic development opportunities. Nonetheless, there are sectors with low LQs which do present potential as economic development opportunities as well as an example of a past success. The opportunities include: Professional and technical services (0.79), Management of companies and enterprise (0.33) and Information (0.82). In this modern age of technology, telecommuting or working from home is increasing in frequency and popularity. As a small state, Vermont needs to ensure adequate infrastructure specifically related to broadband and Wi-Fi so that telecommuting is an attractive option. The need to be in the same room, building or even state is decreasing because of the changing nature of work and technology. As a state, Vermont needs to capitalize on this emerging trend as well as focus on the recruitment of traditional business operations.

The traditional approach combined with some innovative thinking resulted in Vermont's greatest economic development strategy of recent times. Through preferable treatment within state law, Vermont had first mover's advantage and cornered the market on the captive insurance industry. So while Finance and insurance at 0.72 looks like an opportunity, there has already been past success here with room for potentially more. The 'captive model' is often cited as a major success which is regularly trying to be replicated in other industries. Economic development professionals and lawmakers are always on the lookout for the next 'captive'.

### **Current State of the Economy and the Labor Force**

Vermont has the lowest seasonally-adjusted (SA) statewide unemployment rate in the northeastern United States. Nationally, Vermont's SA unemployment rate has ranked between the fourth or fifth lowest over the last year.

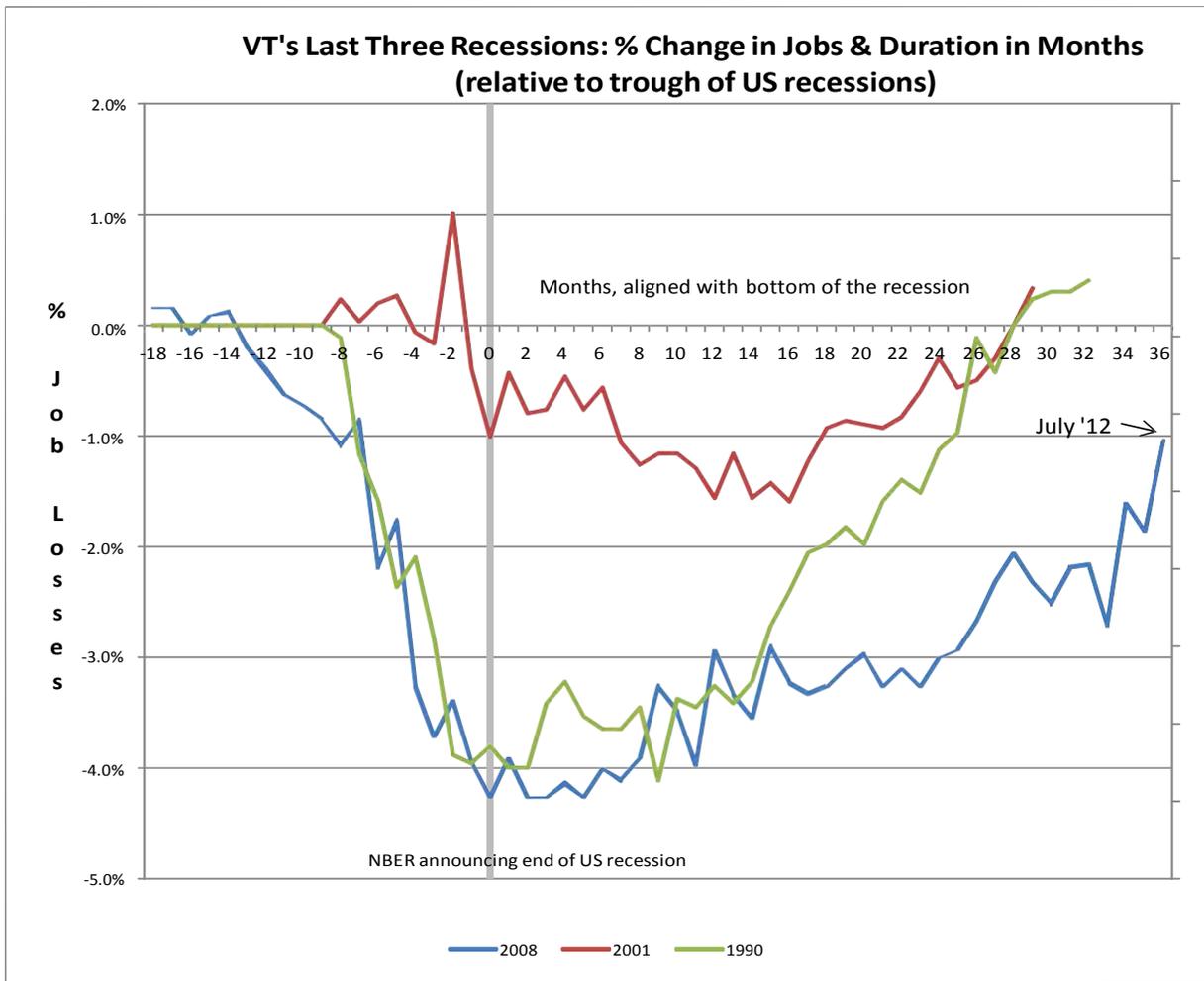
### Vermont Unemployment & Unemployment Rate January 2001 - Present; Seasonally Adjusted



Source: VDOL, LAUS program

The low unemployment rate is attributed to the diversity of hiring employers by industry and the above average educational attainment level of the Vermont population. While relative to other states, Vermont's current SA unemployment rate of 5.0% [July 2012, BLS] is low, it does not look so positive in comparison to pre-recessionary levels. As the graph above depicts, during the economic expansion of the mid-2000s, Vermont's SA unemployment rate was consistently under 4.0%. The recent trend of a rising unemployment rate in the state has many worried about a possible relapse back into economic recession.

So while some are saying another recession will be soon upon us as the national recovery stumbles along, Vermont, like most states, has yet to recover all the jobs lost during the previous recession. The graph on the next page shows the percent of jobs lost in Vermont for the last three recessions. The starting point is based on when the national recession officially began. As the lines move from left to right, they create a U-shape. The depth of the U indicates the severity of the jobs lost in percentage terms. The width of the U indicates the duration in months the local economy took to recover all that was lost. As displayed the current recession (blue line), the Vermont economy stills has about a 1% job loss compared to when the national recession began in December, 2007.



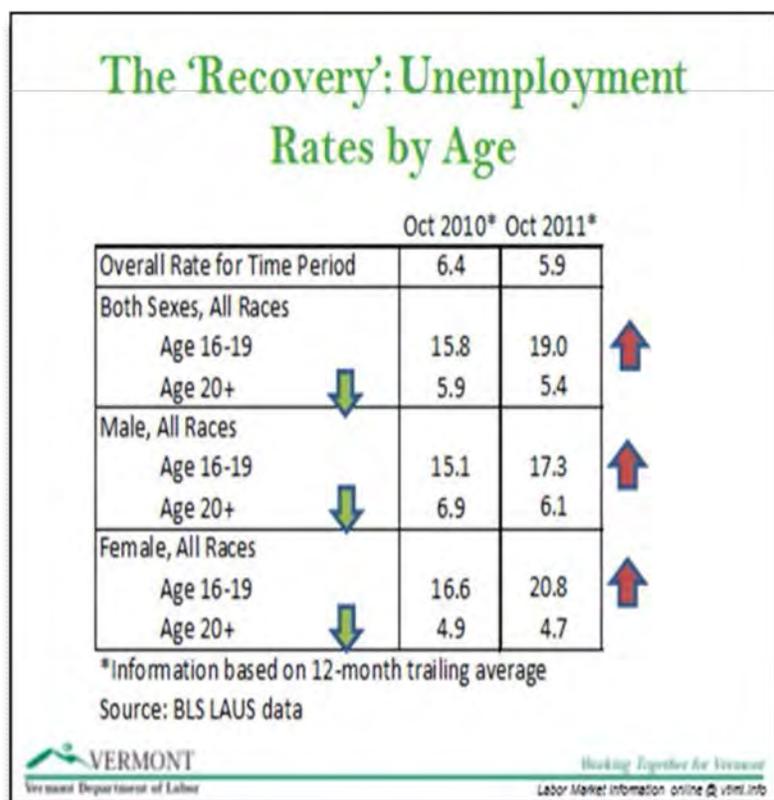
In other words, it has been three years since the end of the “Great Recession” and all that was lost is yet to be regained. For comparison purposes, the national economy lost approximately 6.4% of total nonfarm employment at the height of this last recession versus Vermont’s max job loss of a 4.2% of total nonfarm. In addition, the national economy has farther to go (3.4% versus the aforementioned 1.0%).

It is worth noting a couple other points about the above table which compares the last three Vermont recessions. For starters, the order of magnitude (depth and width) of the 1990 recession compared to the 2001 recession is basically reversed when you look at the national data. By all accounts the 1990 recession was considered a New England recession in that the northeastern states were hit hardest. The “cause” of this recession was attributed to a construction and real estate boom and bust. As such the broader national economy and states outside of the northeast were only marginally impacted. Conversely, the 2001 recession is associated with the ‘dot com’ bubble boom and bust. States with over exposure to technology firms (e.g. California) were tremendously impacted. Vermont with only a small portion of technology firms was not significantly impacted by the “dot com” bubble as the red line displays.

## Employment Opportunities: Now and Into the Future (Part 1)

Through its diversity of employers by industry, the Vermont economy offers a wide range of employment opportunities for individuals of all educational and professional experience levels. As has been the recent national trend due to the recession, the competition for certain positions can be fierce. The role of Labor Market Information (LMI) is to provide timely information to help individuals make the best decision for themselves and their household. Some individuals have a longer time horizon (students); others need to make decisions in a shorter time frame (graduates, returning veterans, recently or long-term unemployed). LMI works to understand its data users so as to best be able to meet their needs.

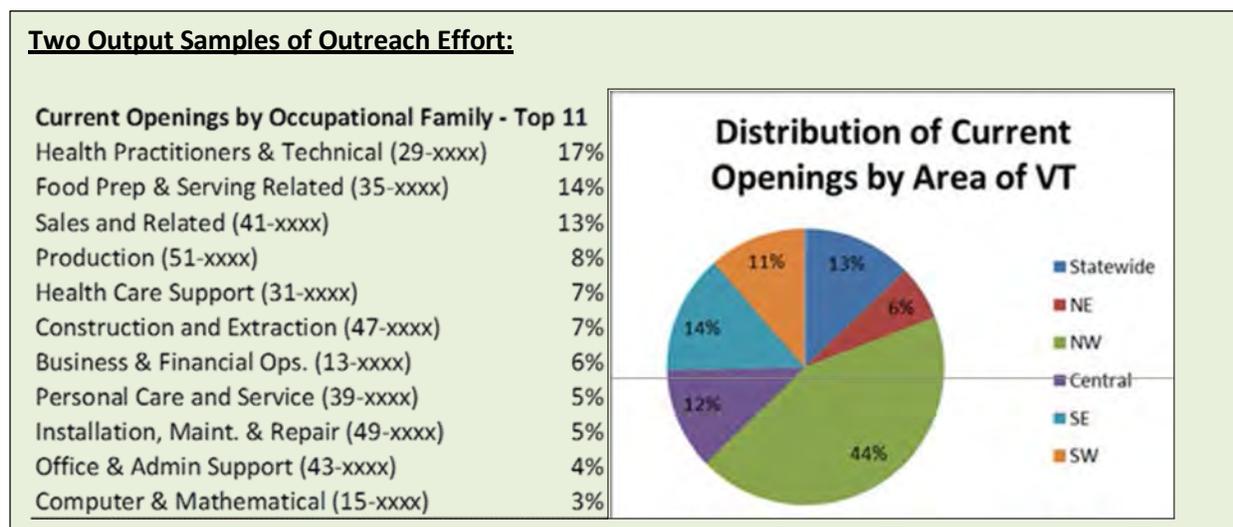
The use of LMI data needs to be ongoing and dynamic in its focus to be effective. There are many examples of how LMI data has driven workforce development outcomes. One such analysis looked out how the recent economic recovery differed by age cohort. Information which was compiled as part of this analysis was used in numerous presentations across the state highlighting the recent difficulties of young people (age 16-19). While the national and the statewide economy were in "recovery" (October 2010 to October 2011), there was a segment of the population that was not feeling the economic advancements. Through these discussions, partnerships between local schools and non-profit agencies which focus on career awareness with young people were fostered. These partnerships are ongoing and have resulted in increased awareness of the opportunities available for young people.



A similar analysis into the topic of the long-term unemployed produced similar results and corresponding actions. In Vermont, an unemployed person over 65 years of age is 1.3 times more likely to become long-term unemployed than the median aged adult unemployed person. For unemployed individuals with less than a high school education the probability increases to 1.4 times. Individuals who become unemployed from Management and Production occupations were 2 times more likely. Statistics like these provide awareness to career counselors and educate the workforce development

community. They allow scarce resources to be more effectively allocated by identifying areas of need and/or reversible trends.

A programmatic outcome which had ties to LMI analysis related to a mass outreach program of all private employers with covered employment greater than 20 through the Governor’s “Bring It Home To Vermont” initiative. This swath of the Vermont economy accounts for 70% of all covered employment in the state. By reaching out to them to discuss their hiring needs, detailed information was able to be produced which was akin to real-time LMI. As Vermont is a small, rural state, proprietary vendors of real-time LMI have yet to produce a comprehensive and stable data series at the state level – let alone the sub-state area. This outreach effort was able to inventory, code to industry, code to occupational family and designate to an area of the state. As a result, timely information about current openings was able to compiled and disseminated. In total, over 2,400 jobs were identified and fed into the workforce development system.



Reaching beyond past and current, LMI’s most referenced data series are consistently the occupational projections. These forecasts of where employment opportunities will exist steer workforce development decisions at all levels including and potentially most importantly in the shaping of curriculum at all levels of education. The short-term (two-year) projections help provide more immediate guidance in the presence of the current economic climate. The long-term projections (ten-year) take a broader view and help shape individuals understanding of the evolution of the modern economy. Too often decisions are based on looking back. The importance of the long-term projections cannot be understated.

The current long-term forecast calls for a recovery in the trades (construction) and the continued high demand for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) and STEM related occupations. A greater number of pathways will be able to be developed with the bifurcation of the 'education/experience' variable in the latest release. Informing and reminding today's workforce about the impermanence of a single employment opportunity has never been more important. The old wisdom was that an individual would have 5 or 6 careers in their lifetime. In today's modern economy, it could be a greater number. One can effectively use projections data as a conversation starter into the concept of career lattices. In Vermont we do this by breaking out the projected growth of individual occupations by educational requirements. This allows several points to be made but potentially none more important than the relationship between education and wages. The ten-year outlook provides a critical view into what the future holds and allows the Occupation Employment Statistics (OES) wage data to be highlighted in a comprehensive and meaningful way.

Technology has revolutionized education: anyone who wants to learn can learn at virtually no monetary cost by using the internet. This is important because the modern economy will not be as

<b>Fastest Growing Occupations by Education; 2010-2020 Projections</b>	<b>Growth Rate</b>	<b>Wage (per/hr)</b>	<b>STEM?</b>
<b>Bachelor's degree</b>			
Market Research Analysts	2.9%	\$26.76	
Interpreters and Translators	2.8%	\$17.96	
Convention, and Event Planners	2.6%	\$20.09	
Personal Financial Advisors	2.3%	\$41.24	
Cost Estimators	2.3%	\$27.04	
Health Educators	2.0%	\$23.93	
Software Developers, Apps	1.9%	\$38.72	Σ
Software Systems Developers	1.9%	\$43.51	Σ
Network & Computer Systems Administrators	1.9%	\$31.79	Σ
Database Administrators	1.9%	\$30.63	Σ
<b>Associate's degree</b>			
Veterinary Technologists and Technicians	3.2%	\$14.64	Σ
Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	2.7%	\$34.54	Σ
Respiratory Therapists	1.9%	\$27.05	Σ
Physical Therapist Assistants	1.6%	\$22.32	
Medical Equipment Repairers	1.5%	\$24.87	
Radiologic Technologists and Technicians	1.4%	\$25.36	Σ
Registered Nurses	1.3%	\$31.35	Σ
Funeral Service Managers	1.2%	\$28.07	
Construction Managers	1.1%	\$39.25	
Environmental Engineering Technicians	1.0%	\$18.25	Σ
<b>High school diploma or equivalent</b>			
Helpers--Plumbers and Pipefitters	3.1%	\$13.97	
Welding Machine Operators	2.6%	\$13.75	
Glaziers	2.5%	\$15.54	
Brickmasons and Blockmasons	2.4%	\$22.58	
Pharmacy Technicians	2.4%	\$14.32	Σ
Stonemasons	2.3%	\$21.80	
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	2.2%	\$22.09	
Cargo and Freight Agents	2.2%	\$15.03	
Dental Laboratory Technicians	2.2%	\$18.53	
Security and Fire Alarm Systems Installers	2.1%	\$23.03	
<b>Less than high school</b>			
Helpers--Carpenters	4.4%	\$13.07	
Personal Care Aides	3.8%	\$10.74	
Helpers--Brick & Stone Masons	3.8%	\$14.58	
Home Health Aides	3.4%	\$13.02	
Nonfarm Animal Caretakers	2.1%	\$12.01	
Septic Tank & Sewer Pipe Servicers	2.0%	\$15.37	
Refuse and Recyclable Material Collectors	1.5%	\$13.18	
Drywall and Ceiling Tile Installers	1.5%	\$20.92	
Hand Packers and Packagers	1.5%	\$11.13	
Cleaners of Vehicles and Equipment	1.4%	\$11.69	

forgiving when it comes to static mindsets about

knowledge. Skill acquisition is the name of the game. The days of being content with a poor knowledge base in math or science need to be in the past. If one has access to the internet they can improve their skills. The far right column on the previous table illustrates the importance of STEM related skills. The green shaded sigma indicates STEM occupations and the yellow shaded sigma indicates STEM related occupations (as defined by the US Census Green Codes and Crosswalks).

## **Employment Opportunities: The Projects Designed to Assist the Workforce (Part 2)**

The Vermont Department of Labor's (VDOL) Workforce Development Division and Economic & Labor Market Information Division are actively involved in current projects related to the increased understanding and preparation of the Vermont workforce. As the topics of study are so integral to the success of the Vermont economy, these efforts are expected to continue for several years. Highlighting three, these important areas of study include the food systems and sustainable agricultural practices, health care reform and how the needs of STEM employers are being met by the current education system. In each of these specialized fields of study, VDOL staff are working in partnership with content experts as well as the educational institutes. This again represents a major benefit of being a small state – the ability to have all the key stakeholders sitting at the same table.

Though each project is slightly different, there are some common themes in the approach. One overarching theme is the use of LMI data to guide decisions. When applicable and or available, the LMI data employed leverages all of the aforementioned sources tying in estimates of past (historical), current (real-time) and future (projections) reference points. The end goal is the preparation and public dissemination of supply and demand analyses for relevant occupations. From here, workforce development professionals, in partnership with the educational institutions, can assess the current programmatic offerings in relation to the training and preparing of tomorrow's workforce. The most complicated of the aforementioned studies relates to the reform of health care because the proposed action includes the complete overhaul of the health care delivery system. As such it transcends the boundaries of occupational families and even industries. Health care reform directly impacts health care providers and insurance but indirectly impacts every employer in the state of Vermont. This challenge represents a tremendous opportunity for the state to be a leader in health care reform. As with all new endeavors, the risk associated with failure can be daunting. Many question if a small state can fix this nationwide issue.

## **Analysis of Vermont's high need, underserved, under-employed, and/or low skilled populations.**

### People with Disabilities.

Almost eleven percent of workforce-age Vermonters are people with disabilities. The most common disabilities among this group are cognitive and ambulatory difficulties at 5.2% and 4.7% of the population respectively. Hearing and vision difficulties are also common.

People with disabilities face numerous unique barriers to employment, from problems related to physical access to the need for reasonable accommodations or supported employment. The rural nature of Vermont, the lack of public transportation and the aged building stock all contribute to these barriers. The state of Vermont and the Vermont Center for Independent Living have programs in place to address these barriers and encourage employment. These programs include:

- The Benefits to Work program which assists people with disabilities to enter the workforce without jeopardizing benefits.
- The Vermont AgrAbility Program provides information and assistance to farmers and farm workers with disabilities who want to continue farming. The program also connects farmers with newly acquired disabilities with others who have successfully accommodated their disability.

Refugee populations (data courtesy of the State Refugee Coordinator. Other information courtesy of Kristen Rengo, the Reach Up Case Manager at the Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program)

Since 1989, over 6,000 refugees have resettled in Vermont through the Colchester Field Office of the US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, better known as the Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program. The program has admitted significant refugee populations from Asia, Africa and Europe. In recent years, the largest numbers of refugees have come here from Bhutan, Somalia, Burma, Iraq and the Congo. Over the course of the program, the largest number of refugees arrived here from Bosnia (1,705), Bhutan (1,279) and Vietnam (1,069). These populations have brought tremendous diversity to the Chittenden County and in pockets throughout the state. Because most come without English language skills or education recognized by US institutions, refugees face significant and unique barriers to employment.

Refugees who arrive in Vermont with university degrees from other nations almost always find that those degrees are not automatically honored here. A private firm can

research the school in question and certify the level of education but this is a very expensive process. In addition, many university's in the country of origin may have closed or been destroyed as part of the same environment that led the individual to refugee status.

Refugees are far more likely than the general population to lack any work experience outside the home. While it's certainly not true of all refugees, the prevalence of people with zero work experience is significant. This lack of experience is compounded by the fact that prior work experience is often difficult to document because it occurred in the refugee's country of origin. This creates an additional barrier to employment.

### **Specific skills and knowledge needed by employers for the future**

Based on 2010 – 2020 occupational projections, Vermont employers in the twenty five fastest growing sectors will need a workforce with a wide range of technical and interpersonal skills as well as some very specific areas of knowledge.

These fast-growing sectors are projected to need over 2,500 new employees with critical thinking and active listening skills each year. Over 1,000 employees with reading comprehension skills and judgment & decision making skills will be required. Technical needs include over 700 people per year with math skills, 840 with complex problem solving skills, 523 with operation monitoring skills and over 200 with skills in science.

Across these same sectors, the knowledge employers will require include over 3,000 people per year with knowledge of customer and personal service. People with knowledge of mathematics will be needed for over 2,000 openings each year. Other areas of knowledge with significant demand include psychology (841 openings per year), therapy and counseling (632), management (812), computers and electronics (422) and engineering (380). Other significant needs include knowledge of education (450 openings per year), construction (372) medicine (279) and biology (230).

Another method to assess current knowledge and skills shortages is to use data from the Labor Market Information office's Make Vermont Home employer outreach initiative. This ongoing program will survey the largest covered employers in the state and seeks information about the number of expected job openings at each firm and the type of positions they seek to fill. It also collects information about the difficulty of finding qualified applicants for specific occupations. According to the November-December results of that survey, the most common occupations where employers have difficulty recruiting qualified applicants include installation and repair occupations, sales, food preparation, construction and education.

## **Assessment of the workforce skills and knowledge that workers will need for current and future employment.**

Over the next decade, the Vermont economy will continue to need a more specialized and trained workforce to meet the needs of employers. This includes employees with significant knowledge and skills requiring post-secondary education and training. Among the 25 fastest growing occupations, skills needed include critical thinking skills with over 2,500 openings each year, complex problem solving skills for over 800 openings each year, greater than 700 openings requiring math skills and more than 200 with openings requiring skills in science.

As is the trend nationwide, the needed knowledge will include an emphasis on STEM (Science, Engineering, Technology and Math). The workforce will also need specialized knowledge in psychology, counseling, management and medicine.

### **Workforce needs linked to solutions.**

Vermont has partnered with several educational institutions to ensure the today's curriculum is in-line with the future expectations of the Vermont labor market. These partnerships have include private businesses whenever possible. Here are three examples of recent successes which we look to replicate and expand from to ensure adequate workforce for tomorrow's employers:

- Burlington Community College working with JayPeak Resort to develop an Associate's degree program in hospitality
- The Governor's Career Ready Certificate as administered by the Community College of Vermont is designed to build soft skills and career readiness in job seekers and students
- Community High School of Vermont is currently evaluating industry foci by facility to ensure successful completers of the program have the greatest economic opportunities available to them upon release. The evaluation is based in part on LMI produced industry projections.

These are just a sample of ways to translate LMI data into actionable items for education institutes.

## **Critical Incumbent Training in Vermont:**

Training incumbent workers is critical to meet the workforce needs of Vermont. The NEK (North East Kingdom) Economic Development effort, lead by Bill Stenger, will generate between 5,000 and 10,000 jobs of all skills into an area of Vermont that has been economically depressed for years and has traditionally had the highest unemployment rate in the State. Bill Stenger has requested that the VDOL Department of Workforce Development will provide the leadership for coordination of the anticipated job growth. Maximum flexibility of use of funds, especially incumbent worker training funds will be essential to meet the skill requirements anticipated to assure that local Vermont workers and businesses can compete for jobs and business expansion with this program. Incumbent worker training will not only help the workers be competitive for new jobs and potential promotion but also assist existing businesses become competitive in a new business environment created by the expansion and the need for services and products supporting the new industries.

The following newspaper article from Caledonia Record provides more information on the NEK project:

*2012 is Bill Stenger's year.*

*In September, something happened in Congress that unleashed a torrent of job-creation projects in the Northeast Kingdom, the likes of which have not been seen in Vermont in modern times.*

*Congress approved a three-year extension of the EB-5 program, which allows foreigners to invest a half-million dollars each to create American jobs in exchange for a green card.*

*Stenger, a Newport City resident who has made a name at Jay Peak Resort, was ready. For years he and partner Ari Quiros had been tapping the EB-5 program to draw investors to build up Jay Peak Resort into a four-season resort and expand to buy Burke Mountain Resort.*

*The extension opened the flood gates.*

*On a bright September day, Stenger gathered the entire congressional delegation, many local and state politicians and the governor of Vermont around him and announced the Northeast Kingdom Economic Development Initiative in a whirl-wind of unveiling at Jay Peak, Newport City and Burke Mountain.*

*The goal was dizzying: the construction of new ski resort hotels and facilities at both ski areas, a window manufacturing plant, a research and manufacturing*

*plant of artificial organs and supplies, plus clean rooms to attract hundreds of researchers and hire local technicians, the reconstruction of a whole downtown block in Newport City, and the long-held dream of a waterfront hotel and conference center on Lake Memphremagog in Newport City.*

*Oh yes, and expanding the Newport State Airport in Coventry as well, adding jobs, warehouse and international access.*

*The \$600 million project would create 5,000 new direct and indirect jobs and require another 5,000 construction jobs to build out.*

*State and education officials have since scrambled to plan to educate and train as many people as possible, working with schools to help graduates have a chance at bio-tech careers, tackle the construction jobs of now and the future, and run the tourist attractions that these destination resorts are becoming.*

Another project in the southern part of the State, Bennington County, has employers collaborating in shared training of incumbent workers to support the expanding Composites Industry in that area. Over the last 3 to 5 years the composite materials industry has added the automotive business to the existing space and military businesses with the goal of improving the efficiency and fuel consumption for commercial vehicles. This has required a change in design, tooling, and manufacture of composite materials to support the growth. Incumbent workers need additional technical, research, design, and manufacturing skills to remain competitive in the changing and expanding composite industry.

## **Special Populations:**

Vermont is a small rural State making large studies and statistical analysis difficult and cost prohibitive. Data on special populations is gathered from analysis of unemployment data, feedback and anecdotal information from the field offices. This data shows that older and younger Vermonters have difficulty finding and/or retaining employment due to their level of education or physical severity of the jobs such as construction, forestry/logging, farming. There has also been an increase in immigrants to some of the more urban areas of the State. Frequently the immigrants are well educated in their home countries but the degrees and certifications are not recognized in the United States. English as a second language, particularly "technical English", also present barriers.

The rapid advance in the use of technology in communications is changing the way the VDOL staff provides services to special populations, including people with disabilities. This includes the use of social media such as LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook. For a number of years now contacting and communication with youth with special needs has required the use of the cell phone and texting due their unstable living conditions. VDOL Workforce Development staff will continue to work closely with Voc Rehab, Refugee Resettlement, agencies and non-profits working with immigrant populations, such as the Association Of Africans living in Vermont. The use and training in the new technologies will enhance their skills working with special populations.

Increasing outreach to employers to hire recent immigrants and assistance with developing technical language training will also be developed.

Workforce Development (WD) is working very closely with the Labor Market Information (LMI) division. Consequently, LMI staff have made presentations to all WD field staff at a series of annual meetings. Additionally, LMI staff have performed site visits to about half of all field offices with the goal of visiting all. These interactions ensure WD staff is up to date on the most current LMI information and best practices. It also creates the opportunity for WD staff to provide observational comments to LMI staff about special populations, current challenges and ideas for further partnerships. These interactions have proved to be very beneficial for all involved

## **An Uncertain Future**

Aside from the health care reform issue, which presents its own opportunities, most frequent concern expressed about the Vermont economy relates to its aging workforce; yet as a large importer of college age students and large exporter of post-college age students, the data is not definitive. Our aging workforce has as much, if not more, to do with our low birth rate. Vermont is a state with population forecasts at growth rates lower than the national average and some only slightly above zero. In a static world this would present a significant challenge. Conversely, the modern economy has produced rapidly improving technological advances. This has created increased pressure on employment opportunities as is evidenced in the manufacturing sector. As such this whole issue of the "brain drain" is something to monitor but nothing to overreact to. It is something to address in ensuring that the infrastructure necessary to support today's (and tomorrow's) technology is in place so that young people find Vermont to be an attractive place to live and work. The ongoing broadband initiative has made strides in this direction. At last report (January, 2012), there were 16,000 locations across the state lacking broadband access. This count was down 5,000, more than 25%, from the previous reporting six months prior and will continue to shrink as efforts continue to envelop the entire state with the broadband coverage Vermont needs as we go into the future.



## **Adult and Dislocated Worker Services**

**Vermont's service delivery strategy includes a comprehensive one-stop in Burlington, and multiple affiliate sites (Career Resource Centers) strategically located around the state. All adults and dislocated workers are provided access to core services at each of the sites, including:**

- Orientation to job information and other services available through the one-stop delivery system.
- Initial assessment of skills, aptitudes, abilities and supportive service needs.
- Job search and placement assistance.
- Labor market information for local, state, and national occupations in demand and the earnings and skill requirements for those occupations.
- Information related to eligible training providers.
- Determination of individual eligibility to receive services beyond core and intensive services.
- Conduct Rapid Response sessions for dislocated workers

Vermont's labor exchange strategy includes maintaining the capacity to provide a three-tiered service delivery system for individuals and employers that includes (1) self-service, (2) facilitated self-help service and (3) staff-assisted service. Vermonters can select the most appropriate method to access information and services statewide at the one-stop centers or via electronic means. The system is designed to address the rural nature of the state and the diverse needs of our many customers, both job seekers and employers.

For many years, services and resources related to the Wagner-Peyser Act and job training programs under WIA have been integrated at the local level. Core services are provided in a seamless manner at the Career Resource Centers for most of the partner programs and for those that are not physically located at the centers, core services are provided electronically. Adding to this mix of services, the Unemployment Division has increased its presence in the Career Resource Centers by adding locally stationed staff to work with claimants in the Re-employment Assistance (REA) program. The successes seen with this growing UI/Workforce Development collaboration has resulted in funding being made available for the program to go statewide and it is a part of our 5 year plan.

The Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) works closely with our partners at the Vermont Agency of Human Services, Department for Children and Families, Economic Services Division, identifying those individuals who are work ready and receiving public assistance. Those determined low income or receiving public assistance are given priority access to WIA services. Any individual requesting WIA funded services who is over income and not receiving public assistance must be approved for services by the Career Grants Administrator prior to WIA services being provided.

In Vermont, the Workforce Investment Act, the Employment Service, Trade, Apprenticeship, Unemployment Insurance, Veterans, Labor Market Information and other VDOL programs fall under one administrative entity. To that end, economizing and gaining efficiencies within the context of data collection, reporting, performance and service delivery have been achieved. To further economize in the face of ongoing federal budget cuts, Vermont has developed a forward looking service delivery strategy that has decreased the emphasis on bricks and mortar and increased the emphasis on technology. While Vermont will continue to provide the full array of Labor services through various outreach strategies and a number of full-service Career Resource Centers, the trend will be to continue moving towards a virtual one-stop system via technology for many customers.

The Vermont Department of Labor is actively engaged with the Vermont State College system (including Community College of Vermont) to identify and develop appropriate training. New initiatives include statewide training in career readiness which has six progressive modules built in for students to earn the Governor's Career Readiness Certificate as well as new initiatives being developed in apprenticeship training programs with Vermont Technical College.

VDOL continues reaching out to area businesses to determine their training needs for employees. Information is often provided by the state's Workforce Development Council (WDC) as well as data garnered from local Regional Workforce Partnerships that are affiliated with the WDC. Once these needs have been determined in each area of the state, group eligibility determinations can be conducted to create a pool of WIA eligible adults. We will continue with group assessments to determine interests, skills, education, and experience which will more readily identify those matches between applicants and employers for employment and training opportunities.

Our One-Stop Career Center in Burlington and eleven Career Resource Centers around the state have areas that have computers, phones, fax machines, copiers and other job search tools are available to the job seeking public. At the centers, people can search for available job opportunities, create resumes, access career and wage information and more. Employers use the centers for recruiting events, interviewing space, employer roundtables, and other activities as needed.

There are common individual assessment tools available for use in all resource centers. These include, but are not limited to, the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems, Career Decision Making and the O\*Net Interest Profiler. In-depth interviews and exploration of such additional information as educational background and work history are valuable assessment tools as well.

VDOL works closely with Vermont's TANF, Corrections and Vocational Rehabilitation agencies to ensure that youth and adult services are provided to those determined low income, public assistance recipients and people with disabilities. Whenever possible we attempt to share resources on behalf of the client. As a part of this collaboration, each Career Resource Center has VDOL Career Development Facilitators working directly with the TANF (called Reach Up in Vermont) population of job seekers. These staff members are funded by a contract with Creative Workforce Solutions (CWS), an Agency of Human Services entity operated by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. CWS is designed to create a single entry point for AHS consumers with barriers to employment. The function of the VDOL Reach Up staff is to provide one-on-one services in our Career Resource Centers to those Reach Up jobseekers referred by the CWS local teams; the goal for this specialized staff is employment for the jobseeker receiving public assistance. Being VDOL staff and VDOL trained, they are very much an integral part of each local Career Resource Center and well versed in the multiple resources available to all jobseekers. Also, because they are part of the VDOL team they are very familiar with WIA programs, Veterans' programs, Vermont JobLink, Wagner Peyser services and the connection with the Unemployment Division, as well as working hand in hand with other Career Resource Center staff and resident partner agencies. It is not uncommon for the blending and braiding of services and funding streams to work within this cross-pollinated system. Aside from the workers under contract with the CWS Reach Up program, VDOL also has a MOU with CWS and the work that is being done for AHS consumers. (Attached to this section)

The Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) has a long and positive history of working with individuals with disabilities. From the regional Career Resource Manager to the case worker our staff in our regional offices routinely interact with staff from the state's Vocational Rehabilitation Department (VR). Frequently this results in joint case management of individuals with complex needs. Based on the individual's needs and challenges staff from VDOL and VR analyze what expenditures would best be met by the various funding sources including VR funds and the Workforce Investment Act funds (WIA). Often these funds are also coordinated with other external funds such as those available through the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC). Employer outreach is coordinated as well. For a concrete example of inter-departmental/agency collaboration refer to the MOU between VDOL and the Agency of Human Services' Creative Workforce Solutions.

An area that will be addressed over the next few years is upgrading and cross training in tools for providing accommodation(s) to individuals. Technology has made huge advancements in meeting the unique needs of individuals with disabilities and our staff need to be trained to keep pace with these changes.

Those who are not likely to become employed through core services alone will swiftly move on to comprehensive assessment and employability planning services. Individual employment plans may include training activities.

The service delivery needs of businesses vary considerably from business to business and area to area. Regional Career Resource Center managers are given considerable latitude to organize their service delivery to our business customers. One core aspect of service delivery is Vermont JobLink, an internet based labor exchange service that is available to employers twenty four hours a day and seven days a week. Employers can use JobLink to post and manage their job openings and search the pool of jobseeker resumes. Employers may also choose to have their openings uploaded to the Job Central national labor exchange to expand coverage.

### **Strategy for working with people with disabilities:**

The rapid advance in the use of technology in communications is changing the way the VDOL staff provides services to special populations, including people with disabilities. This includes the use of social media such as LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook. For a number of years now contacting and communication with youth with special needs has required the use of the cell phone and texting due their unstable living conditions. VDOL Workforce Development staff will continue to work closely with Voc Rehab, VABIR, and other agencies and non-profit organizations to assist place people with disabilities in gainful employment. Training VDOL staff in the use and training in the new technologies, especially enhanced features such as "zoom text" or equivalent for visually impaired people, will enhance staff skills working with special populations, particularly people with disabilities. An update in training for VDOL staff in assisting special populations and people with disabilities will be introduced as part of the overall staff training.

**Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**  
**Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) and Agency of Human Services**  
**(AHS) Creative Workforce Solutions (CWS) Initiative**  
**Jan 1, 2011 – Dec 31, 2013**

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is entered into by, and among, the Department of Labor (VDOL) and the Agency of Human Services (AHS) relating to the Creative Workforce Solutions Initiative. The Secretary of the Agency of Human Services and the Commissioner of the Department of Labor have acknowledged their agreement by their signatures below.

**I. Purpose**

The purpose of this MOU is to define the conditions under which the VDOL, Workforce Development Division (WDD) and Creative Workforce Solutions, Agency of Human Services, agree to pursue a coordinated approach to employer outreach efforts and support CWS established in the “Act Relating to Implementation of Challenges for Change” (H792).

**Duration**

This MOU shall remain in force for three (3) years and will be reviewed annually. Either party to this MOU may withdraw from its obligation, but only after providing 30 days notice to the other party. Upon notice that one party intends to withdraw, the other party will likewise be relieved of its obligations under the MOU. No changes, modification, or amendments in the terms and conditions of this MOU shall be effective unless reduced to writing, numbered, and signed by the duly authorized representatives of WDD and AHS.

**Shared Mission**

To successfully coordinate employment services for both the employer customer and the job seeker that contributes to a thriving and diverse Vermont workforce.

**II. Vision**

A seamless and comprehensive employment service system exists through:

- Coordinated employer outreach
- A continuum of progressive employment options that blend and braid funding
- Effective communication at all levels
- Understanding each other’s roles and structures
- Ensuring competent and capable employees

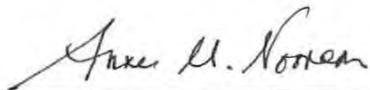
**III. Guiding Principles**

The staffs of CWS partner organizations and WDD agree that:

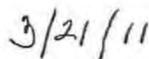
- Our service delivery system is driven by the needs of our customers and is transparent;
- There will be ongoing effective sharing of data and information;
- We will involve staff in solutions;
- We will recognize the unique value of each other’s organizations;
- We will enable all parties to take credit for success.

The parties will work together with each party furnishing the necessary equipment and workspace to accomplish the activities contemplated in this MOU. Neither party is expected to reimburse the other for any expenses associated with the MOU. To the minimum extent necessary, the parties will share information as permitted under state and federal law.

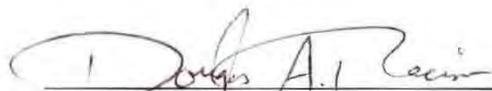
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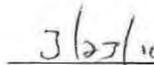
\_\_\_\_\_  
Anne M. Noonan, Commissioner  
Vermont Department of Labor



\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



\_\_\_\_\_  
Douglas A. Racine, Secretary  
Agency of Human Services



\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **Youth Services**

### **WIA Youth Program Design:**

- An objective assessment is provided for each youth including a review of the academic and occupational skill levels, as well as the service needs, of each youth.
- Service strategies including an employment goal are developed for each youth.
- Services and strategies include but are not limited to preparation for post-secondary educational opportunities, linkages between academic and occupational learning, preparation for employment, and connections to intermediary organizations that provide strong links to the job market and employers

### **Serving Youth Most in Need:**

Vermont has multiple strategies focusing on at-risk youth starting with the Success by Six strategy, which involves multiple programs and targets pre-school children from “at-risk” families. This initiative entails across-program interventions that help to ensure a successful entry into school. Strategies focused on at-risk older youth include utilizing expertise and resources from many sources to ensure successful transitions to self-sufficient work. For example, young offenders, aged 16-24, who are soon to leave detention are provided services through a partnership between Corrections, Education, Labor and a number of community based organizations. The focus is on obtaining living accommodations, education and employment. The strategy of providing wrap around services to serve youth most in need extends to those who are at risk of dropping out of school, living in unsafe conditions at home, suffering from drug abuse, domestic violence, child abuse, etc. Coordinated efforts for this population include WIA staff through the VDOL Career Resource Centers, school guidance counselors, probation officers, special educators, social rehabilitation workers and others as appropriate.

In 2006, in an effort to address the problem of unemployed and underemployed high school drop-outs, Vermont passed a law (Act 176) that allows the adult education system to enroll dropouts, or youth at risk of dropping out, between the ages of 16 and 22 into an individualized learning program that will lead to a high school diploma. Services provided to these youth are reimbursed from the State Education Fund, providing a new funding stream to meet the needs of this population.

Vermont uses many strategies designed to eliminate obstacles to economic and workforce development goals, including those associated with business regulation, infrastructure, telecommunication, capital, etc. VDOL’s strategy for comprehensive, integrated services to our neediest youth begins with assessment to determine appropriateness, willingness, and readiness for WIA services.

The assessment focuses on a systematic process of gathering information and subsequent decision making. This includes a strategy to help youth analyze themselves and their options in an informed manner. The assessment process is comprised of an examination of the capabilities, needs, vocational interest and potential while determining probable barriers to employment. This examination includes: evaluating the family situation, work history, education, occupational and soft skills, interests, aptitudes, work values and attitude, motivation, behavior patterns, financial resources, and supportive services needs. In addition, the objective assessment evaluates other services provided to the youth as well as identifies potential services from other partners and the availability of occupations within the labor market.

The VDOL youth specialist and the participant, along with other appropriate service providers, develop goals and an individual service strategy based on the assessment outcomes. Ultimately, the plan will become the foundation for a comprehensive and effective service mix, the focus of which will be work, work readiness or education.

**Post assessment options include:**

- Providing meaningful work in a well-supervised context that enables trainees to learn marketable skills and develop good work habits.
- Developing relationships with caring adults who serve as teachers, trainers, counselors, and mentors, committed to assisting each trainee to achieve his or her potential and gain the skills available through the program.
- Systematic and extensive attention to improving basic education skills including reading, math, writing, computer, and communication skills, towards the attainment of a high school diploma.
- Effective linkages with the private sector and trade unions providing employment opportunities and follow-up with both trainees and employers for an extended period after exit with counseling and job development support available.
- Monetary consideration based on individual benchmarks may be utilized to ensure the youth's success in employment and/or post secondary education retention.

To ensure program excellence, staff attend ongoing seminars, conferences and training related to:

- Drug Court
- Alcohol Abuse
- Child Abuse – Mandatory Reporter Training
- At Risk Youth
- Youth with Disabilities
- IEP Awareness
- Social Worker Program Oversight
- Career Fairs

Specific Conferences attended:

- Working With Youth Conference
- Women Can Do Conference
- Women and Economic Opportunity Conference
- Internal WIA Trainings
- Internal Performance Measures Training

VDOL staff attend collaborative community youth program staff meetings in an effort to facilitate discussions on how the various programs can best work together. This includes periodic meetings with Job Corps, Community High School of Vermont, Vocational Rehabilitation and the JOBS program. In addition, staff from youth organizations are invited to participate in the state "youth team's" monthly meetings. These meetings help to better understand the various programs and their respective goals and share information about youth that may be involved with multiple entities. Cross agency ties also build upon the trust and respect needed amongst staff to move away from the "silo" method of service as we continue to move forward with integrated approaches that include methods for effectively using multiple funding streams for young people.

The state will continue to communicate and support the collaboration among partners to serve our most at-risk youth. Partnerships and working agreements have been established to facilitate the development of innovative models that efficiently and effectively respond to the needs of the most at-risk youth. Collaboration of youth program providers has been greatly enhanced through the Workforce Development Council's youth council.

Vermont will continue to work towards the development of alternative education, combining education with employment that leads to post secondary education or full time employment.

VDOL will continue to work with organizations such as VT Youth Conservation Corps, Job Corps, Youth Build, Re-Source, Vermont Works for Women, Linking Learning to Life, Youth Services, Sunrise, the Lund Center, Spectrum, and the Vermont Coalition for Runaway and Homeless Youth in order to meet the goals and outcomes for Vermont's youth as previously set forth.

**WIA Ten Program Elements:**  
**All youth 14-21 will be advised of and referred to the 10 Program Elements as appropriate.**

1. Tutoring, studying skills training and instruction, leading to completion of secondary school, including dropout prevention strategies
2. Alternative secondary school services, as appropriate
3. Summer employment opportunities that are directly linked to academic and occupational learning
4. As appropriate, paid and unpaid work experience, including internships and job shadowing
5. Occupational skill training as appropriate
6. Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social behavior during non-school hours, as appropriate
7. Supportive Services
8. Adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months
9. Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after completion of participation, as appropriate
10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate

## **Wagner-Peyser Act Services**

The Vermont Department of Labor ensures that the three-tiered labor exchange service delivery for job seekers and employers is available throughout the state and beyond its boundaries through use of Vermont JobLink (VJL), a web-based labor exchange and case management system. VJL enables job seekers and employers to create accounts, enter resumes and job orders and search the database for potential matches. Those who lack internet access can visit one of twelve Career Resource Centers around the state and use the public computers available to all jobseekers. While at the Career Resource Centers, they can be provided with a system user id and access VJL through the VDOL network. Staff members are available to assist with the set up of accounts and enter resumes and job orders for those who require assistance. Employers have the choice of publishing their application directions on job orders or of asking that job seekers request referrals from VDOL staff who are then able to screen candidates based on the employers' required qualifications. Jobs considered "Green Jobs" are flagged as such in VJL, as well as jobs considered to be Work Keys jobs. If desired, employers are able to list their openings over the internet using a self-service account or they can provide the information to Career Resource Center staff who will enter the job order for them and assist with developing strategies to help fill their openings.

Local office staff organize employment related workshops such as interviewing, resume writing, and job search workgroups for job seekers in the Career Resource Centers. Interviewing space is also made available to employers who are recruiting for their job openings when appropriate. VDOL staff also plan and hold job fairs for local jobseekers and businesses and where possible collaborate with community partners on these endeavors.

## **Reemployment Services and the VDOL Unemployment Division/Workforce Development Partnership**

The State of Vermont Department of Labor's Unemployment Division (UI) teams closely with the Workforce Development Division in order to provide re-employment services to unemployment claimant jobseekers in a number of ways. VDOL UI uses identifies those claimants that are most likely to exhaust unemployment benefits by using a statistical model based on data that predicts some of the elemental factors that can keep people from returning quickly to work. Although this program has been active for a number of years, it will continue as part of our 5 year plan and continue to strengthen the ongoing partnership between VDOL's UI and Workforce Development Divisions.

## **RE-Employment Services (RES)**

The Re-Employment Services Program provides unemployment compensation claimants with the tools, services and assistance they need to obtain employment in an appropriate job as quickly as possible. Claimants are provided with employment resources including: labor market information, job listings, referrals to employment opportunities, links to other agencies and community resources, career exploration, resume writing, networking and interviewing workshops, and referrals to federal training programs and educational partners. The goal of RES is to assist claimants in securing the services necessary to achieve successful re-employment. Re-employment Services (RES) not only benefit the UI trust fund but on a more primary level, it provides jobseekers with information as well as greater access to the Workforce Development services available in the Career Resource Centers or Career Resource Center around the state to which they may not have been aware. With awareness comes use of the tools and services available through Workforce Development programs and with use comes the ability to have improved success in the job market thus creating a win, win scenario for Vermonters!

## **Job Assistance Services (JAS)**

The Job Assistance Services Program is a re-employment program focused on claimants who have been identified as long-term unemployed and receiving unemployment compensation. The claimants who are selected for this program have begun receiving Emergency Unemployment Compensation. Vermont has demonstrated the cost benefits of providing JAS to selected claimants results in a more rapid re-employment, shorter duration of receiving unemployment benefits and fewer erroneous payments of unemployment compensation.

Claimants who are selected to participate in the Job Assistance Services are provided labor market information; career exploration and career planning services (My Skills My Future and My Next Move); an assessment of the skills, interests and education; an orientation to WIA training opportunities; and a review of their eligibility for continued unemployment benefits based on their work search efforts

## **Re-Employment Eligibility and Assessment Program (REA)**

Through the UI/Workforce Development partnership, VDOL local Career Resource Centers administer the Re-Employment Eligibility and Assessment Program (REA). In 2010, Vermont's Unemployment Division received a Federal DOL grant to administer REA in three of the Career Resource Centers. With positive outcomes being the result, in 2012, this program was expanded to eight

Career Resource Centers. Moving forward into 2013 and beyond, as part of our 5 year plan, our goal is to expand REA to all twelve of our Career Resource Centers around the state. Not only does this program provide more opportunity for UI claimants to use Workforce Development facilities and services, it also places UI staff in the Career Resource Center where the program is administered. The UI REA staff are well versed in workforce development programs and have the ability and knowledge to share and distribute Labor Market Information. REA randomly selects 80% of the claimants, less those claimants who have already been selected by worker profiling, leaving a 20% control group. These individuals are mailed a letter to attend a UI required group orientation in one of our Career Resource Centers facilitated by resident UI REA staff. Following the group orientation, claimants must also attend two additional one-on-one, in person meetings with REA staff to assist them with their job search, enroll them in Vermont JobLink for Wagner Peyser services and offer appropriate and meaningful referrals locally to WIA program staff, VDOL Veteran's programs staff, Vermont Associates for Employment and Training (Vermont's SCSEP contractor) and in many locations adult education providers.

### **Extended Unemployment Compensation (EUC)**

In addition to RES, JAS and REA, because of the recession's high unemployment rates, VDOL's UI Division has also implemented and currently administers the federal UI Extended Unemployment Compensation (EUC) The EUC program selects all claimants who have been filing UI claims for twenty-six weeks or more and calls them into local Career Resource Centers to attend a UI required orientation designed to re-connect them with the services and programs available through the Career Resource Centers and explain changes to the UI filing process under EUC. Although VDOL does not foresee EUC as part of our ongoing 5 year plan, the VDOL UI/Workforce Development partnership is ready if needed to re-implement this sun-setting program should market forces and random changes in the economy once again create higher unemployment rates that would trigger the need for extended benefits

### **Basic Career Center Service for Referrals**

The services that will be provided to claimants referred to the local Workforce Development Career Resource Centers by RES, JAS, REA or EUC include: orientation to the job Career Resource Center information and its uses, initial assessment of skills, abilities and supportive service needs, job search and placement assistance, labor market information on local, state and national occupations in demand and the earnings and skill requirements for those occupations as well as information related to eligible training providers. Claimants will be assigned a case manager when it has been determined they will require intensive services in order to be reemployed. Services at this level

will include a comprehensive assessment of skill level and support service needs, in-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers, development of employability plans, and identification of training needs to obtain marketable skills.

### **AJC Branding**

The Vermont Department of Labor Workforce Development Division is committed to American Job Center Branding as outlined in TEGGL No. 36-11 dated June 14, 2012.

Grant funding has been identified and secured for the physical implementation such as updating One Stop Career Center signage, posters, brochures, and the Vermont Department of Labor Website, identifying that they are part of the American Job Center network.

The American Job Center – Graphics Toolkit for Media, at [www.dol.gov/ajc](http://www.dol.gov/ajc) will be used to create the applicable logos and statements.

This activity will start 05/01/2013, with training of Field Staff, and a target date for completion 3Q2013.



## **Business /Employer Outreach**

VDOL continues to integrate service delivery with multiple departments and organizations. Our goal has been to utilize limited resources prudently in serving individuals and businesses while making the actual process of integration seamless to clients.

Vermont's Workforce Development Council's Annual Report of 2010 states the following, "Over the past year we have seen the implementation of a number of workforce programs that responded to the lagging and challenging employment environment. Across Vermont's workforce education and training system, providers worked to respond to the needs of employers with new programs and adjustments to existing programs to help Vermonters get jobs and help employers training workers with new skills in order to avoid layoffs.

Mainstays of the State's workforce development efforts such as the Workforce Education and Training Fund (WETF), the Vermont Training Program (VTP), the VSAC Non-Degree Program, the Workforce Investment Act, and the Department of Education's Learning Works High School Completion Program continue to provide essential education and training services. In spite of the poor economy, employers continue to apply for assistance from the WETF and VTP."

Over the past few years fewer new jobs were being created in Vermont and consequently the training programs listed above invest in up-skilling and cross-training for incumbent workers. In many cases these programs have resulted in wage increase and lay-off aversion.

VDOL's Employer Outreach staff actively promote WETF, WIA, VSAC, VTP and other important Workforce Development programs and incentives. VDOL serves a conduit to match employers with these important training resources.

Vermont is unique in that our total population averages 626,000 and our business community is made up of largely small employers. It is an understatement to say that Vermont is a small state; some even suggest that Vermont as a whole is a small town. As a result, the service delivery needs of businesses in Vermont vary considerably from business to business, as well as region to region. Our Regional Managers are given considerable latitude to organize their service delivery to our business customers. One core aspect of service delivery is Vermont Joblink, our internet based labor exchange service. This database is available to employers 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Employers can use Joblink to post and manage their job openings and search the pool of jobseeker resumes. While we acknowledge that Joblink has its limitations

as a labor exchange system, it still proves to be a useful tool for the business community and jobseeker.

VDOL central office and regional field staff contribute to our WDC's efforts related to determining workforce training needs in a number of ways. These include, but are not limited to promoting Workforce Education and Training Fund dollars to employers, meeting with employers at monthly regional SHRM meetings, providing individual consultative services to targeted or interested employers, promoting the Work Opportunity Tax Credit, WIA, Federal Bonding, Apprenticeship as well as providing Rapid Response Services.

Our Regional Employer Outreach staff offer recruitment services through the twelve Career Resource Centers around the state. Employer Outreach staff can provide specialized recruitment, assistance with conducting and coordinating job fairs, providing interview space and helping employers with planning additional recruitment strategies. Some of our offices have dedicated Employer Outreach Staff while other offices have a selected team of front line field staff providing these services to the business community. The business relationships VDOL establishes produce significant mutual benefits...especially in our "small town" environment. Armed with a working knowledge of VDOL's internal resources, and other public and private resources that impact workforce development, this team connects with individual businesses and business associations. Services can take the form of practical guidance around recruitment, retention and training of workers, as well as direct assistance in accessing financial and other resources that turn plans into reality.

Just as important, VDOL's business services staff listen to the concerns of the business community and bring this knowledge back to the department, where such information can become the catalyst to develop effective solutions. Our business outreach staff is expected to work with businesses and education/training providers to identify key occupational skills that are transferable across multiple sectors, help to develop appropriate training and lead the effort to recruit and select candidates. VDOL is not alone in this initiative but is actively engaged in partnerships with the Agency of Human Services (AHS) and the Department of Economic Development (DED), entities that bring significant financial and human resources to workforce issues. Currently, AHS, through a wide range of programs, has direct access to a large pool of available workers, while DED controls significant financial resources that promote business expansion, job creation and workforce training. In addition to leveraging resources more effectively, this close partnership is intended to eliminate duplication of business contacts and other services related to employment.

VDOL has been the leading force on an initiative on behalf of the Governor's office, conducting a survey of Vermont employer's immediate and future hiring needs titled, "Bring It Home To Vermont." As the Governor traveled around the state members of the business community reported that they are having trouble recruiting for their vacant positions. In response to this, the Governor proposed an initiative to keep young Vermonters working in Vermont and to recruit talented Vermonters and others who are working out of state to come back to Vermont. The Department of Labor is helping by conducting an extensive outreach and survey to businesses to ask about their vacancies and recruitment needs. As needs are discovered, the information is then shared with the regional Career Resource Center staff who then reach out to the local employers surveyed and offer assistance with their recruitment or other concerns while seeking to fill vacancies with qualified candidates.

**Businesses are critically important customers of the workforce development system. Under state planning requirements, states should identify and provide specific strategies for serving their business customers.**

- 1) Engage employers and public entities as active partners in identifying skill gaps; developing, funding and sustaining innovative workforce training programs; outreach efforts to students, unemployed, underemployed, and displaced workers.
- 2) Support and encourage the efforts of Vermont's education system, as well as workforce education and training providers, to respond to the need for skilled workers and life-long learners.
- 3) Foster collaboration between programs and institutions to create and enhance educational pathways in high demand/career areas.
- 4) Identify successful workforce education and training innovations and work to support their statewide implementation.

**Working with business members of the state and local WIB to support business sector engagement goals**

Our Employer Outreach staff actively engages in working with regional partners. These partnerships include, but are not limited to the following:

- Workforce education and training is delivered through local partnerships including Regional Workforce Partnerships, employers, Regional

Development Corporations, trade associations, and many partner local non-profit organizations.

- The Agency of Human Services (Department of Corrections, Economic Services Division of the Department for Children and Families, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation of the Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living) in the development of the statewide initiative for AHS jobseekers with barriers to employment called "Creative Workforce Solutions."

### **Goals: WDC Goals and Economic Sectors**

- 1) The skills of the Vermont workforce will meet the needs of employers.
- 2) Vermont enterprises in all economic sectors will succeed because of the quality of the Vermont workforce.
- 3) The capacity of Vermont's workforce education and training system will be enhanced.
- 4) Education and training programs will prepare Vermont's workforce for good jobs.

#### **Economic Sectors:**

Focus workforce development efforts on sectors where a skilled workforce is critical, including:

- a) Engineering/Manufacturing
- b) Sustainable Foods/Natural Resources /Environmental Science
- c) Healthcare
- d) Business Systems/Hospitality/Tourism
- e) Energy Efficiency/Construction/Architecture
- f) Information Tech/Broadband

### **Training for Business Service Representatives, Rapid Response Coordinators and other staff that work directly with businesses**

Training is provided on an as needed basis to Employer Outreach staff. VDOL continues to plan on providing training minimally on a quarterly basis. The Workforce Development Division is committed to ensuring that Employer Outreach staff have the skills and knowledge that is needed to carry out this important work.

## **Partnerships and linkages with state and local businesses, professional service organizations and trade associations**

Our Regional Office Career Resource Centers are actively involved with the local business community, professional service organizations such as SHRM and Trade Associations. Vermont has an advantage by being a small state comprised of many small employers. This gives our staff the ability to develop personal relationships which allow for a great advantage when it comes to our involvement in these partnerships and linkages. In that same vein, we have very good relationships with local unions including IBEW, Plumbers and Pipe Fitters, and Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee. While we continue to strengthen our relationships with labor unions around apprenticeship and use of WIA training funds, through the WETF we are also able to do pre-apprenticeship OJT programs with program contractors.

## **Services and resources provided to businesses, including layoff aversion strategies, On the Job Training, customized training, recruitment, toolkits, data visualization and other materials**

The Vermont Department of Labor, Workforce Development Division, provides Rapid Response services to businesses in transition; downsizing, laying off workers, and/or closing a facility.

The Rapid Response Team responds to layoffs and plant/facility closures by quickly coordinating services and providing immediate aid to affected companies and their workers, either on-site or off-site. The Team will provide information about unemployment insurance, reemployment services and services available at the Career Resource Centers around the state. Pre-layoff services are designed to help the affected workers shorten their transition time and assist in preparing the affected workers to find new employment. Vermont continues to research best practices and is working to develop procedures and policies around lay off aversion strategies.

## **Services to Employers:**

The Vermont Department of Labor Workforce Development Division and Unemployment Insurance Department are partnering to support the business growth in the North East Kingdom (NEK) of Vermont. Through strategic community economic development to encourage foreign investment the previously depressed area is expected to grow significantly over the next 10 years. In addition the whole geographic area has been designated a "Free Trade Zone" further encouraging the growth of new business. Introduction of new technical businesses, especially Bio-Medical, and the development of world class sports training and recreational facilities, will increase the need for qualified workers in high skilled technical, medical, and supporting industries. Two VDOL staff have been assigned as coordinators for the employers and economic development organizations in the area. Determining needs of existing and new employers in the area, paying particular attention to developing the skills of incumbent workers to maintain employment with current employers and assist those employers to determine the employee skills they will need to grow and support the new business direction. The goal is to maintain a balance of providing employment for the present residents of the area and manage the influx of new employees with existing competitive skills. A similar approach is being used in the southern part of Vermont, Bennington County, reaching out to employers to collaborate in training both new and incumbent workers to support and expand the composite industry.

## **Leveraging Resources in support of the Governor's vision:**

VDOL will continue to identify relevant sources of funding and partner with Federal and State agencies, educational institutions, and private sector service providers to identify and use resources available in support of the Governor's vision.

Examples include:

Partnership with the Vermont Community College system and Vermont Technical College to encourage use of resources to train Trade Act eligible participants in such areas as medical technician and farm to plate-related occupations.

Partnership with the Community College of Vermont and several businesses to train individuals in work ready skills resulting in the receipt of credentials.

Using State Next Generation Funding to support internships, fund adult technical education programs, retrain incumbent workers to upgrade their skills to be competitive in the current and future Vermont job market.

Partner with the State of Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development to share funding for training for new and/or expanding businesses and fully utilize economic programs available such as incentive grants and low interest loans.

Administer disaster recovery grants to provide a wage and work experience to unemployed and under-employed workers in the State impacted by disasters.

Share resources, wherever possible, with the Vermont Associates for Training and Development through their Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP) to train and place job seekers age 55 years and older.

Continue to expand the Registered Apprenticeship program to include new areas of employment such as Line Maintenance, Health Care, and Child Care apprenticeship programs.

Provide services to the unemployed enrolled in the unemployment insurance (UI) funded programs such as Re-employment and Eligibility Assessment (REA), Reemployment Services (**RES**), and Job Assessment Services (JAS), for potential retraining, job search assistance, and job placement. These programs leverage Labor Market Information (LMI) to ensure students, job-seekers and career-changers are getting the most relevant information to assist in the decision making process. Whether it is wage or annual projected openings data by occupation, the LMI division is regularly partnering with the Unemployment Insurance and Workforce Development divisions as well as the Workforce Development Council and Vermont educational institutes to ensure access to LMI data in the most digestible of forms. By leveraging LMI information and funding, new forms of information dissemination are being created. While the 'old style' of information dissemination - written reports – will always be around as new reports are being developed, LMI is also branching out and embracing other forms of information sharing such as websites and short informational videos.

## **Policy on Priority of Service for Veterans and Eligible Spouses**

U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) regulations (20 CFR Part 1010) effective 01/19/2009 mandate "priority of service" (POS) to veterans and eligible spouses seeking service from qualified job training programs. Qualified job training programs are defined as "any workforce preparation, development or delivery program or service that is directly funded, whole or in part, by the Department of Labor."

### **Key Definitions:**

**Covered person** – The regulations adopt and apply this statutory term, which includes eligible spouses, as defined by the statute, and veteran, as defined by regulations.

**Veteran** – The regulations specify that the definition for a veteran specified at 38 U.S.C 101(2) applies across all qualified job training programs for the purpose of priority of service. This definition includes two key criteria:

- 1) Service in the active military, naval, or air service; and,
- 2) Discharge under conditions other than dishonorable.

**Eligible spouse** – means the spouse of any of the following:

- (1) Any veteran who died of a service connected disability.
- (2) Any member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who, at the time of application for the priority, is listed in one or more of the following categories and has been so listed for a total of more than 90 days:
  - (i) Missing in action;
  - (ii) Captured in the line of duty by a hostile force;
  - (iii) Forcibly detained or interned in line of duty by a foreign government or power;

**Note:** spouses of service members who died while on active duty are not covered

- (3) Any veteran who has a total disability resulting from a service connected disability, as evaluated by the Department of Veterans Affairs;
- (4) Any veteran who died while a disability, as indicated in paragraph (3) of this section, was in existence.

**Note:** The definition of veteran specified by the regulations for priority of service is functionally equivalent to the definition enacted Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and codified at 29 U.S.C. 2801(49)(A).

This definition is much broader than the more narrow definition of "eligible veteran" that is applied for the Wagner-Peyser, LVER and DVOP Programs and does not take into account such factors as length of service or combat experience. Consequently, LVER and DVOP will be prohibited by both regulation and current VJL system restrictions from serving some covered persons as defined under this rule.

Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists provide intensive services to meet the employment needs of disabled and other eligible veterans, with a case-management approach that individually tailors training and job placement opportunities for those who are economically or educationally disadvantaged, including homeless veterans and veterans with severe barriers to employment.

Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) conduct outreach to employers and engage in advocacy efforts with hiring executives to increase employment opportunities for veterans and monitor all job listings from federal contractors and agencies to ensure veterans receives priority of service, in referrals to these positions. LVER staff conduct seminars for employers, job search workshops for veterans seeking employment, facilitate priority of service in regard to employment, training, and placement services furnished to veterans by all staff members.

### **Identifying and Informing Covered Persons**

VDOL staff at physical locations must ask applicants to self-identify their veteran/covered person status at the point of entry to programs and/or services so they may take full advantage of veterans' priority of service. Point of entry includes physical locations, such as American Job Centers, as well as web sites and other virtual service delivery resources. Point of entry through VDOL's VJL job search database also asks for applicants to self-identify so that they can be notified of veteran's POS.

In addition to identifying and notifying covered person of their entitlement to POS, such covered persons must be made aware of the full array of programs and services available to them; and, any applicable eligibility requirements for those programs and/or services.

### **Verification and Documentation**

The process for identifying covered persons does not require verification of an individual's status as a veteran or eligible spouse at the point of entry unless they immediately undergo eligibility determination and enrollment in a program. However, proof of status will be required during formal determination for program eligibility.

The status of a veteran or an eligible spouse can be verified by referring to a variety of official documents, including but not limited to:

- DD-214
- An official notice issued by the Department of Veterans Affairs that establishes entitlement to a disability rating or award of compensation to a qualified dependent;
- An official notice issued by the Department of Defense that document the eligibility of an individual, based on the missing or detained status of that individuals' active duty spouse; or

- An official notice issued by a State veterans' service agency that documents veteran status of spousal rights, provided that the State veterans' service agency requires Federal documentation of that information.

In Vermont, the office of Veterans Affairs can also provide proof and documentation of veteran status.

### **Implementing Priority of Service**

POS regulations clearly state that priority of service means the right of eligible covered persons to take precedence over eligible non-covered persons in obtaining services.

Taking precedence means that, provided the covered person meets any and all eligibility requirements for a specific program:

- The covered person receives access to the service or resource earlier in time than the non-covered person; or
- If the service or resource is limited, the covered person receives access to the service or resource instead of or before the non-covered person.

All VDOL staff providing service to clients will continue to be informed of and must follow the guidelines set forth for Priority of Service to veterans and other eligible covered persons. Questions concerning this policy should be addressed to the State's Veterans Program Manager.

### **Provision of Priority of Service to Veterans**

Veterans access our system at a variety of entry points which may include visiting one of our twelve Career Resource Centers, establishing a self-service Vermont JobLink plus account, being selected for Re-employment Services, including Worker Profiling, Re-Employment and Eligibility Assessment, and/or extended benefits through EUC and/or REA-EUC, or accessing online resources such as our website. There is a "Veterans Priority" link under the main menu of the veterans' page of our state website that informs veterans about their entitlement to Priority of Service.

<http://www.labor.vermont.gov/Default.aspx?tabid=215>. Priority of Service begins during the core service intake process. It is the responsibility of the entire resource center team to explain and provide Priority of Service to covered persons.

VDOL gives veterans preference in job placement selection and the job referral process. Vermont's automated Labor Exchange System, Vermont JobLink (VJL) identifies veterans at point of entry.

Both job and resume searches are coded for Veteran's Priority of Service (VPOS). Non-Covered Persons have a two-day delay on new job orders. Covered Persons have a one-day delay. Covered Veterans and Other Eligibles see job orders and resumes the same day. On the resume side, only resumes of Covered Veterans and Other Eligibles show to self-service employers the same day. Covered Persons appear the next day. Non-Covered Persons display in two days. This delay is also integrated into the batch email (Email Alerts). Likewise, when employers complete a resume search VJL

physically flags veteran accounts with an American flag next to their name. This enables employers to easily identify and match veterans to open positions.

VJL also provides queries so staff can search for newly registered veterans to ensure that these veterans are aware of their entitlement to POS, and full array of services available to them. This same priority of service is observed in the provisions of intensive services including resume preparation, employment search activities, career assessment, career guidance, employability planning, case management services, and referrals to support services and training. Whenever veterans are referred to our statewide partners in workforce development such as Job Corps, SCSEP programs, or other programs outside VDOL, the training provider is advised that the person being referred is a veteran so the provider can likewise accord the veteran the appropriate level of priority of service.

Regional Managers monitor all aspects of local Career Resource Center Labor Exchange activities to ensure veterans receive priority of service in the selection and referral of jobs. These managers work closely with the WIA and TAA Program Managers and in essence, local staff working within those programs, to monitor the provision of intensive services to eligible veterans to ensure they receive enrollment priority in all workforce programs and service including, but not limited to WIA, TAA, Wagner Peyser, Job Corps, National Emergency Grants, SCSEP programs, etc. Veterans also receive priority seating in workshops.

Over the next year Vermont will work towards developing formal state guidance policy's that requires local levels, sub-grantees, and contractors to develop and implement a Priority of Service Plan. In addition, we will continue to conduct periodic trainings for VDOL staff.

## **Vermont's Apprenticeship Program**

The Vermont Department of Labor, through its State Apprenticeship Council, is the registration agency for Apprenticeship in Vermont. There are over 750 apprentices registered in nearly 30 occupations. Over 300 Vermont employers participate as sponsors of Apprenticeship.

Vermont has made significant strides in expanding Apprenticeship into new occupational areas. While Apprenticeship has traditionally been in the construction and manufacturing trades, Vermont has expanded to include many occupations in the health care and information technology (IT) industries. In the health field, programs have been developed for phlebotomist, medical coder, medical practice support specialist and licensed nursing assistant. In the IT field, programs have been developed for software analyst, web site developer, account manager and, most recently, interface analyst.

During the next 5 years, recognizing the need and initial results, Vermont will continue to build on its success in the medical and IT fields. In addition, VDOL will establish Apprenticeship programs in advanced manufacturing and meat cutting. While continuing to develop programs in new occupations, monitoring and expanding our efforts with ongoing programs, VDOL will work towards re-establishing programs that were in significant decline due to the lagging economy. In this vein, VDOL will work closely with local contractors to reinstate a once vibrant sheet metal program.

Of the many challenges faced delivering services to such a rural state as Vermont has traditionally been class size and location. Because the state's population centers are not always able to serve the travel needs of those who live in the most rural areas, VDOL has worked to address that obstacle through the use of technology. VDOL currently offers related instruction in the plumbing and electrical trades through a grant to Vermont Technical College, part of the overall state college system. Classes have been offered in selected areas of the state. In 2011, for the first time, classes were offered over Vermont Interactive Technologies, a provider of videoconferencing services. Students who previously had to travel very long distances were served much closer to where they live and work. Level I and II classes were offered as a "pilot" and were very successful. More than 50 students were served during the first year. During the next two years, Levels III and IV will be added as students advance in their studies and new apprentices are registered. The vision is to provide close-to-home related instruction classes for all Vermonters, even those living in remote areas of the state as we continue to move forward. As broadband continues to envelop the entire state it is likely that VDOL and its' Apprenticeship partners will find new and amazing methods of delivering courses throughout the state.

During the next five years, VDOL will formalize pre-apprenticeship programs with regional technical centers. Currently, students who participate in plumbing and electrical classes during high school are offered the opportunity to test out of Level I Apprenticeship classes. A system will be established to track student's grades and their success to assist them in finding an Apprenticeship sponsor.

During the past year, VDOL has had success in placing Workforce Investment Act participants into Apprenticeship. Through the use of On-the-Job Training contracts, individuals who had been unsuccessful in securing an Apprenticeship program were able to find work. VDOL will expand the use of OJT contracts as a very useful tool to place eligible workers into Apprenticeship continuing Vermont's ongoing tradition of program partnering across all VDOL administered programs.

Finally, Vermont will be implementing the new federal regulations, Title 29 CFR Part 29. Vermont welcomes the opportunity to register innovative programs using the competency-based and hybrid training models. Vermont will also rewrite its existing EEO plan to conform to the forthcoming changes in Title 29 CFR Part 30.



### **Wagner-Peyser Agricultural Outreach:**

The majority of the crop activity in the State of Vermont begins in April when vegetable crops, which had been growing in greenhouses, are transplanted to the fields. The crops continue to intensify through May, June, July, and August with the harvesting of vegetables, strawberries, raspberries and blueberries. In mid-August workers are needed for early apples with the majority of the labor force for apples hired around the first of September for work that goes through the end of October.

The level of crop activity in PY 2013 is expected to remain the same as in PY 2012 when 58 Agricultural Job Orders were filed for temporary H-2A workers. The anticipated job order filing will be 10 job orders to start in March, 2013, 9 job orders to start in April, 2013, 6 job orders to start in May, 2013, 6 orders to start in June, 2013, 7 job orders to begin in July, 2013, 13 job orders to start in August, 2013, 4 job orders to begin in September, 2013 and 3 job orders to start in October, 2013. Based on prior years the majority of the crop activities going forward will be vegetables, strawberries, raspberries, blueberries and apples.

The State Monitor Advocate will document and maintain a file of on-going and regular reviews of services and protections provided to Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFW) by the VDOL Career Resource Centers. The State Monitor Advocate will ensure that the VDOL Career Resource Center staff are trained in the requirements of the regulations in respect to services offered to MSFWs. Outreach contacts are conducted by the State Monitor Advocate during the peak harvest season. The Vermont Department of Labor's State Monitor Advocate will conduct MSFW outreach activities to at least 20 MSFWs in order to make sufficient amount of penetration in the temporary farm worker community. As many MSFWs as possible will be made aware of the full range of services, benefits and protection provided under 20 CFR 653, Subpart B. The State Monitor Advocate will continue its MSFW outreach through the peak harvest season and during routine employer visitations. For the quarter ending June 30, 2012 the Vermont Department of Labor State Monitor Advocate conducted 22 outreach contacts and PathStone Corporation, a private, not-for-profit regional community development and human service organization providing services to farmworkers, low-income families and economically depressed communities throughout New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Ohio, Indiana, Vermont, Virginia and Puerto Rico, conducted 108 outreach contacts.

The plan for PY 2013 and beyond is to increase the level of outreach by 20 new employers a year, average of 5 per quarter. This will be achieved by creating a list of current non-dairy agricultural employers in cooperation with the University of Vermont Extension Service, Growers Associations, Vermont web sites, and updating the list annually. The UVM Extension Service reports that Vegetable, Fruit, and Berry producers have increased in number by 54% over the last 10 years. This growth is expected to continue as specialty "Vermont Brand" products are developed and marketed.

The State Monitor Advocate, SMA, is a full time Employer Resource Consultant position which covers the SMA requirements, Foreign Labor Certification, H-2A, MSFW, and JS Complaint System. The position also currently provides general employer outreach and labor exchange services in support of the Career Centers. The current funding for the position will not change, the increased outreach activity will be handled by time and schedule management.

The Vermont Department of Labor will continue providing labor exchange services to agricultural employers through each Career Resource Center. Employer Resource Consultants, Regional Managers, Veteran staff, and staff from VDOL's Central Office will continue to provide and continue to contact and develop employment opportunities in the communities to include agriculture as part of VDOL's five year plan. The employers most likely to utilize MSFWs or seasonal farm workers are the small fruits, vegetable and apple growers. These employers have a historical timeframe of when they need workers and are contacted when those times arrive. The H-2A program does operate in Vermont and the State Monitor Advocate tracks the agricultural openings and the referral of US workers to these positions. The Monitor Advocate is also in contact with the WIA Section 167 grantee, PathStone Corporation, and migrant education staff to make connections between any of their workers and the job opportunities being offered.

Going forward, the State Monitor Advocate plans to conduct outreach activity throughout the State during the peak harvest season of April through October. The Monitor Advocate will utilize 6 staff days and plans on contacting 20 MSFWs or seasonal farm workers. PathStone Corporation, the WIA 167 grantee will contact approximately 15-27 farm workers per quarter and utilize 24-26 staff days per quarter in their efforts.



## **Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)**

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) is a program to assist adversely affected workers prepare for reemployment as quickly as possible.

The Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) provides case management services through the Career Resource Centers around the state. Trade-impacted workers will work one on one with a case manager in one of the statewide Career Resource Centers. The case manager working with the WIA Dislocated Worker program also works with the Trade program and will co-enroll the participants in both programs.

When the adversely affected workers become certified under the Trade program, a Trade Informational Session will be held for the adversely affected workers by the TAA Coordinator from the Workforce Development Division, the TRA Coordinator from the Unemployment Insurance Division and case managers who work with the Trade program from the statewide Career Resource Centers.

In Vermont, all our customers can obtain the same core services through our Career Resource Centers. Individuals eligible for WIA Dislocated Worker Services and TAA Services are provided intensive services with the same case manager. This allows the individual a seamless approach to development of a reemployment plan towards suitable employment. Co-enrollment allows the individual to receive core and intensive services, reemployment services, training and support services. Funding for both programs is available at each Career Resource Center.

Case management begins with an initial assessment of the individual's skills, interests, abilities and goals. Marketable and transferrable skills are identified during this assessment process, as well as matching the skills to available, suitable employment with local employers. Many times the trade petition is certified well after the assessment process and because VDOL has a co-enrollment process, the individual can continue working with the same case manager while being provided services and benefits under both the WIA Dislocated Worker program and the Trade program. After the assessment is completed and it is determined that the individual requires retraining in order to become reemployed in suitable employment, the case manager will continue working with the individual in developing the retraining plan. Training will be approved as long as it meets the six criteria for approval of training under the Trade Act and there are available federal Trade funds. The TAA Coordinator reviews and makes the final determination on the retraining plan, ensuring it

meets the federal requirements under the Trade Act. Co-Enrollment continues through the end of the retraining program to meet the needs of the individual.

The Trade Act program is administered, staffed and implemented by the Vermont Department of Labor's Workforce Development and Unemployment Insurance Divisions. The TAA Program is managed in the Workforce Development Division and the TRA Program is managed in the Unemployment Compensation Division. When working with trade-impacted individuals, all divisions work together by providing accurate and consistent information to the trade-impacted workers. When developing retraining plans under the Trade Act, both divisions and the case manager, who is working with the individual, must work together on behalf of the impacted worker. The case manager must gather accurate information during the entire training program, as well as making sure that the TRA deadlines will be met. This is of paramount importance as the individual must be able to financially enter and complete the retraining program.

VDOL strives to provide the best services possible to meet the needs of our customers in a seamless manner. By the various divisions working together we will be able to achieve our goals with the trade act program.

## **Description of common data collection and reporting processes in Job Centers:**

Vermont uses several common data systems and reporting processes. First, Vermont uses Vermont Job Link to collect information for Wagner-Peyser, Veterans and TAA reporting. Second, Vermont uses IDEM to collect and report on WIA activities. Another system, DART (Data Analysis and Reporting Tool) performs the extractions from both systems and calculates the performance measures to render the federally required reports.

Wage record information is also attained using the state-source earnings file and the Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS).

## **Description of the State's performance accountability system:**

Activity and performance accumulates in the two systems currently in use, IDEM and Vermont JobLink. The data is currently being uploaded and reported through the Data Reporting and Validation System (DRVS). Monthly and quarterly reports are reviewed by Grant Managers, the Assistant and the Director of the Vermont Department of Labor's Workforce Development division.

Annual Data Validation is conducted for WIA, TAA and Labor Exchange activity, also through DRVS. Results of data validation is reviewed and shared with all staff members, often times resulting in goal specific training events based on the results.

Another key component to performance accountability is the information collected annually on the required customer service and employer surveys. Results from these surveys are also used for training opportunities with staff.

## **Strategy for use of quarterly wage record information to measure progress on performance measures:**

The Vermont Department of Labor utilizes three sources for wage record information. In state wage record data, Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS), and Federal Employment Data Exchange System (FEDES) for reporting on performance measures.

## **Identification of entities that have access to wage record information:**

WRIS and FEDES information is not shared with any other agencies. State wage records are shared only with other state agencies as allowed by written agreements.



Please refer to document #: 707830

January 17, 2013

Ms. Anne Noonan  
Commissioner  
Vermont Dept. of Labor  
5 Green Mountain Drive  
P.O. Box 488  
Montpelier, Vermont 05601-0488

Dear Commissioner Noonan:

This letter is to officially confirm the negotiated Common Measures performance goals for the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Act and Wagner-Peyser (W-P) funded activities for Program Year (PY) 2012.

In accordance with Training and Employment Guidance Letter Nos. (TEGL) 38-11 (Negotiating Performance Goals for the WIA Title 1B Programs and Wagner-Peyser Act Funded Activities for PY 2012), and TEGL 21-11 (Requirements for 2012 State Workforce Plans) this letter serves as the approved modification to the Vermont Department of Labor's Strategic Plan for PY 2012-2016. A summary of the agreed upon performance goals is enclosed. The goals have been formally entered into ETA's on-line reporting system and should be included in the final State Plan.

We would like to thank you and your staff for your time and effort related to arriving at an agreement on these performance goals. Please contact me or Ms. Christina Eckenroth at [eckenroth.christina@dol.gov](mailto:eckenroth.christina@dol.gov) or (617) 788-0157 with questions.

Sincerely,

Holly C. O'Brien  
Regional Administrator

Enclosure

**Vermont Department of Labor  
Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and Wagner-Peyser (W-P) Act  
Performance Goals Summary  
Program Year (PY) 2012**

Performance Measures	Final Negotiated Goals
<b>WIA Adults</b>	
Entered Employment	70%
Retention	85%
Average Earnings	\$11,700
Employed with Credential	53.1%
<b>WIA Dislocated Workers</b>	
Entered Employment	80%
Retention	90%
Average Earnings	\$16,421
Employment and Credential	60%
<b>WIA Older Youth (19-21)</b>	
Entered Employment	50%
Employment Retention	85%
Earnings Change	\$2,000
Credential	28.1%
<b>WIA Younger Youth (14-18)</b>	
Skill Attainment Rate	75%
Diploma or Equivalent	50%
Employment or Education Retention	55%
<b>W-P Labor Exchange (LEX)</b>	
Entered Employment	58%
Retention	81%
Average Earnings	\$11,700
<b>Customer Satisfaction</b>	
Average Participant Index Score	80%
Average Employer Index Score	80%

## **Technology Infrastructure Plans:**

Vermont Department of Labor Workforce Development Division has been in discussion with States who use the AJL system hosted by AJLA, as well as with AJLA support staff, to analyze the problems that VDOL has seen with the current VJL system. The VJL system is based on AJL with locally modified and supported code.

In general, problems discussed have not been seen in other States. Based on this analysis VDOL has decided to implement AJL fully hosted by AJLA with no local modifications.

VDOL has been in negotiation with AJLA since early February, 2013.

Current plan is:

05/03/2013 – complete plan negotiations with AJLA.

05/17/2013 – review plans with Commissioner Noonan and receive approval to proceed.

05/24/2013 – complete negotiations with AJLA and establish installation date. AJLA has committed to have system installed and ready for live testing within 12 weeks.

11/1/2013 – user basic training completed with system operational state wide.

01/01/2014 – all functions operational and in use with measurements data Collection and reporting from AJLA.

## **Reporting and Data Collection:**

The AJLA Support team has agreed to conversions of all current and active IDEM records to AJL as part of the 12 week conversion.

Training of WIA Case Managers and Central Office support staff will be completed by 11/01/2013.

At that time the conversion from IDEM will be complete and use of AJLA to collect and report data, such as literacy and numeracy, in support of common measures will be fully operational.

## **Reserve Funds**

Vermont, as required by law, will use the Governor's reserve funds for statewide functions. Funds will be used for:

- Rapid response for layoff activities
- Maintaining and disseminating a list of eligible training providers
- Conducting evaluations in conjunction with the Workforce Development Council (WDC-Vermont's WIB)
- Providing technical assistance where performance goals have not been met
- Operating statewide workforce development service delivery system
- Providing additional assistance to areas with high concentrations of eligible youth
- Operating Workforce Development MIS systems
- Administration of adult, dislocated worker and youth programs
- Innovative incumbent worker training
- Training of displaced homemakers
- Non-traditional training
- Staff development
- Carrying out adult, dislocated worker and your activities
- Preparation and submission of the annual performance progress report



## Waiver Requests

**State of Vermont  
Workforce Investment Act  
Waiver Request**

**LAYOFF AVERSION ACTIVITIES FOR RAPID RESPONSE**

The Vermont Department of Labor Workforce Development Division, as the administrative entity of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) in the State of Vermont, requests approval of a waiver enabling the State to expand training activities allowing the use of up to a 10% portion of rapid response funding described in WIA Sec. 133(a)(2) for incumbent worker training as part of the state resources to assist Vermont workers and companies anticipating layoffs. The waiver enables Vermont to retain workers or retrain workers for new companies in order to avert layoffs by providing a variety of skill development resources through its Career Resource Center network. Vermont would create the necessary policies and procedures to approve these activities.

Upon notification of this waiver approval, state policy will be amended or created to comply with the terms of the waiver and applicable policies and procedures will be developed for Vermont's Career Resource Centers.

The U.S. Department of Labor has approved similar waivers for a number of other states and we ask that our request for approval of this waiver be granted. We request that the waiver period begin July 1, 2013.

**A. Statutory or Regulatory Requirements to be Waived**

Vermont requests a waiver of language in WIA Sec. 133(a)(2) to allow up to a maximum of 10% of the funding described in Sec. 133(a)(2) to be used for the described activities allowable under statewide activities described in 134(a).

**B. Goals of the Waiver and Expected Programmatic Outcomes if Waiver is Granted.**

The waiver request is consistent with the national policy direction to develop a workforce system that is responsive to the demands of both individual and employer customers. In addition, it supports a key priority of the Governor to close the "skill gaps" between job vacancies in the state and the available workforce through better alignment of public investments with regional data on employer need.

Vermont anticipates an increase in capacity of Regional Career Resource Centers to manage service changes required by the needs of dislocated workers and changes in the volume of layoff activity.

Flexibility in the use of Rapid Response Set-Aside funding will encourage collaboration with economic development organizations, business, industry associations, education and training institutions, Vermont's Workforce Investment Board, and the Career Resource Centers. If approved, the State of Vermont will increase its ability to align the supply and demand for skilled workers. Specifically it will provide the opportunity to increase industry collaborations to address worker training.

**C. State or Local Statutory or Regulatory Barriers**

There is no state or local statutory or regulatory barrier to implementing the proposed waiver.

**D. Description of Individuals Impacted by the Waiver**

Workers in companies anticipating layoffs or workers affected by layoffs would most directly benefit from the approval of this waiver.

All WIA customers and WIA partners -- including the Workforce Investment Board the department's Rapid Response Teams, and the Career Resource Centers -- will be positively affected by adoption of this waiver request.

**E. Opportunity for Public Comment and the Process for the Implementation of the Waiver**

As with all other major policy and procedural decisions made by Vermont we relied upon input from Regional Career Resource Center staff, boards and employers. All requests for this waiver have been posted on the Vermont Department of Labor's website, with a procedure for submission of comments and questions. Public input is factored into all policy considerations in Vermont.

The Executive Office of the Vermont Department of Labor and Workforce Development Division, as the State administrator of WIA, will continue to monitor the implementation of this waiver through the Regional Career Resource Centers and develop the appropriate state policies to govern its use by the Regional Career Resource Centers.

**State of Vermont  
Workforce Investment Act  
Waiver Request**

**INCUMBENT WORKER TRAINING**

The Vermont Department of Labor Workforce Development Division, as the administrative entity of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) in the State of Vermont, requests approval of a waiver enabling the State to expand training activities for individuals. This action would include incumbent workers, to better meet the needs of Vermont's economy. This request would waive language limiting use of local formula funding for adult and dislocated workers in order to allow Vermont to utilize these resources for allowable statewide employment and training activities, including flexible training design for unemployed and incumbent worker training activities, as described by WIA Section 134(a)(3)(A). Funds will continue to be tracked by funding stream and will not be combined thereby losing individual funding stream identity or integrity.

Pursuant to WIA Section 189(i) (4) (B) and the WIA Federal regulations at 20 CFR 661.420, the state of Vermont requests a waiver to enable local areas to expand flexible training design and incumbent worker training to better align training investments with the needs of Vermont's employers by allowing up to 10 percent of local adult and dislocated worker described by WIA Section 133 (b) (2) and WIA Section 129 to be expended on incumbent worker education and training activities pursuant to the rules adherent to statewide activities described by WIA Section 134(a) (3) (A).

Upon notification of this waiver's approval, state policy will be examined to determine compliance with the terms of the waiver and applicable policies and procedures will be revised, if necessary. State policy prefers to use local formula resources to expand services to customers in the form of education and training of the allowable statewide activities outlined in Section 134(a)(3)(A).

The U.S. Department of Labor has approved similar waivers for a number of other states and we ask that our request be granted for the waiver. We request that the waiver period begin July 1, 2013.

**A. Statutory or Regulatory Requirements to be Waived**

Language in Section 133 (b) (2) and WIA Section 129 limiting use of local adult and dislocated worker formula funding for allowable statewide employment and training activities, including flexible training

design for unemployed and incumbent worker training activities (described in Section 134(a) (3) (A)).

**B. Goals of the Waiver and Expected Programmatic Outcomes if Waiver is Granted.**

The waiver request is consistent with the national policy direction to develop a workforce system that is responsive to the demands of both individual and employer customers. In addition, it supports a key priority of the Governor to close the “skill gaps” between job vacancies in the state and the available workforce. Vermont’s incumbent worker program will provide employers with a means of working with their current employees who need to improve their skills in order to avoid being laid off from an employer which is at risk of downsizing or closing. A significant portion of Vermont’s economy is supported by small rural businesses who employ between 5 and 50 employees. Additionally, smaller companies in Vermont are struggling to recover from the last economic downturn and a series of three crippling storm disasters. Those companies would greatly benefit from incumbent worker training resources. Vermont businesses in general would benefit from the incumbent worker program offering them the ability to keep their workforce competitive and highly trained. The residual impact of this program would translate to new openings as incumbent workers are promoted. Vermont sees significant potential in coupling our OJT program with the incumbent worker resources resulting in business growth and averting closure and layoffs. Offering training and retraining for the incumbent workers to improve their existing, or obtain additional, skills to remain employed is critical to layoff aversion across the State.

Vermont anticipates an increase in capacity of Regional Career Resource Centers to respond to labor market changes within each region. The waiver allows regions to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of education and training vendors and institutions by connecting program design and curriculum with the labor market needs for the region through the use of Workforce Investment Act funding. Flexibility in the use of local formula funding will encourage collaboration with economic development organizations, business, industry associations, education and training institutions, Workforce Investment Boards, Career Resource Centers and other workforce intermediaries to change the system of delivery to align supply and demand for skilled workers. Specifically it provides the opportunity to increase collaborations with industry to address their worker training needs.

**C. State or Local Statutory or Regulatory Barriers**

There is no state or local statutory or regulatory barrier to implementing the proposed waiver.

**D. Description of Individuals Impacted by the Waiver**

Vermont anticipates an increase in the number of incumbent workers receiving training who might otherwise be ineligible.

All WIA customers and WIA partners -- namely, Title I Administrators and Career Resource Centers -- will be positively affected by adoption of this waiver request.

**E. Opportunity for Public Comment and the Process for the Implementation of the Waiver**

As with all other major policy and procedural decisions made by Vermont we relied upon input from Regional Career Resource Center staff, boards and employers. All requests for waivers have been posted on the Vermont Department of Labor's website, with a procedure for submission of comments and questions. Public input is factored into all policy considerations in Vermont.

The Executive Office of the Vermont Department of Labor and Workforce Development Division, as the State administrator of WIA, will continue to monitor the implementation of this waiver through the Regional Career Resource Centers and develop the appropriate state policies to govern its use by the Regional Career Resource Centers.

**State of Vermont  
Workforce Investment Act  
Waiver Request:**

**Adoption of Common Measures**

The Vermont Department of Labor Workforce Development Division, as the administrative entity of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) in the State of Vermont, requests approval of a waiver to adopt the Common Measures. Pursuant to WIA Section 189(i)(4)(B) and the WIA Federal regulations at 20CFR 661.420, the State of Vermont requests a waiver to allow the State to replace the 17 WIA Title I performance measures (15 core and 2 customer satisfaction measures) with the common measures delineated in TEGL 17-05. If approved, the State of Vermont would be allowed to report outcomes solely under the nine common measures for all required federal reports starting January 1, 2014, (one quarter after implementation the AJL MIS system) and beyond. This would allow Vermont to report the common measures for programs under the Workforce Investment Act, the Wagner-Peyser Act, the Jobs for Veterans Act, and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) programs. The nine common measures as outlined in the TEGL are: Entered Employment, Retention, Average Earnings, Youth Placement in Employment or Education, Youth Attainment of a Degree or Certificate, and Youth Literacy and Numeracy Gains. This waiver would allow Vermont to avoid the inconsistencies and complexities inherent in the current WIA performance reporting requirements. It would allow the state to continue to effectively align accountability across all programs within our workforce system. The common measures more effectively support the State's goals of promoting on-the-job training and customized training for adult workers including employed workers. They also more clearly target out-of-school youth and youth most in need as identified

**A. Statutory or Regulatory Requirements to be Waived**

Vermont seeks a waiver of requirements established in Sections 136(b)(2) and (c)(1) of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, as well as accompanying regulations at 20 CFR 666.100(a) and 666.300(a), which specify the required state and local performance measures for WIA Title 1B programs. Vermont also requests a waiver of the seventeen indicators of performance for activities authorized under sections 129 and 134 of the Workforce Investment Act. Specifically, with approval of this request, the State would not be required to report the following WIA measures: WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker credential rates; participant and employer customer satisfaction; older youth measures, and younger youth measures.

**B. Goals of the Waiver and Expected Programmatic Outcomes if Waiver is Granted.**

The requested waiver is consistent with following principles of the national strategic direction as outlined in TEGL 13-06 as well as more recent United States Department of Labor issuances.

- Enhance an integrated service delivery system that focuses on services rather than programs.
- Advance a vision for serving youth most in need.
- Increase the use of flexibility provisions in WIA to design innovative programs that fuel regional economic competitiveness and create employment opportunities for career seeker customers.
- Utilize an integrated and enhanced performance accountability system.

**With the waiver Vermont expects to see the following benefits:**

- Simplified and streamlined performance measurement reporting.
- Improved One-Stop case manager integration through the use of common measures which capture the effectiveness of the workforce system across all partners.
- The provision of clear and more understandable information concerning all workforce partner programs.
- Enhanced capacity for Vermont to continue to implement USDOL's youth vision, which focuses on out-of-school populations;
- Removal of the current disincentives for the provision of on-the-job training and customized training.

**C. State or Local Statutory or Regulatory Barriers**

There is no state or local statutory or regulatory barrier to implementing the proposed waiver.

**D. Description of Individuals Impacted by the Waiver**

Approval of this waiver will positively impact all customers of Vermont's workforce system by streamlining program measurement to aid program management and program improvement. The waiver will assist efforts to more fully integrate all partner programs involved in the workforce effort.

**E. Opportunity for Public Comment and the Process for the Implementation of the Waiver**

As with all other major policy and procedural decisions made by the State of Vermont, we rely upon input from Vermont's Work Force Development Division's Management, State's Workforce Investment board, businesses and Career Resource Center staff and customers.

All requests for waiver submissions have been posted on the Vermont Department of Labor website, with a procedure for submission of comments and questions. Public input is factored into all policy considerations in the State.

The Executive Office of the Vermont Department of Labor and its Workforce Development Division will monitor the implementation of this waiver and develop the appropriate state policies to govern its use.

**State of Vermont  
Workforce Investment Act  
Waiver Request**

**EXPANDED TRANSFER AUTHORITY**

The Vermont Department of Labor Workforce Development Division, as the administrative entity of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) in the State of Vermont, requests approval of a waiver enabling the Vermont Department of Labor's Workforce Development Division to transfer up to 50% of the initial allocation between the Adult and Dislocated Worker funds. The requested waiver will provide Vermont's Workforce Development Division with greater flexibility to respond to changes to the State's labor markets, and will help ensure that WIA funds allocated to Vermont are being utilized in a way that will maximize customer service.

The U.S. Department of Labor has already approved a similar waiver for a number of other states and we ask that our request for renewal also be granted for the waiver. We request that the new waiver period begin July 1, 2013, and apply to subsequent years.

In keeping with the guidelines set forth in WIA Section 189(i)(4)(b) and 20 C.F.R. Part 661.420(c), please accept the following as a request for a waiver:

**A. Statutory or Regulatory Requirements to be Waived**

WIA Section 133(b)(4) and 20 C.F.R. Part 667.140 state that a Local Board may transfer, if such a transfer is approved by the Governor, not more than 20 percent of the funds allocated to the local area in a fiscal year between Adult employment and training activities and Dislocated Worker employment and training activities.

Vermont requests approval of this waiver which allows the Vermont Department of Labor's Workforce Development Division to transfer up to 50 percent of a program year allocation for Adult funds and up to 50 percent of a program year allocation for Dislocated Worker funds between the two funding streams.

**B. Goals of the Waiver and Expected Programmatic Outcomes if Waiver is Granted.**

The main anticipated goal is increased flexibility in allocating and expending Adult and Dislocated Worker funds. Such flexibility would enable Vermont to better serve the needs of its customers, and would heighten the State's ability to respond to changes in the local labor market.

The U.S. Department of Labor has already approved similar waivers for other states, and we ask that our waiver request be granted.

**C. State or Local Statutory or Regulatory Barriers**

There is no state or local statutory or regulatory barrier to implementing the proposed waiver.

**D. Description of Individuals Impacted by the Waiver**

All Adults and Dislocated Workers, as well as business customers, will benefit from the waiver. Granting Vermont the ability to move substantial funds to the areas of greatest need will ensure optimum service to the general population of Vermont's workforce.

**E. Opportunity for Public Comment and the Process for the Implementation of the Waiver**

As with all other major policy and procedural decisions made by the State of Vermont, we rely upon input from Vermont's Work Force Development Division's Management and Career Resource Center staff. This waiver will be especially helpful in serving workers in an effort to assist them in retaining employment or obtaining employment leading to self-sufficiency.

All requests for waiver renewal have been posted on the Vermont Department of Labor website, with a procedure for submission of comments and questions. Public input is factored into all policy considerations in the State.

The Executive Office of the Vermont Department of Labor and its Workforce Development Division will monitor the implementation of this waiver and develop the appropriate state policies to govern its use.

**State of Vermont  
Workforce Investment Act  
Waiver Request**

**Waiver of the required maximum 50 percent OJT employer  
reimbursement.**

The Vermont Department of Labor's Workforce Development Division local workforce request a waiver of WIA Section 663.710 (b) related to the statutory exclusion and regulatory prohibition of the maximum On-the-Job Training (OJT) reimbursement. This waiver will allow a change to the maximum employer reimbursement for OJT training from the current 50 percent of the wage rate. The waiver request seeks to allow Vermont the ability to reimburse the employer on a graduated scale based on the size of the business. Under the waiver, the following reimbursement amounts will be permitted: 1) up to 90 percent for employers with 50 or fewer employees, and 2) up to 75 percent for employers with more than 50 but fewer than 100 employees. For employers with 100 or more employees, the current statutory requirements will continue to apply. The statutory maximum reimbursement has been determined to be a deterrent for small employers in Vermont that had considered OJT as a means to develop workforce skills necessary for growth in their respective industries. A graduated scale of reimbursement will create more incentive for small employers to participate in OJT that achieves high-skill, high demand and/or high wage attainment and family sustaining jobs. As required by 20 CFR 663.700, the length of an OJT will still be determined by the skill requirements of the occupation, the academic and occupational skill level of the participant, prior work experience, and the participant's individual employment plan. No reimbursement greater than 50 percent will remain in effect longer than three months. Approval of this waiver will be especially beneficial to small businesses that provide most of the new jobs being created in Vermont. This waiver request follows guidelines identified in WIA 189 (i) (4) (B) and 20 CFR Section 661.420 (c).

The U.S. Department of Labor has already approved similar waivers for a number of other states and we ask that our waiver request be granted. We request that the new waiver period begin July 1, 2013 and apply to subsequent years.

**A. Statutory or Regulatory Requirements to be Waived**

The WIA Section 101 (31) (B) and Title CFR 663.710 (b) dealing with the OJT reimbursements.

**B. Goals of the Waiver and Expected Programmatic Outcomes if Waiver is Granted.**

- Increased percentages of employers using OJT as a means of hiring and retaining a skilled workforce.
- Increased number and percentages of workers trained and hired through OJT programs.
- Elevated skill proficiencies for workers that will result in increased worker viability.
- Increased responsiveness to labor market issues in the private sector.
- Increased flexibility at the local level to offer businesses training solutions tailored to respond to the specific needs of the business.

**C. State or Local Statutory or Regulatory Barriers**

There is no state or local statutory or regulatory barrier to implementing the proposed waiver.

**D. Description of Individuals Impacted by the Waiver**

Employers will benefit from this waiver allowing OJT at a reduced cost. It will allow businesses to more rapidly adapt to changes in technology and the marketplace. Businesses will be capable of expanding and remaining competitive with affordable OJT options uniquely designed to achieve their specific developmental goals. This waiver will make OJT a much more viable option, especially for small businesses looking to get started or expand. The waiver will also benefit Adults, Dislocated Workers and Out-of-School Youth who are eligible for services under WIA by the availability of OJT reimbursement options.

**E. Opportunity for Public Comment and the Process for the Implementation of the Waiver**

As with all other major policy and procedural decisions made by the State of Vermont, we rely upon input from Vermont's Workforce Development Division's Management, State's Workforce Investment board, businesses and Career Resource Center staff and customers.

All requests for waiver submission have been posted on the Vermont Department of Labor website, with a procedure for submission of comments and questions. Public input is factored into all policy considerations in the State.

The Executive Office of the Vermont Department of Labor and its Workforce Development Division will monitor the implementation of this waiver and develop the appropriate state policies to govern its use.

**State of Vermont  
Workforce Investment Act  
Waiver Continuation Request:  
Competitive Procurement Process for selected youth program elements  
provided**

The Vermont Department of Labor Workforce Development Division, as the administrative entity of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) in the State of Vermont hereby requests a continuation of the 2001 waiver of the competitive selection of youth training providers that is found at Section 123 of the Workforce Investment Act, for the work experience, supportive services, and follow-up program elements for Program Years 2012-2016.

Since Program Year 2001, VDOL has operated under a waiver that allows Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) youth case managers to provide the three program elements of work experience, supportive services, and follow up, without undergoing a competitive bid process. Vermont originally sought, and continues to need this waiver to accommodate the unique and challenging characteristics of a rural state.

Under the regulations, all ten elements of youth services, including follow-up services, must be provided by youth service providers that have been procured in separate competitive bidding processes. Framework services may be provided either by the fiscal agent without a competitive procurement, or by another organization subsequent to a competitive award. Providers of framework services are in a better position to provide follow-up services to youth, and the requirement of an additional competitive bidding process for follow-up services is burdensome.

Vermont lacks the formal statewide service infrastructures commonly present in more heavily populated states. Outside of state agencies that serve youth or their families, there are very few providers with even a regional structure, and virtually none with a statewide presence. In Vermont, service providers, particularly those who work with youth, tend to be small and specialized, with a focus on serving the needs of local clients.

This waiver facilitates a more streamlined approach to case management by allowing providers of youth framework services to provide personal attention on a consistent basis to each youth as they access many different programs available for education and training.

The U.S. Department of Labor has already approved similar waivers for a number of other states and we ask that our waiver continuation request be granted. We request that the new waiver period begin July 1, 2012 and apply to subsequent years.

**A. Statutory or Regulatory Requirements to be Waived**

WIA Section 123, Section 117(h)(4)(B)(i), and 20 C.F.R. Part 664.400 require that eligible providers of youth services be selected by awarding a grant or contract on a competitive basis for youth activities and services.

**B. Goals of the Waiver and Expected Programmatic Outcomes if Waiver is Granted.**

A waiver renewal will maximize resources by allowing framework service providers to provide follow-up services to youth, instead of requiring a second competitive bidding process.

Granting the waiver renewal will decrease state and local paperwork, reduce the need for extra staff needed to track and report the progress of a youth through various programs, and make available youth case staff to work directly with youth on more substantive training and educational goals.

Approving the waiver will allow for a smoother flow of data that documents the delivery of youth services, as well as the outcomes that result from youth participation, since the organization that is providing framework services will be in a better position to understand where each youth is in relationship to his or her Individual Service Strategy, when a youth has exited a WIA service or the WIA program, and when the period for follow-up begins.

VDOL has developed a highly trained staff of dedicated case managers who exclusively serve eligible youth in each of our twelve local offices as well as numerous off-site locations. Our experience has shown that youth participants are more likely to succeed when they are case managed by the same person who can facilitate their progress through the program, from intake through progressively appropriate elements and finally to successful transition into employment. VDOL case managers provide a level of consistency and stability that has typically been lacking in this population's family, school and social environments. In addition to providing stability, VDOL youth case managers consistently model behaviors that guide youth toward success in the workplace.

In serving a youth population that reflects a broad range of challenges, VDOL case managers rely heavily on established relationships with a variety of local partners to secure appropriate services. By working directly with service providers, our case managers have fostered greater collaboration among partners, resulting in greater efficiency and quality of programs/services. In many instances, case managers have identified local service gaps, and because of the cooperation among providers, someone has stepped up and filled the gap.

In developing individual or group work experience sites, VDOL staff and management will continue its strict adherence to all state and local procurement laws and policies.

**C. State or Local Statutory or Regulatory Barriers**

There is no state or local statutory or regulatory barrier to implementing the proposed waiver.

**D. Description of Individuals Impacted by the Waiver**

VDOL youth case managers are responsible for the design framework component including such services as intake, objective assessments and development of individual service strategies. Allowing them to continue delivering the work experience, supportive services and follow-up elements is more cost effective and seamless than the alternative of undergoing a competitive process, negotiating and monitoring grants and subsequently referring youth participants to various other service providers for these three program elements. This strategy prevents youth from falling through the cracks and engages them to continue services provided at the One Stop Centers.

Youth participants are the ultimate beneficiaries of this waiver. It allows them to relate to a single case manager for most of their programmatic needs during their enrollment, and for the twelve month period following exit.

This waiver, if granted, should yield high levels of program outcomes as measured by the youth performance measures, in particular, entered employment, employment retention and earnings change for older youth. Program monitoring by the VDOL youth services coordinator, both on-site and through desk reviews, will continue on an on-going basis.

**E. Opportunity for Public Comment and the Process for the Implementation of the Waiver**

As with all other major policy and procedural decisions made by the State of Vermont, we rely upon input from Vermont's Work Force Development Division's Management, State's Workforce Investment board, businesses and Career Resource Center staff and customers.

All requests for waiver submissions have been posted on the Vermont Department of Labor website, with a procedure for submission of comments and questions. Public input is factored into all policy considerations in the State.

The Executive Office of the Vermont Department of Labor and its Workforce Development Division will monitor the implementation of this waiver and develop the appropriate state policies to govern its use.

**State of Vermont  
Workforce Investment Act  
Waiver Request**

**Eligible Training Provider Performance Requirements Waiver**

The Vermont Department of Labor's Workforce Development Division, the administrative entity for the Workforce Investment Act, is requesting a waiver that pertains to Section 122(c) and (d) and CFR 661.530, to permanently waive the performance eligibility requirements for training providers from June 30, 2013, and subsequent years. Additionally, the State wishes to provide an opportunity for existing training providers to reenroll and be considered enrolled on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) as initially eligible providers, as provided for under WIA Section 122(b) and Title 20 CFR Section 663.530, related to eligible training provider provisions.

Vermont's rural nature and the fact that there are not enough service providers to make competitive bidding for most youth and adult services cost effective. Likewise a large number of eligible training providers for adult services indicate that the WIA enrollment numbers are too small for an investment in a WIA data collection system for all students. This waiver will assist the State in developing a more efficient and cost effective workforce system and provide a wider range of options to Vermonters.

**A. Statutory or Regulatory Requirements to be Waived**

WIA Section 122(c) and (d) and WIA Regulations at Section 661.530 address the time limit for initial eligibility that would be waived with an extension of the initial eligibility period and subsequent years. WIA Section 122(b) and Title 20 CFR Section 663.530, related to eligible training provider provisions.

**B. Goals of the Waiver and Expected Programmatic Outcomes if Waiver is Granted.**

- Retain current approved eligible providers and continue to increase their numbers thereby providing quality customer choice for Vermont job seekers
- Alleviate providers' concerns with the types and amount of required information
- Have sufficient time to develop an effective and efficient method of collecting data from training providers
- Increase the amount and accuracy of WIA performance information from training providers
- Provide increased training opportunities for Vermont WIA participants residing close to border areas (New Hampshire, New York and Massachusetts) where attending training would be more convenient and practical.

**C. State or Local Statutory or Regulatory Barriers**

There is no state or local statutory or regulatory barrier to implementing

the proposed waiver.

#### **D. Description of Individuals Impacted by the Waiver**

This waiver will positively impact Vermont's public and private training providers. As indicated earlier, these mandated reporting requirements are so burdensome and costly that some providers may find it necessary to end WIA participation. The waiver would alleviate this problem by allowing the State to retain providers that are currently participating and also allow for the reinstatement of past providers.

The waiver would also have a positive impact on WIA training participants. It gives greater choice, not only among in-state providers, but also with providers located in border states where a Vermont WIA participant may find it more convenient to attend training.

#### **E. Opportunity for Public Comment and the Process for the Implementation of the Waiver**

As with all other major policy and procedural decisions made by Vermont we relied upon input from Regional One Stop Career Center staff, boards and employers. All requests for this waiver have been posted on the Vermont Department of Labor's website, with a procedure for submission of comments and questions. Public input is factored into all policy considerations in Vermont.

The Executive Office of the Vermont Department of Labor and Workforce Development Division, as the State administrator of WIA, will continue to monitor the implementation of this waiver through the Regional One Stop Career Centers and develop the appropriate state policies to govern its use by the Regional One Stop Career Centers.

**Note:** Performance goals for waivers will be established by Region, results monitored quarterly, corrective action plans developed and implemented to assure that waivers are being used and managed effectively.

**VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF LABOR—WIA COMPLAINT FORM**

Complainant	Complaint Against	Type of Complaint
Name	Name	Eligibility
Address	Address	Termination
City/State/Zip	City/State/Zip	Support Services
Telephone	Telephone	Work Site
		Other
		<b>Discrimination; Refer immediately to EO Officer</b>

Statement – Explain as briefly and clearly as possible:

(Attach pertinent documentation)

What happened? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Who was involved including witnesses? (name, address, phone) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

When and where did it happen? (dates) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Were you treated differently? If yes, how? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How would you like this complaint to be resolved? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

<p><b>CERTIFICATION:</b> I CERTIFY that the information furnished is true and accurately stated to the best of my knowledge. I AUTHORIZE the disclosure of this information to other enforcement agencies for the proper investigation of my complaint. I UNDERSTAND that my identity will be kept confidential to the maximum extent possible, consistent with applicable law and a fair determination of my complaint.</p>		
Signature of Complainant	Social Security Number	Date

Action Taken by the WIA Program Manager to Resolve Complaint:

Multiple horizontal lines for writing the action taken by the WIA Program Manager to resolve the complaint.

WIA Program Manager's Signature

Date

Disposition:

**RESOLVED: (Action Taken)**

Multiple horizontal lines for providing details for the disposition.

I am satisfied that this action resolves the complaint issues identified

Complainant's Signature

Date

**UNRESOLVED:** Attach all documentation pertaining to this complaint and forward **within 10 days** to:

Date Forwarded for appeal

10/17/05

Hearing Officer, Commissioner's Office  
Department of Labor  
P.O. Box 488  
Montpelier, VT 05601-0488

## **Addendum WIA 1 – WIA Monitoring Procedure**

### **SUBJECT: PROGRAM COMPLIANCE MONITORING UNDER THE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT (WIA)**

#### **Purpose**

Monitoring Workforce Investment Act (WIA) activities ensures their compliance with statutory, regulatory and policy requirements from the federal, state and Workforce Development Council levels. Reviewing WIA activities maintains system integrity and conformance to pertinent laws, regulations and policies. Monitoring is critical to the workforce development system by ensuring that WIA resources are being used lawfully and effectively.

Generally, monitoring of contracts will:

- Identify problems and areas of non-compliance.
- Result in ending activities or procedures that are not in compliance with existing regulations and policies.
- Establish corrective action plans for resolution of identified problems.
- Identify issues requiring technical assistance.
- Determine the extent to which internal or contracted program operations are effectively and efficiently meeting their obligations.
- Identify internal problems within the administrative organization of the VT Department of Labor [VDOL] and effect timely solutions.

#### **General**

All Workforce Investment Act (WIA) activities will be reviewed annually.

A standard compliance monitoring checklist will be used by WIA Grant Managers to review the WIA activities. Additions and deletions to the checklist will be done on an as-needed basis depending on the type of activities and its work statement requirements.

WIA Grant Management Staff will schedule compliance reviews in consultation with the Workforce Development Director every June for the following program year beginning July 1. Regional Managers will be reminded of the upcoming review visit approximately a month prior to the monitoring visit. The annual monitoring schedule will be submitted to the Workforce Development Council. Reports of compliance monitoring will be issued to the Commissioner and Workforce Development Director of the VDOL and the Workforce Development Council.

On-site monitoring visits will focus on one or several programmatic and fiscal areas but will at a minimum cover each of the following annually:

- Participant Eligibility
- Fiscal Management
- Management Information Systems
- Property Management
- Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action
- Prevention of fraud and abuse

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

In order to achieve the objectives specified in this section, the VDOL has delegated responsibility to WIA Grant Managers for adult, dislocated worker, and youth operations. The responsibilities are as follows:

- Generate Management Information System (MIS) reports for review.
- Conduct formal monitoring to include: on-site monitoring visits, generate reports and develop and implement corrective action.
- Monitor the implementation of and adherence to policies developed by the Workforce Development Council
- Monitor program progress and outcomes against program goals.
- Report on program performance to the Commissioner, Workforce Development Director of the VDOL and the Workforce Development Council.

### **Corrective Action**

A Corrective Action Plan is defined as a specific plan of action established by the VDOL, which is intended by design to correct a specific problem of non-compliance with WIA law, provisions, regulations or contract, when implemented within a specified period of time.

The VDOL is responsible for the development and implementation of corrective action plans, and the successful correction of each problem of non-compliance.

Corrective Action Plans established by the VDOL will be evaluated for acceptability by the Workforce Development Director and presented to the Commissioner for approval.

Monitoring for Corrective Action Plan completion and status of problems resulting in non-compliance notification will be conducted through review and analysis of reports and/or during an on-site visit within thirty (30) days following the completion due date.

**Monitoring Visits**

Monitoring visits will begin with an entrance meeting between monitoring WIA Grants Managers, VDOL Regional Manager and the Regional Office WIA staff. This meeting will outline the purpose of the visit, the areas to be reviewed, and level of involvement required of WIA staff and training sites.

Monitoring visits may include interviews with directors, staff, participants and training supervisors, on-site observation, review of relevant source documents and systems. An exit meeting, which summarizes the monitoring activities, will be conducted with the Regional Manager at the conclusion of the monitoring visit.

**Monitoring Reports**

The WIA Grant Manager will issue a monitoring report usually within thirty (30) working days of the conclusion of the scheduled visit. The report and accompanying documentation details the areas of review, the findings of non-compliance or other additional problems, needed for Correction Action Plans, and suggested assistance.

## **Addendum WIA 2 Vermont WIA Manual** (first 4 pages)

### **WIA REGISTRATION and PARTICIPATION POLICY and PROCEDURE JULY 2008**

Adults and dislocated workers must be registered to receive WIA services. Registration is the process for collecting information to support a determination of eligibility. This information may be collected through methods that include electronic data transfer, personal interview, or an individual's application.

Adults and dislocated workers who receive services funded under title I other than self- service or informational activities must be registered **and** determined eligible.

### **CORE SERVICES (Adult & Dislocated Workers)**

To be eligible to receive core services as an adult in the adult and dislocated worker programs, an individual must be 18 years of age or older. To be eligible to receive core services as a dislocated worker in the adult and dislocated worker programs, an individual must meet the definition of "dislocated worker".

At a minimum, an individual must receive at least one core service; such as an initial assessment or job search and placement assistance, before receiving intensive services. The initial assessment provides preliminary information about the individual's skill ... levels, aptitudes, interests; and supportive services needs. The job search and placement assistance helps the individual determine whether he or she is unable to obtain employment, and thus requires more intensive services to obtain employment. The decision on which core services to provide and the timing of their delivery, may be made on a case-by-case basis depending upon the needs of the participant.

The following core services for adults and dislocated workers will be available in each Resource Center:

- Determination of whether individuals are eligible to receive assistance
- Outreach, intake (which may include profiling), and orientation to the information and other services available through the one-stop delivery system
- Job search and placement assistance, and where appropriate, career counseling
- Labor market information, which provides accurate information relating to local, regional and national labor market areas, and information relating to job vacancy listings in the labor market areas; information relating to occupations in demand and the earnings and skill requirements for such occupations.
- Performance information and program cost information on eligible providers of training services.

Information regarding how the local area is performing on the local performance measures and any additional performance information with respect to the one-stop delivery system in the local area.

Information about available supportive services, including child care and transportation, available in the local area and referral to such services, as appropriate.

Information regarding filing claims for unemployment compensation.

Assistance in establishing eligibility for public assistance in the local area; and programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs that are not funded under the Workforce Investment Act and are available in the local area.

Follow up services, including counseling regarding the workplace, for participants in workforce investment activities who are placed in unsubsidized employment, for a minimum of 1.2 months after the first day of the employment, as appropriate.

A determination of the need for intensive services as established by the initial assessment or the individual's inability to obtain employment through the core services provided, must be contained in the participant's case file.

### **INTENSIVE SERVICES (Adult & Dislocated workers)**

The following intensive services for Adults and Dislocated Workers will be available in each Resource Center:·

Comprehensive and specialized assessments of skill levels and service needs including:

diagnostic testing and use of other assessment tools;

- in-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals . .

Development of an individual service strategy to identify:

employment goals,

appropriate achievement objectives

- appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve the employment goals

Group counseling

- Individual counseling and career planning Case management  
Short-term pre-vocational services;  
including development of:  
learning skills  
communication skills interviewing skills

- punctuality
- personal maintenance
- professional conduct to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training
- remedial education
- life skills training
- non-occupational specific training

- Literacy activities related to basic workforce readiness Supportive Services
- Work experience- a planned, structured learning experience that takes place in a workplace for a limited period of time may be in the private sector, the non-profit sector or the public sector.

There are two categories of Adults and Dislocated Workers who may receive Intensive Services.

**CATEGORY 1** - Those who are: unemployed, and have received at least one core service, and are unable to obtain employment through Core Services, and are determined to be in need of more intensive services to obtain employment; and

**CATEGORY 2** - Those who are: employed, and have received at least one core service, and are determined to be in need of intensive services to obtain or retain employment that leads to self-sufficiency..

At a minimum, an individual must receive at least one intensive service, such as development of an individual service strategy with a case manager or individual counseling and career planning, before the individual may receive training services.

The individual service strategy is an ongoing strategy jointly developed by the participant and the case manager that identifies the participant's employment goals, the appropriate achievement objectives and the appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve the employment goals.

The participant's record (614) must contain documentation of the determination of need for training services, as identified in the individual employment plan, comprehensive assessment or through any other intensive service received.

There is no minimum time period for participation in intensive services before receiving training services. The length of participation is determined on a case-by-case basis depending upon the needs of the individual and it should be long enough to prepare the individual for training or employment.

### **TRAINING SERVICES (Adult & Dislocated Worker)**

Training services may be made available to employed and unemployed adults and dislocated workers who:

- Have met the eligibility requirements for intensive services, have received at least one intensive service and have been determined to be unable to obtain or retain employment through such services;
- After an interview, evaluation, or assessment, and case management, have been determined to be in need of training services and to have the skills and qualifications to successfully complete the selected training program;
- Select a program of training services that is directly linked to the employment opportunities either in the local area or in another area to which the individual **is willing to relocate**;
- Are unable to obtain grant assistance from other sources to pay the costs of such training, including Reach Up, State funded training funds, Trade Adjustment Assistance and Federal Pell Grants established under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, or require WIA assistance in addition *to* other sources of grant assistance, including Federal Pell Grants

NOTE: Priority for training services will be given to those adults determined low income or receiving public assistance as required by law. The Program Grants Administrator may approve adults seeking training services that are over the income guidelines to receive training services after a review of the case.

## Addendum WIA 3 – WIA Intake Manual – At Risk Youth

### VERMONT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT – WIA INTAKE MANUAL

#### 36. AT RISK YOUTH

Enter 1 if the individual is a person who is between the ages of 14 and 21 and requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment

Enter 2 if the individual does not meet the conditions described above.

#### DATA VALIDATION

Information in the file must SUPPORT this for Older and Younger Youth.

#### SOURCE DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Document this in the individual service strategy, case notes, WIA intake or registration form, State MIS, self-attestation.

Requirement for additional assistance can be determined through a combination of:

- Individual interview and personal assessment.
- Formal assessment such as CASIS or equivalent.
- An IEP (educational at risk) or 504 (medically at risk).
- Disability at Risk Certification (WIA-22) from their school.
- TABE scores for older youth.
- Other pertinent equivalent documentation.

### **Section III. Integrated Workforce Plan Assurances and Attachments**

This section provides a "check-the-box" table of assurance statements and a single signature sheet to certify that the information provided by the state, and submitted to the Department, in the following table is accurate, complete, and meets all legal and guidance requirements. The table below contains the assurances, the legal reference that corresponds to each assurance, and a column for the state to provide a reference to the document(s) that it believes meets the stated assurance or where the statute requires documentation of a policy or procedure. Such a reference may be a hyperlink to an on-line document or it may be an attachment. Not all assurances require documents to be attached or referenced. Where an approved special exemption, waiver, or an approved alternate structure makes an assurance not applicable to your state, please insert the words "Not Applicable" in the reference column.

By checking each assurance, attaching the proper documentation or links, and signing the certification at the end of the document, the state is certifying it has met each of the legal planning requirements outlined in WIA law and regulations and in corresponding Departmental guidance. By checking each box and signing the certification, the state is also indicating that its supporting documentation meets all applicable Federal and state laws and regulations and is available for review. Any deficiencies in the documentation attached to each assurance identified during the state plan review process may result in additional technical assistance and a written corrective action as part of the Department's conditional approval of the state's Integrated Workforce Plan. Assurances that are part of the state's grant agreement are not duplicated here.

**ASSURANCES AND ATTACHMENTS – PLANNING PROCESS AND PUBLIC COMMENT**

	STATEMENT	REFERENCE	DOCUMENTATION and COMMENTS
1.	X The state established processes and timelines, consistent with WIA Section 111(g) – and, where appropriate, 20 CFR 641.325 (g) – to obtain input into the development of the Integrated Workforce Plan and to give opportunity for comment by representatives of local elected officials, local workforce investment boards, businesses, labor organizations, other primary stakeholders, and	WIA Sections 112(b)(9), 111(g) 20 CFR 661.207 20 CFR 661.220(d) 20 CFR 641.325(f), (g), (h), 20 CFR 641.335 Include a link or copy of a summary of the public comments received.	The draft Plan is accessible on the VDOL website: <a href="http://www.labor.vermont.gov">http://www.labor.vermont.gov</a>

		the general public.		
2.	X	The state afforded opportunities to those responsible for planning or administering programs and activities covered in the Integrated Workforce Plan to review and comment on the draft plan.	WIA Sections 112(b)(9), 111(g) 20 CFR 661.207 20 CFR 661.220(d)	Yes.
3.	X	The final Integrated Workforce Plan and State Operational Plan are available and accessible to the general public.		Yes

4.	<p>X The state afforded the State Monitor Advocate an opportunity to Agricultural Outreach Plan. The state solicited information and suggestions from WIA 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other interested organizations. At least 45 days before submitting its final outreach, the State provided a proposed plan to the organizations listed above and allowed at least 30</p>	<p>WIA Sections 112(b)(9), 111(g) 20CFR 661.220(d) 20 CFR 653.107 (d) 20 CFR 653.108(f)</p>	<p>The State Monitor Advocate, Cris LaDuke, participated in the writing and the review of the Agricultural Outreach Plan. The plan includes the input from the WIA 167 Grantee PathStone Corporation.</p>
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	<p>days for review and comment. The State considered any comments received in formulating its final proposed plan, informed all commenting parties in writing whether their comments have been incorporated and, if not, the reasons therefore, and included the comments and recommendations received and its responses with the submission of the plan.</p>		
5.	<p>X In the development of the plan, the state considered the recommendations submitted by the State Monitor Advocate in the</p>	<p>20 CFR 653.108(t)</p>	<p>Yes.</p>

		annual summary of services to Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers.		
6.	X	The state established a written policy and procedure to ensure public access (including people with disabilities) to board meetings and information regarding board activities, such as board membership and minutes.	WIA Sections 111(g), 112(b)(9), 117(e) 20 CFR 661.207	Yes. Included in the Workforce Development Council Member's Handbook. All WDC meetings and committee meetings are open to the public.  <a href="http://labor.vermont.gov/tabid/1495/Default.aspx">http://labor.vermont.gov/tabid/1495/Default.aspx</a>  The WDC, co-chaired by the Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Labor, assures that all State Policies are followed as described in the State Policies and Procedures outlined on their web site at <a href="http://humanresources.vermont.gov">http://humanresources.vermont.gov</a>
7.	X	Where SCSEP is included in the Integrated Workforce Plan, the state established a written policy and procedure to obtain advice and recommendations on the State Plan	20 CFR 641.315(a)(1-10), 641.325 (f), (g), (h)	SCSEP plan is submitted as an attachment to the Vermont State Plan so is available for review with the plan. Also included is the ETA letter of approval of the SCSEP plan to the Governor of Vermont.

	<p>from representatives of the State and area agencies on aging; State and local boards under the WIA; public and private nonprofit agencies and organizations providing employment services, including each grantee operating a SCSEP project within the state, except as provided under section 506 (a)(3) of OAA and 20 CFR 641.320(b); Social service organizations providing services to older individuals; Grantees under Title III of OAA, Affected</p>		
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	Communities, Unemployed older individuals, Community-based organizations serving older individuals; business organizations and labor organizations		
	<b>ASSURANCES AND ATTACHMENTS REQUIRED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES</b>		
8.	X The state made available public state-imposed requirements, such as statewide policies or guidance, for the statewide public workforce system, including policy for the use of WIA title I statewide funds.	WIA Sections 112(b)(2), 129,134 20 CFR 665.100	General information on Workforce Investment Act is on the VDOL website <a href="http://www.labor.vermont.gov">http://www.labor.vermont.gov</a> .

9.	X The state established a written policy and procedure that identifies circumstances that might present a conflict of interest for any state or local workforce investment board member or the entity that s/he represents, and provides for the resolution of conflicts. The policy meets the requirements of WIA Sections 111(f) and 117(g).	WIA Sections 112(b)(13), 111(f), 117(g)	The Vermont State Policy is referenced in the Workforce Development Council Member's Handbook and at the State Department Of Human Resources web site <a href="http://humanresources.vermont.gov">http://humanresources.vermont.gov</a> , policies and procedures section.
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10.	<p>X The state has established a written policy and procedure that describes the state's appeals process available to units of local government or grant recipients that request, but are not granted, designation of an area as a local area under WIA Section 116.</p>	<p>WIA Sections 112(b)(15), 116(a)(5) 20 CFR 661.280 20 CFR 667.700</p>	<p>Not applicable in the State of Vermont. The State is a single SWIB (WDC) that is managed directly by the Workforce Development Division under the guidance of the WDC.</p>
11.	<p>X The state established written policy and procedures that describe the state's appeal process for requests not granted for automatic or temporary and subsequent designation as a</p>	<p>20 CFR 667.640 20 CFR 662.280</p>	<p>Not applicable. Vermont is a single SWIB (WDC) State.</p>

		local workforce investment area.		
12.	X	The state established a written policy and procedure that set forth criteria to be used by chief elected officials for the appointment of local workforce investment board members.	WIA Sections 112(b)(6), 117(b) 20 CFR 661.300(a), 20 CFR 661.325	<b>Act of the Vermont General Assembly 2005-2006</b> Sec. 1. 10 V.S.A. § 541 provided the definition of the operation, appointment of members, and terms for the WDC.
13.	X	The state established written policy and procedures to ensure local workforce investment boards are certified by the governor every two years.	WIA Sec 117(c) 20 CFR 661.325	Same as 12.
14.	X	Where an alternative entity takes the place of an SWIB, the state has written policy and procedures to	WIA Sections 111(e), (b) 20 CFR 661.210	Not Applicable. Vermont is a single SWIB state.

	ensure the alternative entity meets the definition under section 111(e) and the legal requirements for membership.		
15.	X Where the alternative entity does not provide representative membership of the categories of required SWIB membership, the state has a written policy or procedure to ensure an ongoing role for any unrepresented membership group in the workforce investment system. (Only applicable in cases where a state uses an alternative entity as its SWIB,	WIA Sections 111(b), (e) 20 CFR 661.210(c)	Not Applicable.

	and that entity does not provide for representative membership by individuals in the categories required by WIA sec. 111(b).)		
16.	X When applicable, the state takes any action necessary to assist local areas in developing and implementing the One-Stop system	WIA Sections 112(b)(14), 134(c) W-P Section 8(c)	Yes. The One Stop system is managed by the Workforce Development Division under the guidance of the WDC.  <a href="http://labor.vermont.gov/tabid/1495/Default.aspx">http://labor.vermont.gov/tabid/1495/Default.aspx</a>
17.	X The state established procedures for determining initial and subsequent eligibility of training providers.	WIA Sections 112(b)(17)(A)(iii), 122, 134(d)(4) 20 CFR 663.515, 663.535	Yes. Information for applying as a Training Provider is available on the VDOL web site <a href="http://labor.vermont.gov">http://labor.vermont.gov</a> .
18.	X All partners in the workforce and education system described in this plan will ensure the physical, programmatic, and	WIA Section 188 W-P Section 8(b) 29 CFR part 37 20 CFR 652.8(j)	Yes. Most partners reside in State Offices with One Stop Offices and/or in buildings managed by Vermont State Employees so are governed by Vermont State Department of Human Resources policies and procedures: <a href="http://humanresources.vermont.gov">http://humanresources.vermont.gov</a>

	communications accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities in One-Stop Career Centers.		Contracting for lease of space and contracting of services by non-State agencies is controlled by the Department of Buildings and Services with guidelines documented on their web site at <a href="http://bgs.vermont.gov/">http://bgs.vermont.gov/</a>
19.	X The state ensures that outreach is provided to populations and sub-populations who can benefit from One-Stop Career Center services.	WIA Section 188 29 CFR 37	Yes.
20.	X The state implements universal access to programs and activities to all individuals through reasonable recruitment targeting, outreach	WIA Section 188 29 CFR 37.42	Yes.

	efforts, assessments, services delivery, partnership development, and numeric goals.		
21.	X The state complies with the nondiscrimination provisions of section 188, including that Methods of Administration were developed and implemented.	WIA Section 188 29 CFR 37.20	Yes. The State follows the policies of the Department Of Human Resources available on the web site <a href="http://humanresources.vermont.gov">http://humanresources.vermont.gov</a> .
22.	X The state collects and maintains data necessary to show compliance with nondiscrimination provisions of section 188.	WIA Section 185	Each office maintains a Job Service Complaint Log where any complaint, including discrimination, is recorded and followed up on. Quarterly reports of the complaints from all offices are generated by the State Monitor Advocate.
23.	X For WIA Single-Area States only, the state has memorandums of understanding between the local workforce	WIA Sections 112(b)(5), 116(b), 118(b)(2)(B), 20 CFR 661.350(a)(3)(i)	The WDC (SWIB) advises the Workforce Development Division in the management of all One Stop Centers in the state. <a href="http://labor.vermont.gov/tabid/1495/Default.aspx">http://labor.vermont.gov/tabid/1495/Default.aspx</a>

	investment board and each of the One-Stop partners concerning the operation of the One-Stop delivery system in the local area.		
	<b>ASSURANCES AND ATTACHMENTS - ADMINISTRATION OF FUNDS</b>		
24. X	The state established written policy and procedures that outline the methods and factors used in distributing funds, including WIA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth formula and rapid response funds. The policy establishes a process for funds	WIA Sections 112(b)(12)(A) 111(d)(5),(C), 128 (b)(3)(B), 133(b)(2)(B), 133(b)(3)(B) 20 CFR 661.205(e)	By State Law the WDC works with and advises the Workforce Development Division on the distribution of funds for all WIA programs taking into account the need, economic situation, and business requirements in various parts of the state. <a href="http://labor.vermont.gov/tabid/1495/Default.aspx">http://labor.vermont.gov/tabid/1495/Default.aspx</a>

		<p>distribution to local areas for youth activities under WIA Section 128(b)(3)(B), and for adult and training activities under WIA Section 133(b), to the level of detail required by Section 112(b)(12)(a). In addition, the policy establishes a formula, prescribed by the governor under Section 133(b)(2)(B), for the allocation of funds to local areas for dislocated worker employment and training activities.</p>	
24 a.	X	For Dislocated Worker funding formulas, the	<p>WIA Section 133(b)(2)(B) 20 CFR</p> <p>Yes. Defined by the WDC and managed by the VDOL Workforce Development Division. <a href="http://labor.vermont.gov/tabid/1495/Default.aspx">http://labor.vermont.gov/tabid/1495/Default.aspx</a></p>

		state's policy and procedure includes the data used and weights assigned. If the state uses other information or chooses to omit any of the information sources set forth in WIA when determining the Dislocated Worker formula, the state assures that written rationale exists to explain the decision.	667.130(e)(2)(i)-(ii)	
25.	X	The state established a written policy and procedure for how the individuals and entities represented on the SWIB help to determine the methods and	WIA Sections 111(d)(5), 112(b)(12)(A), 128(b)(3)(B), 133(b)(2)(b), 133(b)(3)(B), 20 CFR 661.205(e)	Yes, by State Law and documented in the WDC (SWIB) Member's Handbook. <a href="http://labor.state.vt.us/tabid/1495/Default.aspx">http://labor.state.vt.us/tabid/1495/Default.aspx</a>

	<p>factors of distribution, and how the state consults with chief elected officials in local workforce investment areas throughout the state in determining the distributions.</p>		
26.	<p>X The state established written policy and procedures for any distribution of funds to local workforce investment areas reserved for rapid response activities, including the timing and process for determining whether a distribution will take place.</p>	<p>WIA Sections 133(a)(2), 134(a)(2)(A) 20 CFR 667.130(b)(2), (e)(4), 665.340</p>	<p>Yes. Vermont is a single SWIB (WDC) state with all funding recommended by the WDC with distribution managed by the Workforce Development Division to the local One Stop Center providing the Rapid Response Services.  <a href="http://labor.state.vt.us/tabid/1495/Default.aspx">http://labor.state.vt.us/tabid/1495/Default.aspx</a></p>
27.	<p>X The state established written</p>	<p>WIA Section 112(b)(16)</p>	<p>For grants and other employment and training contracts (including contracts for youth activities), the selection of service providers will be made on a competitive basis. The procurement process</p>

	<p>policy and procedures to competitively award grants and contracts for WIA Title I activities.</p>		<p>used follows the procedures defined in the Federal Assurances and Certifications and by the policies of the Vermont Department of Buildings and General Services outlined on their web site at <a href="http://bgs.vermont.gov">http://bgs.vermont.gov</a>, under purchasing and contracting.</p>
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28.	X The state established written criteria to be used by local workforce investment boards in awarding grants for youth activities, including criteria that the governor and local workforce investment boards will use to identify effective and ineffective youth activities and providers of such activities.	WIA Sections 112(b)(18)(B), 123, 129	Not applicable. The single SWIB (WDC) appointed by the Governor advises the VDOL Workforce Development Division in the effective activities and providers of such activities.
29.	The state	WIA Sections	The VDOL Workforce Development Division manages the contracts using

	<p>X established written criteria for a process to award a grant or contract on a competitive basis for Summer Youth Employment Opportunities element of the local youth program, where a provider is other than the grant recipient/fiscal agent.</p>	<p>123, 129(c)(2)(C) 20 CFR 664.610.</p>	<p>the state guidelines managed Buildings and General Service web site <a href="https://www.bgs.vermont.gov">https://www.bgs.vermont.gov</a> , under purchasing and contracting, which allows services to be provided by other than the grant recipient as long as the total cost of services does not exceed \$10.000.</p>
<p>30.</p>	<p>X The state distributes adult and youth funds received under WIA equitably throughout the state, and no local areas suffer significant shifts in funding from year-to-year during the period covered by this plan.</p>	<p>WIA Section 112(b)(12)(B)</p>	<p>Yes.</p>

31.	X The state established written fiscal-controls and fund-accounting procedures and ensures such procedures are followed to ensure the proper disbursement and accounting of funds paid to the state through funding allotments made for WIA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs, and the Wagner-Peyser Act.	WIA Sections 112(b)(11), 127, 132, 184 W-P Sections 9(a), (c) 20 CFR 652.8(b), (c)	The Vermont Department of Labor Fiscal Department manages WIA funds paid to the State using a Federally approved cost allocation plan.
32.	X The state ensures compliance with the uniform administrative requirements in WIA through annual, onsite monitoring of each local area.	WIA Sections 184(a)(3), (4) 20 CFR 667.200, .400(c)(2), 667.410	Yes. Reference addendum WIA Monitoring Procedure, plan page 109: SUBJECT: PROGRAM COMPLIANCE MONITORING UNDER THE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT (WIA)

33.	X The state follows confidentiality requirements for wage and education records as required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), as amended, WIA, and applicable Departmental regulations.	WIA Sections 136(f)(2), (f)(3), 122, 185(a)(4)(B) 20 USC 1232g 20 CFR 666.150 20 CFR part 603	Yes.
34.	X The state will not use funds received under WIA to assist, promote, or deter union organizing.	WIA Section 181(b)(7) 20 CFR 663.730	Agreed.
<b>ASSURANCES AND ATTACHMENTS - ELIGIBILITY</b>			
35.	X Where the SWIB chooses to establish them, the state established definitions and eligibility documentation requirements regarding the —deficient in basic literacy skills	WIA Sections 101(13)(C)(i) CFR 664.205(b)	Due to the small size of the state requests are made by the Regional Manager and Reviewed by the Director in accordance with the WDC guidelines. <a href="http://labor.state.vt.us/tabid/1495/Default.aspx">http://labor.state.vt.us/tabid/1495/Default.aspx</a>

	critterion.		
36.	X Where the SWIB chooses to establish them, the state established definitions and eligibility documentation requirements regarding —requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment criterion.	WIA Sections 101(13)(C)(iv) 20 CFR 664. 200(c)(6), 664.210	Definitions necessary to determine eligibility for at risk youth are covered in the Vermont Workforce Development WIA intake manual #36. See plan addendum “At Risk Youth”
37.	X The state established policies, procedures, and criteria for prioritizing adult title I employment and training funds for use by recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals in the local area when funds are limited.	WIA Section 134(d)(4)(E) 20 CFR 663.600	The latest WIA eligibility criteria has been documented in the WIA Case Managers Manual.  Refer to addendum “Vermont WIA Manual (first 4 pages)”.
38.	X The state established policies for the delivery of priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses by the state workforce agency or agencies, local workforce investment boards, and One-Stop Career Centers for all qualified job training programs delivered through the state's workforce system. The state policies: 1. Ensure that covered persons are identified at the point of entry and	WIA Sections 112(b)(17)(B), 322 38 USC Chapter 41 20 CFR 1001.120- .125 Jobs for Veterans Act, P.L. 107-288 38 USC 4215 20 CFR 1010.230, 1010.300-.310	WIA policies on Veterans and Military Spouses are documented on the VDOL web site <a href="http://www.labor.vermont.gov">www.labor.vermont.gov</a> .

	<p>given an opportunity to take full advantage of priority of service; and</p> <p>2. Ensure that covered persons are aware of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Their entitlement to priority of service;</li> <li>b. The full array of employment, training, and placement services available under priority of service; and</li> <li>c. Any applicable eligibility requirements for those programs and/ or services.</li> </ul> <p>3. Require local workforce investment boards to develop and include policies in their local plan to implement priority of service for the local One-Stop Career Centers and for service delivery by local workforce preparation and training providers.</p>		
	<p><b>ASSURANCES AND ATTACHMENTS - PERSONNEL AND REPRESENTATION</b></p>		
39.	The state assures that Migrant and	WIA Section	Vermont is not a significant state and

	<p>X Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) significant office requirements are met. Note: The five states with the highest estimated year-round MSFW activities must assign full-time, year-round staff to outreach activities. The Employment and Training Administration designates these states each year. The remainder of the top 20 significant MSFW states must make maximum efforts to hire outreach staff with MSFW experience for year-round positions and shall assign outreach staff to work full-time during the period of highest activity.</p> <p>If a state proposes that its State Monitor Advocate work less than full-time, the state must submit, for approval by the Department, a plan for less than full-time work, demonstrating that the state MSFW Monitor Advocate function can be effectively performed with part-time staffing.</p>	<p>112(b)(8)(A)(iii), 112(b)(17)(A)(iv) W-P Sections 3(a), (c)(1)-(2) 20 CFR 653.107(a), 107(i), 653.112(a), 653.108(d)(1)</p>	<p>does not have any significant offices with regard to Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFWs). The State Monitor Advocate (SMA) is a year-round VDOL staff member who conducts outreach activities as an Employer Resource Consultant. See Agricultural Outreach Plan in the State Plan.</p>
40.	<p>X Merit-based public employees provide Wagner-Peyser Act-funded labor exchange activities in</p>	<p>W-P Sections 3(a), 5(b) 20 CFR 652.215 Intergovernmental</p>	<p>Yes.</p>

	accordance with Departmental regulations.	Personnel Act, 42 USC 4728(b)	
41.	X The state has designated at least one person in each state or Federal employment office to promote and develop employment opportunities, job counseling, and placement for individuals with disabilities.	W-P Section 8(b) 20 CFR 652.211	All core, career resource center, staff are trained to work with individuals with disabilities. In the event of special needs, beyond the basic training, the office manager is assigned the responsibility of securing the appropriate services, such as those provided by the staff of the Vocational Rehabilitation Division of the Agency of Human Services.
42.	X If a SWIB, department, or agency administers state laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peysner services.	W-P Section 8(b) 20 CFR 652.211	In Vermont, representatives from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation work together to assist individuals with disabilities. In some situations Voc Rehab staff are located in the same building as the One Stop Offices. Additionally, representatives from Voc Rehab serve alongside representatives from the VT Dept of Labor on the Governors Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities.

**STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES CERTIFICATION**

The State of Vermont certifies on the 2nd day of May in the 2013th year that it complied with all of the required components of the Workforce Investment Act, Wagner-Peyser Act, and with Vermont Statutes annotated 21 VSA, 1201 - 1203 and 10 VSA 541 - 542.

The State of Vermont also assures that funds will be spent in accordance with the Workforce Investment Act and the Wagner-Peyser Act and their regulations, written Department of Labor guidance implementing these laws, and all other applicable Federal and state laws and regulations.

*Anne M. Noonan, on behalf of Gov. Peter Shumlin*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Governor

*May 2, 2013*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Name & Title of State Employment Security Administrator (Signatory Official):**

Name: Anne M. Noonan  
Title: Commissioner  
Address: Vermont Department of Labor  
5 Green Mountain Drive

City: Montpelier State: VT Zip: 05602

Telephone Number: 802-828-4301  
Facsimile Number: 802-828-4181  
E-mail Address: annie.noonan@state.vt.us

**Governor's Authorization:**

As the governor, I certify that for the State/Commonwealth of Vermont, the agencies and officials designated above have been duly designated to represent the State/Commonwealth in the capacities indicated for the Workforce Investment Act, title I, and Wagner-Peyser Act grant programs. Subsequent changes in the designation of officials will be provided to the U.S. Department of Labor as such changes occur.

I further certify that we will operate our Workforce Investment Act and Wagner-Peyser Act programs in accordance with this Plan and the assurances herein.

Typed Name of Governor: Peter Shumlin

Signature of Governor



Date 4-15-11



State of Vermont  
 Department of Labor  
 5 Green Mountain Drive  
 P.O. Box 488  
 Montpelier, VT 05601-0488  
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**MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT**  
**between**  
**Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc.**  
**and the**  
**Vermont Department of Labor**

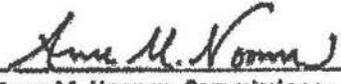
On 24 April, 2012 staff from the Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) met with Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. (Vermont Associates) staff to discuss their commitment to a continued partnership whereby Vermont Associates will provide services at the Resource Center including various job search skill and computer training workshops for mature workers.

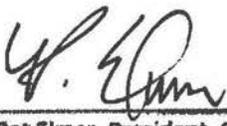
A summary of the partnership commitment is as follows:

- Staff from the Vermont Associates Mature Worker Resource Center, co-located at the Vermont Department of Labor Career Resource Center in Burlington Vermont will provide job search skill workshops to workers aged 55+. These mature workers may be current Senior Community Service Employment Program participants, Aging Worker Initiative Program participants, or individuals 55+ referred to the workshops by Career Resource Center staff.
- Vermont Associates is permitted to be co-located at the VDOL Career Resource Center through an agreement with the VDOL Commissioner to rent space from VDOL.
- Individuals interested in attending Vermont Associates workshops will "sign up" at the Career Resource Center. Vermont Associates Training and Employment Coordinator will be given a list of attendees in advance of each workshop from Resource Center staff.
- The agreed upon Vermont Associates Mature Worker Job Search Workshop schedule (subject to change based on Resource Center space availability and needs) is as follows:
  - **Networking** – Every Monday from 1:00-3:00pm. Vermont Associates Training and Employment Coordinator will support and assist Department of Labor staff.
  - **Interviewing Skills** – First Wednesday of the month from 1:00-3:00pm. Vermont Associates Training and Employment Coordinator will facilitate the workshop.
  - **Portfolio Development (Cover Letter and Resume Development)** – Third Wednesday of the month from 1:00-3:00pm. Vermont Associates Training and Employment Coordinator will facilitate the workshop.
  - **Online Job Search** – Second Friday of the month from 10:00-12:00pm. Vermont Associates Training and Employment Coordinator will facilitate the workshop.

In addition, the Vermont Department of Labor Career Resource Center is currently offering a basic computer workshop that Vermont Associates will refer its participants to. If the need arises, Vermont Associates will assist Resource Center staff conduct existing workshops or will offer additional sessions.

In summary, this letter reflects the commitment to partnership between Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc. and the VDOL Burlington Career Resource Center in offering job search skill workshops. Signed this 5th day of May, 2012

  
 Anne M. Noonan, Commissioner  
 Vermont Department of Labor

  
 Pat Elmer, President, CEO  
 Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc.



**VERMONT STATE PLAN**  
**For**  
**Senior Community Services Employment Program**  
**SCSEP**  
**Program Years 2012 to 2015**

**Background and Purpose:** The 2006 Older Americans Act (OAA) Section 503(a)(1) and SCSEP funding criteria requires that Vermont submit a plan to the U. S. Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administration that will describe the long term, strategic plan for the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) to cover program years 2012 – 2015. The Vermont State SCSEP Plan is an independent document that outlines a four-year strategy for the statewide provision of community service employment and other authorized activities for eligible, unemployed, low-income seniors who participate in the SCSEP grants of Vermont. The plan describes how Vermont’s two SCSEP grantees, the State and the National programs, work as one to deliver services at the highest level of collaboration and mutual support. It describes current statewide partnerships and outcomes achieved by expanding partnerships with other programs, initiatives, and entities operating in the state. The plan reflects the development of new initiatives and strategies we intend to implement over the course of the plan. It also conveys the importance of the State’s role, to convene efforts of key stakeholders—including state and local boards under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA)—to work collaboratively to accomplish SCSEP goals.

The Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living (DAAIL) is the Grantee and administrator of the State SCSEP awarded by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL). Vermont Associates for Training and Development (VATD) is the non-profit sub-grantee operating the National SCSEP awarded by the USDOL. VATD also operates the State SCSEP as Vermont’s sub-grantee. The specific requirements for the plan are located in 20 CFR 641.300-641.300.

## **Involvement of Organizations and Individuals**

The input process was enhanced by the state's size and because collaborators are often divisions within the DAIL structure, DAIL sub-grantees, or community organizations that have long-standing relationships with DAIL and/or VATD. Additionally, VATD's parallel role as the operator of the National and State SCSEP provided a conduit for the cross program alignment needed for a successful plan. DAIL asked the following organizations to provide input in the development of the State SCSEP Plan.

- Area Agencies on Aging;
- State and local groups under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA);
- Public and private nonprofit agencies and employment services organizations;
- Social service organizations serving older individuals;
- Grantees under title III of the OAA;
- Affected communities throughout the state;
- Unemployed older individuals including SCSEP participants;
- Community-based organizations serving older individuals;
- Business organizations; and
- Labor organizations

The DAIL network includes Area Agencies on Aging, Community of Vermont Elders (COVE), ten Aging, and Disabilities Resource Connections (ADRC) sites, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), adult day service providers, grantees under Title III of the OAA, nursing homes, and home health agencies. The Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) network includes Workforce Investment Act (WIA) partner organizations, business, labor, state government, community employment organizations, and the Workforce Development Council (WDC). The sub-grantee, VATD, has developed a vast network, which includes non-profit host sites, post secondary education, certification training programs, Vermont Chamber of Commerce, Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility, and numerous other partners. Solicitation for comment included networks that extend out from DAIL, VDOL, and VATD to capture key stakeholders involved with the program-eligible population.

### **Solicitation and Collection of Public Input**

DAIL requested stakeholder input via e-mail alerts specifically soliciting input across these broad networks. Electronic alerts served the rural geography of Vermont well by assuring statewide access for input more comprehensively than a centrally held public forum process would have produced. Email distribution lists were used to disseminate the draft to stakeholders. The draft was placed on the DAIL and VDOL web sites for three weeks – 8/30/12 to 9/14/12. Individual emails from the SCSEP State Coordinator went to key statewide contacts requesting comment on the plan. To assure alternative access, DAIL advertised contact information in regional newspapers with directions for those who required that a hard copy be mailed. The newspaper posting included the hyperlink for downloading the draft. *See Attachment A for a summary of public comments received.*

### **Information Required in the State Plan**

#### **1) The long-term strategy for achieving equitable distribution of SCSEP positions within the State that:**

*(a) Moves positions from over-served to underserved locations within the State.*

The equitable distribution of the slots in the State and National programs are well coordinated between DAIL and the single SCSEP vendor that operates both; there is no variance between the equitable share per county and the distribution of authorized slots. Many states encounter significant challenges to align their distribution of slots, but the coordination of the Vermont State and National slots has allowed us to achieve a seamless and flexible process. If the demographics change, and a county is under or over served, consultation between VATD and DAIL and the USDOL occurs to achieve balance by moving slots from one county to another. Movement of positions is facilitated without disruption to participants.

*(b) Equitably serves rural and urban areas.* Vermont is a small, rural state generally classified as rural and of its 14 Counties, the only urban classification—assigned by the Rural Urban Commuting Area (RUCA) data in the USDOL-SCSEP database— is Chittenden County where Burlington, the largest city is located. The following bedroom communities of Burlington are in reality extremely rural but have been included in Chittenden County’s urban classification due to their proximity to Chittenden County. They are Cambridge, Charlotte, Fairfax, Ferrisburg, Grand

Isle, Hinesburg, Huntington, Jeffersonville, Jonesville, Bolton, Richmond, South Hero, Starksboro, Underhill, Westford, and Moretown. As an example of the rural character of these towns, all but Richmond have only one or two convenience stores and a gasoline station, and several have neither. Twelve of these 14 towns have no manufacturing or industrial base.

Given an almost statewide rural classification, serving the rural population occurs as a matter of course with both the State and the National SCSEP serving the entire state. Vermont has a statewide network of local training centers located in each labor market region; some co-located the VDOL One-Stop venues. The rural and urban areas are served with parity and adequate resources to promote the SCSEP program.

*(c) Serves individuals afforded priority for service.*

Vermont does well in serving minorities and priority populations. This includes, individuals who are age 65+; have a disability; limited English proficiency; low literacy skills; reside in a rural area; are veterans or qualified spouses; have low employment prospects; have failed to find employment after utilizing services provided through the One-Stop, or are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Development of outreach and recruitment strategies ensures equitable participation for these important groups of the eligible population. Vermont program year 2012, 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter *State and National SPARQ* (SCSEP Performance and Results Quarter) data indicate that:

- 33 % of participants have disabilities
- 34 % of participants are age 65 years or older
- 77% of participants have low employment prospects
- 92% reside in rural areas as compared to a national rate of 29%
- No instances of under-service to any minority category

**2) The ratio of eligible individuals in each area to the total eligible population in the state**

Data from Vermont *Quick Facts-US Census Bureau* and the *Vermont Department of Health Census Counts and Population Estimate-Bulletin 10* identifies the following distribution and demographics of program eligible Vermonters for program year 2012.

**Table 1 – Individuals Age 55+**

<b>Counties</b>	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>2012 Eligible %</b>	<b>Eligible Population</b>
Addison	36742	29%	10539
Bennington	3697	4%	12585
Caledonia	31166	31%	9611
Chittenden	157545	23%	36248
Essex	6291	7%	2299
Franklin	2113	25%	11930
Grand Isle	6931	32%	2247
Lamoille	24701	26%	6505
Orange	29006	30%	8846
Orleans	27173	33%	8981
Rutland	61289	32%	19823
Washington	59626	30%	17612
Windham	44266	33%	14526
Windsor	56666	34%	19272
	626,431		181,024

**Table 2 – Equitable Distribution Program Year 2012**

USDOL Distribution of Vermont slots between State and National SCSEP

<b>County</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>National</b>	<b>Total</b>
Vermont			247
Addison County, Vermont	5	7	12
Bennington County, Vermont	8	7	15
Caledonia County, Vermont	6	12	18
Chittenden County, Vermont	6	32	38
Essex County, Vermont	1	4	5
Franklin County, Vermont	0	18	18
Grand Isle County, Vermont	0	2	2
Lamoille County, Vermont	2	8	10
Orange County, Vermont	3	9	12
Orleans County, Vermont	0	21	21
Rutland County, Vermont	8	21	29
Washington County, Vermont	0	23	23
Windham County, Vermont	6	16	22
Windsor County, Vermont	6	16	22
Totals	51	196	247

**3) The relative distribution of eligible individuals who:**

*(a) Reside in the State*

The 2011 population of Vermont was 626,431 of which 181,024 were age 55 or over. The distribution by county is in Table I from which the USDOL calculates the Equitable Distribution of SCSEP slots per area.

*(b) Reside in urban and rural areas*

Thirteen of Vermont’s fourteen counties are classified as rural and the only urban classification is Chittenden County with a census of 157,545 as compared to the thirteen rural counties with a total census of 468,886.

*(c) Have the greatest economic need*

The Vermont Department of Health Census Counts and Population Estimates reported that in June 2012, 26,022 of the eligible population were living at the poverty level and that 54% of the eligible population were unemployed. The ratios are dispersed below by county.

**Table 3 – Economic Need**

County	Classification	Total Population	Eligible Population	Poverty Level (Greatest Economic Need)	Unemployment (Greatest Economic Need)
Vermont		626431	181024	11.5%	4.7%
Addison	Rural	36742	10539	12.0%	4.7%
Bennington	Rural	36979	12585	13.8%	5.8%
Caledonia	Rural	31166	9611	16.1%	6.0%
Chittenden	Urban	157545	36248	11.8%	4.4%
Essex	Rural	6291	2299	17.2%	5.8%
Franklin	Rural	48113	11930	11.9%	4.6%
Grand Isle	Rural	6931	2247	8.1%	4.8%
Lamoille	Rural	24701	6505	13.3%	5.2%
Orange	Rural	29006	8846	12.5%	4.6%
Orleans	Rural	27173	8981	17.0%	6.7%
Rutland	Rural	61289	19823	13.2%	6.4%
Washington	Rural	59626	17612	10.8%	4.8%

<b>Windham</b>	<b>Rural</b>	<b>44266</b>	<b>14526</b>	<b>12.8%</b>	<b>5.2%</b>
<b>Windsor</b>	<b>Rural</b>	<b>56666</b>	<b>19272</b>	<b>10.2%</b>	<b>4.6%</b>

*(d) Are minorities*

Vermont’s average minority population is 5.8% of its 626,431 residents. The highest ratio is 8.9% occurring in Chittenden County, the only urban area of the state. The remaining 13 counties are very rural with minority populations that range from 2.6% to 5.9%.

*(e) Are limited English proficient*

Vermont population census for all residents who spoke a language other than English at home is 5.4%. Chittenden County is 8.5%, Essex County is 7.9%, and Orleans County is 6.7%. These higher rates are because one county has a very active refugee resettlement programs and the other two are close to the Canadian border where many speak French as their first language at home. The remaining 11 counties have rates that range from 2.5% to 5.4%.

*(f) Have the greatest social need*

The following areas comprise the greatest social need in Vermont.

1) *Physical and mental disabilities:* Vermont population census for all residents who have a physical disability is 55,048, or 9.5%. The census for all residents who have a mental disability is 39,339 or 6.8%.

2) *Language barriers:* Language barriers exist in an environment where people who do not have English as their primary language speak English less than “very well”. The Vermont population census for all residents with a barrier is 9,793, or 1.7%.

3) *Cultural, social, or geographical isolation:* Although Vermont is a rural state, most of the isolation that is experienced is the result of cultural and social barriers associated with linguistic isolation. Vermont population census for all residents who are linguistically isolated is 1,850 or 0.7%.

**4) Steps taken to avoid disruptions to the program when positions are redistributed, when new census or other reliable data become available, or when there is over-enrollment for any other reason**

When new census data indicate that a shift in the location of the eligible population has occurred, or when there is over-enrollment for any other reason, SCSEP positions are re-distributed through attrition to avoid any disruption of SCSEP services. The Vermont program has a positive participant flow rate because of its success in assisting participants to find unsubsidized employment. This creates available slots to refill in an underserved area of the state. The recovery of slots by attrition is a reliable tool because the quality of Vermont's host sites coupled with the broad array of training and support services provided by community partners expedites job placements.

The mutually supportive collaboration between the State and the National SCSEP slots allows the gradual shift of positions from over-served areas to under-served areas. Consultation and approval from DAIL and USDOL will always occur prior to moving slots from one county to another. Redistribution of positions between Lamoille and VATD will occur, as an intentional and thoughtful process to assure that there is no disruption to participants.

**5) The long-term strategy for serving minority older individuals under SCSEP**

According to the *SCSEP Preliminary Analysis of Service to Minority Individuals, May 2009*, Vermont has a 3.6% minority population with Vermont's SCSEP serving 6.7% of minority participants. This indicates that the Vermont SCSEP exceeds the minority average for the State by a factor of two.

Vermont SCSEP has proactively recruited and enrolled minorities to achieve a minority participation level relative to the minority distribution within the state. Vermont ensures that minority participants achieve similar outcomes to those achieved by non-minority participants through partnerships with minority associated service organizations. Diverse support services for minorities provided by an array of collaborating organizations have helped to reinforce consistent outcomes across SCSEP participants. Religious organizations, behavioral health organizations, and the Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program engage in extensive outreach to minorities, which often leads to referrals to SCSEP for their clients over age 55. In addition, the smallness of Vermont's communities serves the minority goal well, because non-profits and

helping organizations have tight connections within each county of the state. Partnerships with entities such as English as Second Language (ESL) programs, faith-based organizations, refugee-resettlement employment programs, and specific job programs at VDOL are cultivated without difficulty due, not only to small geography, but also to a shared vision that centers on the inclusion of minorities in Vermont's workforce. A strategy that has been very effective is host site development within the minority oriented service provider agencies. Finally, Vermont's sub-grantee bolsters referrals of minority applicants to SCSEP by placing staff in regular contact with all partnering programs.

**6) Long term projections for job growth in occupations in the state that may provide employment opportunities for older workers and how they relate to the types of unsubsidized jobs for which SCSEP participants will be trained, and the types of skill training to be provided**

The source for Table 4 and Table 5 below is the Vermont Department of Labor: *Economic & Labor Market Information 2010*.

*(a) Vermont's Growing Industries*

The health care, environmental, and information technology industries comprise the top 16 occupations of the 25 projected to have annual growth rates between 2008 and 2018. Health care occupations represent 50% of the three top growth areas. Over the decade, Vermont's aging population will require increased personnel in long-term care occupations such as personal care attendants. In addition, the need for physician assistants, dental assistants and hygienists, health care practitioners, and technical workers will increase. The environmental field has four of the fastest growing jobs, which include waste management and remediation, environmental protection, engineering, and geological science technicians. A decline in computer programmer jobs is expected over the next decade, but a demand is expected for computer applications software engineers and network systems administrators.

**Table 4 – Industry Growth**

<b>Occupational Title</b>	<b>Employment</b>		<b>Annual Percent Change</b> (compounded)
	<b>2008</b>	<b>2018</b>	
<u>Network Systems and Data Communications Analysts</u>	503	811	4.90%
<u>Personal and Home Care Aides</u>	7,222	10,585	3.90%
<u>Home Health Aides</u>	1,328	1,926	3.80%
<u>Computer Software Engineers, Applications</u>	868	1,211	3.40%
<u>Geoscientists, Except Hydrologists and Geographers</u>	93	129	3.30%
<u>Environmental Engineers</u>	216	298	3.30%
<u>Pharmacy Technicians</u>	576	774	3.30%
<u>Medical Scientists, Except Epidemiologists</u>	209	280	3.30%
<u>Environmental Science and Protection Technicians, Including Health</u>		135	3.30%
<u>Financial Examiners</u>	59	81	3.20%
<u>Veterinary Technologists and Technicians</u>	391	533	3.10%
<u>Athletic Trainers</u>	105	143	3.10%
<u>Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Workers, All Other</u>	179	243	3.10%
<u>Septic Tank Servicers and Sewer Pipe Cleaners</u>	163	221	3.10%
<u>Eligibility Interviewers, Government Programs</u>	156	209	3.00%
<u>Veterinarians</u>	215	284	2.80%
<u>Computer Software Engineers, Systems Software</u>	663	872	2.80%
<u>Personal Financial Advisors</u>	493	641	2.70%
<u>Separating, Filtering, Clarifying, Precipitating, and Still Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders</u>	116	149	2.50%
<u>Medical Equipment Repairers</u>	78	100	2.50%
<u>Agents and Business Managers of Artists, Performers, and Athletes</u>	69	88	2.50%
<u>Helpers--Carpenters</u>	523	667	2.50%
<u>Electrical and Electronics Repairers, Powerhouse, Substation, and Relay</u>	131	166	2.40%

Physical Therapist Assistants	79	100	2.40%
Physical Therapist Aides	83	105	2.40%

*(b) Occupations with the Largest New Job Growth or Openings*

Table 5 represents the estimated number of positions available annually based on a combination of openings due to industry growth and employee turnover. Therefore, occupations with the most openings include those with the most additions, but also those that have a significant turnover. Vermont projections for jobs with the highest annual openings are; retail and cashier, personal health care, food service, and registered nurses.

**Table 5 – Occupations with the Most Growth**

Occupational Title	2008 Employment	Annual job openings
Cashiers	9,148	459
Personal and Home Care Aides	7,222	426
Retail Salespersons	10,471	362
Waiters and Waitresses	5,328	311
Registered Nurses	5,686	215
Customer Service Representatives	3,748	176
Teacher Assistants	5,367	174
Carpenters	6,546	171
First-Line Supervisors/Managers of Retail Sales Workers	5,629	146
Child Care Workers	4,136	144
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	6,723	140
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	3,825	135
Landscaping and Grounds keeping Workers	4,418	128
Accountants and Auditors	3,473	126

Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	3,716	125
Counter Attendants, Cafeteria, Food Concession, and Coffee Shop	1,566	123
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	5,421	120
Teachers and Instructors, All Other (includes substitute teachers)	3,966	117
Executive Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	4,813	114
Truck Drivers, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer	4,523	95
Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Vocational Education	2,407	94
Food Preparation Workers	2,174	91
Receptionists and Information Clerks	2,332	91
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	2,674	86
Nursing Aides, Orderlies, and Attendants	2,332	85

*(c) Growth Occupations That Offer Career Opportunities for SCSEP Participants*

The following occupations offer career opportunities for participants: Nurse, Retail Associate, Customer Service Representative, Data Entry Clerk, Home Health Aide, and Personal Care Attendant. Other suitable occupations include Educational Para professional, Receptionist, and Information Clerk. Vermont has been very successful at placing over 50% of participants at their non-profit host site venues upon completion of their training plan. In Vermont, over 22% of the workforce in professional occupations consisted of older workers with the prevalent occupation being administrative support staff. The majority of host sites hiring Vermont trainees upon completion of training offer these types of occupations. Although this requires constant development of new host sites, participants at non-profits, municipalities, and social service organizations often report higher satisfaction than working in entry-level service jobs that are prevalent in Vermont. In addition, many participants express interest in the human service sector because they can contribute life experience, maturity, and make a difference in their communities and towns.

By matching labor market information to information gleaned from participant assessments and Individual Employment Plans (IEP), Vermont has targeted growth industries from which to guide host site development and needed ancillary training provided by community partners and vendors. The following table presents the range of high growth jobs, their corresponding training tracks, and the types of host agencies needed for work experiences, skill training, or the on-the-job experiences needed for employment in growth occupations.

**7) How the long-term job projections relate to the types of unsubsidized jobs SCSEP participants will train in and the types of skill training to be provided**

**Table 6 - Growth Jobs and Related Host Agencies**

<b>High Growth Industries – Training Tracks</b>	<b>Jobs in Demand</b>	<b>Host Training Sites</b>
Health Care	LNA, Home Health Aide, Personal Care Assistant	rural medical centers, State Health Dept, Red Cross, nursing homes
Environmental Services	Waste management, environmental recovery/reuse, environmental protection, energy efficiency technicians	municipalities, regional planning commissions, energy audit firms
Education	Teacher, Teacher Aide, Instructional Aide	schools, libraries, adult education services
Finance and Insurance	Teller, IT, Support Staff, Bookkeeper, A/P Clerk	town offices, non-profits, finance firms, credit unions
Hospitality	Culinary, Service Staff, IT, Telemarketing, Front Desk	nutrition programs, homeless shelters, cafeterias
Human Services	Activity Coordinator, Information & Referral Specialist, Outreach Specialist	State & Area Agencies on Aging, Veterans Outreach & Assistance, Catholic Charities,
Retail & Customer Service	Greeter, Merchandiser, Sales Clerk, Asst Manager	hospital gift shops Good Will Industries, Salvation Army thrift shop

Manufacturing	Shipping/Receiving Clerk, Supervisory, Warehouse	emergency management centers, National Guard, warehouses
Child Care, Adult/Senior Care	Child Development Specialist, Adult Day Program Aide	parent-child centers, disability programs, senior, and advocacy centers
Jobs in variety of industries that require basic math, reading, computer literacy, communication & problem solving skills	Customer Service, Data Entry, Reception, Admin Assistant, Security	historical museums, local and state arts councils, community and faith-based organizations

Host sites are developed to assure that participants gain skills that will lead to the best match in high demand occupations by locating sites that will not only comply with all SCSEP requirements but also will authentically support the participants' skills development and job searches. Vermont combines meaningful training—that will enhance unsubsidized employability—with host sites that are willing and able to teach quality marketable skills that reflect the occupations in Table 6. The quality of host agencies directly affects the participants' abilities to transition into meaningful and satisfying unsubsidized employment.

Vermont SCSEP has strategically pursued utilizing the SCSEP Enrollee Wage and Fringe Waiver to support ancillary training and supportive services for participants. The waiver allows up to 10% of the customary funds for enrollee wage and fringe benefits used to provide training and supportive services. By utilizing the waiver and leveraging other types of funding, Vermont participants are able to enroll in classroom and/or community based trainings to augment their host site training. Participants receive computer training that will best enhance their employment goals. One-Stop Career Centers, community colleges, senior centers, adult vocational technical centers, community action organizations, and many other partner organizations provide ancillary skill development.

Vermont SCSEP encourages participants who arrive with pre-requisite skills and aptitudes pertinent to environmental occupations to explore the growth in Vermont's environmental occupations. To this end, Vermont has created partnerships with energy efficiency, weatherization, renewable energy, and environmental service organizations.

Vermont's sub-grantee has worked with Efficiency Vermont to collaborate on specialized training opportunities for participants. For individuals with past construction experience, some of these training options lead to certification by the Building Performance Institute (BPI) in positions such as Building Analyst. VATD has also coordinated with Vermont's Weatherization Program at the Office of Economic Opportunity to explore referring SCSEP participants to the energy audit and weatherization training workshops that they run throughout the state. Finally, Vermont coordinates with the statewide Regional Technical Career Center Adult Coordinators and with the Vermont Technical College Center for Sustainable Practices.

The example of development in this growth area illustrates how Vermont works to develop a broad range of host agencies to assure that positions are relevant to the needs, interests, and abilities of the participants and to the high growth jobs identified in Vermont's labor market.

## **8) The long-term strategy for engaging employers to develop and promote opportunities for the placement of SCSEP participants in unsubsidized employment**

### *(a) Increasing placements*

Vermont has established commendable partnerships with businesses in the Vermont workforce to assure the seamless placement of participants into unsubsidized jobs. The Vermont SCSEP program strives to establish solid working relationships and regular communication with the business sector in order to remain current with the competencies that participants need in the competitive job market. Close interface with VDOL, business associations, and individual employers has allowed Vermont to create training tracks specific to the industry standards and the cultural expectations of the market from the outset of the program. The Mature Transitions Holistic Assessment Portfolio steers participants to high growth areas that match the interests and aptitudes revealed by their assessments. The goal of unsubsidized employment is reinforced upon intake and at every stage of training activities. The IEP, developed by the participant with the aid of SCSEP staff, clearly maps the skill acquisition process and activities with the VDOL that will lead to employment opportunities as expeditiously as possible. The IEP serves as a case management tool to benchmark participants' existing skills and identify the training plans needed to reach their job goals. This approach leads to higher-level skills that enhance participant employability.

*(b) Engaging and developing partnerships with employers*

Vermont SCSEP staff maintains consistent employer contacts to remain current in their knowledge of actual and projected job openings. In addition, staff maintains on going relationships with Chambers of Commerce and economic development agencies, and they make use of the job orders and other resources provided by the Vermont One-Stops. The Vermont SCSEP benefits greatly from the VATD role as the Governor's appointee on the State Workforce Development Council (WDC). WDC represents older workers in their regional work to develop partnerships with the private sector to identify business skill shortages and demand jobs.

*(c) Identifying Opportunities with Career Ladders*

Vermont focuses on accessing job opportunities that offer the highest level of growth and advancement. In the health care industry, the career ladder begins with the position of Personal Care Attendant, advances to Licensed Nursing Assistant, Licensed Practical Nurse and then to Registered Nurse. In the retail industry, Sales Clerk and Cashier advance to Assistant Manager, and then Manager. In the case of older workers, lateral transitions can be very appropriate. Improving transferable skills can open new opportunities for lateral movement into jobs that may not increase wages or benefits but will land older workers in industry sectors that are growing and stable. SCSEP job development beyond individual relationship building consist of participating and/or organizing job fairs, Chamber of Commerce mixers, presentations to clubs and trade associations, and regular contact with employers who not only retain SCSEP hires but have hired at some point in the past.

*(d) Partnership with One-Stop*

Vermont SCSEP is an active and long-standing partner with VDOL. Over the past 29 years, collaborative strategies and shared initiatives have benefited Vermont's participants. (See 9b below)

**9) The strategy for continuous improvement in the level of performance for entry into unsubsidized employment**

*(a) Targeting jobs effectively*

A great number of SCSEP participants are hired by their host sites. In large part, this happens because of the remarkable relationships that develop between supervisors, co-workers, and the older worker who has brought enthusiasm and commitment to the organization. Their contribution, coupled with the customer service provided to the sites by SCSEP staff, has spurred host site managers to locate funding and create new positions for the older worker. As an additional placement strategy, Vermont encourages the host agency to become part of the participant's personal employment network and job search team. The host agency supervisor routinely evaluates the participant's skill development against the benchmarks established in the IEP. When the participant attains the intended skill level, further assistance is provided such as job referrals, networking groups, and job fairs.

Another effective strategy is to have participants meet regularly with staff to discuss methods of overcoming job search barriers by developing positive work habits necessary to obtain and retain employment. Participants develop skills in self-evaluation, receive constructive input from their peers, and learn group networking skills to advance their job search.

Non-profits, social service organizations, and State of Vermont departments represent other successful hires and retentions. Vermont will continue to target jobs in the non-profit world because it is a consistent and proven placement sector. However, Vermont will also work to develop strategies for increasing and diversifying placements in all of the private sector industries targeted as growth areas. An example of planned further development is the computer and media technology arena.

*(b) Working with One-Stops effectively*

Vermont SCSEP has located staff at several of the One-Stop Centers, which serve as the central clearinghouse for all workforce development programs under WIA. This allows staff to steer older workers into VDOL services to meet their specific needs. The shared resources and space also serves to increase older workers utilization of the One-Stop Centers. Vermont will continue to collaborate closely with VDOL via cross referrals, committee work, shared initiatives, and most importantly to assure that seamless services to access all available resources is maximized between SCSEP and VDOL. The individual's SCSEP training plan requires participants be fully engaged at their One-Stop Career Centers in Vermont.

*(c) Managing durational limits effectively*

The USDOL mandates that SCSEP participants may remain in the program for a maximum duration of 48 months and it has approved Vermont's Durational Limit Policy that allows the possibility of waiver for those who meet USDOL waiver criteria. Vermont SCSEP regularly assesses where participants are in the timeline and keeps participants cognizant of the allocated time in which to acquire unsubsidized employment. USDOL guidelines allow a one-time 12-month increase of for those who meet one or more of the waiver factors defined by them. An enhanced IEP sets goals that must be mastered and the SCSEP focuses on those who have been in the program in excess of two years or in excess of 36 months. The IEP includes a strong emphasis on job search activities (maintaining current resume, creation of an employment portfolio, and active job search). The extension waiver provides transitional services so those who reach the durational limit will receive additional services to achieve unsubsidized employment. To expedite placement and avoid exceeding durational limits, Vermont focuses virtually all of the participants' training time on job search activities. The IEP requires that the participants attend weekly VDOL Networking Workshops or a similar job club and at least two Interview Workshops per month. They are required to attend a Skills Assessment Workshop at Vermont Adult Learning and complete the Career Readiness Program through Community College of Vermont.

(d) Training participants effectively

Vermont has established proactive policies to increase the caveat that unsubsidized placement is the goal of each participant. The use of the Enrollee Wage and Fringe Waiver to provide funding for the skill training; the use of On-the-Job-Experience (OJE) to provide training for specific jobs; and the development of very functional IEPs to guide meaningful and timely training on a continuum all set the stage for training participants effectively. Of particular note is the use of OJE as an effective training tool used as the capstone for the participant's SCSEP training experience when an employer commits to hire a participant.

Vermont strategies for transitioning participants into unsubsidized employment in occupations that support the regional economy are founded on job and community development as an ongoing process that requires establishing rapport and continuity with each employer. This is an evident process that begins immediately upon enrollment rather than being a discrete task undertaken as participants near their final IEP. All services reinforce that SCSEP is a transitional

program by which to secure unsubsidized employment. Mentoring participants to focus on training related to growth areas early in the process, sets the tone of a work search and influences positive exits within the durational limits of the program.

**9) Actions to coordinate activities of SCSEP with other programs**

*(a) Activities being carried out in the State under title I of WIA, including plans for using the WIA One-Stop delivery system and its partners to serve individuals aged 55 and older*

Vermont collaborates closely and effectively with the One-Stop Centers as described in 9b. From the leadership perspective, Commissioners and key managers of VDOL have actively engaged with SCSEP over the years, reaching out to invite SCSEP participation in One-Stop and WIA initiatives which assures that SCSEP is integrated into the One-Stop delivery system. VDOL and its regional centers collaborate to coordinate the provision of services to older workers under the One-Stop model. Staffs that are co-located at One-Stop Centers ensure that SCSEP participants register for relevant training services. They regularly search the job data base for job matches that meet the participants' goals, and they partner with One-Stop Career Center staff on employer engagement strategies such as 50+ Job Fairs and the One-Stop rapid response to business closures.

*(b) Planned actions to coordinate activities of SCSEP grantees activities in the State under other titles of the OAA*

Vermont State Agency of Human Services has located SCSEP and the Older American Act (OAA) administration within DAIL, which administers both. Coordination happens as a matter of course under the direction of the Commissioner of DAIL and the aging team assigned to OAA activities and grants.

At the local level, community senior centers provide health, wellness, and recreational activities. An association called the Community of Vermont Elders (COVE) provides advocacy, training, and support for care providers. COVE sponsors the Vermont Association of Professional Care Providers (VAPCP) with DAIL and VDOL providing efforts to support the association. Vermont has five Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) that either provide or arrange OAA services that consist of case management; health promotion and disease prevention; information, referral and assistance; and legal assistance and family caregiver support. The number of Vermonters served in FY 2011 was 56,765 but it does not include all possible OAA services received. DAIL is also the administering entity for the Aging and Disabilities Resource

Connections (ADRC), which has a statewide presence. Their outcome has been to improve continuity across the aging network, to bridge gaps, and to improve the information and referral system. The Vermont 211 service is a statewide information and referral service capturing all services for the aging population in one place.

*(c) Planned actions to coordinate the SCSEP with other public and private entities and programs that provide services to older Americans, such as community and faith based organizations, transportation programs, and programs for those with special needs or disabilities*

Vermont is a small, socially responsible state with a strong faith-based and human service network whose missions often lessen the needs of SCSEP participants. The spirit of cooperation prevalent across Vermont communities is fortunate for program participants because it narrows gaps among helping agencies that assist the aging population. This cross alignment of programs generally assures that older workers have interagency referrals and services to meet their needs. On behalf of participants, Vermont regularly leverages the resources of organizations like Vermont's Refugee Resettlement program, Veteran's Administration, Public Transit Authorities, Community College of Vermont, Vermont Adult Learning, Vermont Health Access Program, housing shelters, and low income housing programs.

Vermont's sub-grantee, VATD is the grantee for an Aging Worker Initiative (AWI) demonstration grant to provide training and employment services to Vermonter age 55 and over. This new resource augments the two SCSEP grants.

*(d) Planned actions to coordinate the SCSEP with other labor market and job training initiatives*

Vermont's SCSEP and DAIL either actively participate or administer other labor related projects that augment the goals of SCSEP such as the Aging Workforce Initiative Grant, Vocational Rehabilitation, and the DAIL State Plan. On-going work with the University Of Vermont's Center for Transportation focuses on decreasing transportation barriers that hinder older workers. Limited public transit in rural areas is a problem that will require increased attention over the course of this plan.

Like SCSEP and the OAA programs, Vermont's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is too, administered by DAIL. Working within the same team makes cross referrals and collaboration easy to negotiate. With a high number of participants having disabilities, VR and SCSEP often engage in shared case management of employment goals for mutual clients. The services provided by VR include Social Security Benefits counseling, career coaching, job

development, and specialized employment supports such as adaptive technology and job accommodation consultation. In addition, VR can arrange for broad array of ancillary services tailored to the individual to increase their employability. Another resource provided to SCSEP by VR is a new initiative called Creative Workforce Solutions (CWS), which organizes collaboration across all employment programs. It works to coordinate job placement and employer outreach efforts throughout the state by connecting all Agency of Human Services funded programs in each county. Each CWS team has a Business Account Manager who functions as a liaison of marketing efforts to business on behalf of the regional CWS member organizations.

Vermont SCSEP has worked with the Vermont Association of Business, Industry, and Rehabilitation (VABIR) as a liaison for job referral leads between the private sector and skilled workers with disabilities. SCSEP could increase its working relationship by discussing alignment and cross referrals with this organization. Vermont Adult Education provides the Adult Diploma Program, the Bridge to College Program, and computer and literacy programs to participants. Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSA) gives non-degree grants to participants for specialized training and community colleges and vocational training centers provide customized and traditional courses for SCSEP participants. Coordination and partnership with this broad network is the cornerstone of the Vermont SCSEP due to the magnitude of leveraged resources that flow from these community collaborators.

#### **10) Community Services that are needed and where they are needed**

Vermont's distribution of community services is in accordance with the equitable distribution of available program positions. Vermont will provide community services in areas based on the census of the eligible population and will provide services to target populations relative to their distribution within the state. In a time of scarce Federal as well as State resources, Vermont shares resources equitably among all eligible populations and localities. The specific distribution of positions by county is in Table 2 - Equitable Distribution found earlier in this plan.

Vermont selects community service sites based on achieving a balance between the training needs of the participant and the operational needs of the community organization. The Vermont SCSEP identifies a variety of community service sites to accommodate the diversity in

participants, so the scope of community services are as diverse and varied as are the individual participants. Of primary concern is the on-going process of balancing the participants' community giving while meeting their IEP goals, therefore community service assignments need to be reciprocal.

Host agencies provide relevant work experiences for participants to achieve their employment goals, and they meet their organizational goals by providing meaningful assignments for participants. By collaborating with SCSEP, organizations often expand their community contribution, which creates the win-win partnership for which SCSEP is known. Vermont utilizes a diverse network of community and faith based organizations to achieve this reciprocity. In addition to the traditional types of community service activities, Vermont concentrates on developing host site placements that can train particular high demand occupations based on labor market information and direct input from employers.

The selection of community assignments is made based on relevance to the IEP and the capacity to add value to the community via community service. SCSEP staff continually develops new training opportunities with eligible organizations. The challenge is to provide service while training for high growth jobs. Vermont has been able to create this balance in community service through organizations that understand the importance of utilizing the participants' skills, interests, aptitudes, but also endorse unsubsidized employment within a specified period. Over the next four years, a goal will be to again diversify sites to increase training in environmental and health organizations.

**11) The State's long-term strategy to improve SCSEP services, including changes to the design of the program and planned changes in the use of SCSEP grantees and operators to better achieve the program goals; this may include recommendations to the Department**

The Governor has convened The Governor's Commission on Successful Aging, with 15 key member representatives. The Director of VATD (Vermont's sub-grantee) was appointed to the Commission and as the Chair of the Workforce sub-committee, which includes VDOL, VR, DAIL, and the business community. By re-thinking the way Vermont jobs are structured, Vermont sees the need to accommodate and respond to the older labor force and those in their retirement years. The Commission has worked for several years to improve conditions for older Vermonters through education, training, and public awareness. The State SCSEP will work to

support the recommendations put forth by the Workforce sub-committee; this initiative will have a positive influence on the future success of Vermont's SCSEP. Vermont SCSEP supports the recommendations of this committee as the core of its long-term strategic plan to improve SCSEP services.

The specific recommendations that relate to the SCSEP include:

- increased training and employment opportunities for older workers;
- making services available and affordable to low-income and unemployed workers; and,
- improving employer knowledge of the availability and value of the older workforce

**1. Policies that address employment opportunities for older workers in Vermont**

- Identify employer best practices regarding flexibility in the work culture to encourage older workers to remain employed. Consider flexibility like:
  - flex-time work schedules;
  - part time positions;
  - flex-leave (partial year work);
  - flex-careers (worker sabbaticals); and,
  - flex-place (telecommuting)
- Work with State agencies to position Vermont as a model for the employment and retention of older workers through innovative training, re-training, and benefits programs in State government jobs;
- Proactively recruit employers, employees, and government agencies having regulatory jurisdiction or a clear policy interest such as VDOL, DAIL, Economic Services, State Human Resources, and the Treasurer's Office to participate in the initiatives. (Modeled on the GAO recommendation for Executive Action, *Older workers, Labor Can Help Employers and Employees Plan Better for the Future* December 2005);
- Publicize the needs of the labor market to fully engage older workers; and,
- Develop a state initiative focused on improving employer outreach and education. This may include public relations efforts to combat inaccurate stereotypes of older workers with the aim of reducing discriminatory practices

## **2. Education and training activities that support older workers to remain in or re-enter the workforce.**

- Enhance training, educational, and life-long learning resources;
- Create incentives for employers to train older workers;
- Offer free or reduced tuition to Vermont's State Colleges and Regional Technical Centers as space is available in classes and/or as some percentage of class size;
- Identify a list of Vermont employers who are pro-active in hiring older workers and connect older Vermonters to them. Promote these employers through public relations to raise awareness of the benefits of hiring older workers and to advance the proposition that hiring older workers is good business practice;
- Recent government reports have raised concerns that the Federal performance standards used in the WIA programs have resulted in a bias against serving older workers. WIA performance standards via earnings gains and retention measures favor workers with low prior earnings who, subsequent to training enter higher paid full time jobs. These measures could lead to a bias against serving older workers, many who have relatively high prior earnings or who may want to transition from high paying full time positions to lower paying part time employment (*Government Accountability Office Study 2003*). Legislation is needed to make access to workforce development programs including the Workforce Education and Training Fund, the Next Generation Initiative, the Vermont Training Program Grants, etc more available to older workers seeking training/re-training for lateral career moves and necessary and important yet potentially lower paid positions and part time employment; and,
- Many older workers need computer training. Increase the number of free or low cost venues for computer training geared to the older worker. This could include free computer classes at One-Stop Career Centers, the Regional Technical Centers, Community College of Vermont, and community libraries, etc.

## **3. Policies to enhance successful job transitions for older workers.**

To remain in the labor force into their retirement years will require many older workers to change employers since many seek a change in activity, work schedule, etc.

- A best practice is to place older worker specialist in the One-Stop Centers, which serve as the central clearinghouse for all workforce development programs under WIA. This specialist would direct older workers to services for their specific needs and potentially help older workers feel more comfortable at the One-Stops. VATD has located older worker staff at VDOL for many years through SCSEP. Expand that model to ensure that older workers are represented at all One-Stop Career Centers in Vermont;
- Develop new information tools and improve existing systems that provide outreach to older workers and connect them to employment opportunities utilizing existing partnerships among state agencies and public and private partners; and,
- Support existing programs and partnerships such as SCSEP that meet the specific needs of older workers by providing general career information, peer counseling, job placement, networking, life planning seminars, financial services, assessments, computer training and other resources.

In summary, Vermont's four year strategic SCSEP Plan simplifies partnerships that are well coordinated, work effectively and have been in existence for many years. It also clearly identifies new partners to develop as part of the 2012 – 2015 State SCSEP. The vision of the Governor's Commission on Successful Aging establishes a road map to improve the lives of older Vermonters that coalesces with the needs and the goals of SCSEP.



FEB 6 2013

The Honorable Peter Shumlin  
Governor of Vermont  
109 State Street Pavilion  
Montpelier, Vermont 05609

Dear Governor Shumlin:

This letter is to notify you that the Employment and Training Administration has approved Vermont's Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) State Plan for Title V of the Older Americans Act (OAA). As required by law, your SCSEP State Plan has been reviewed by the Department of Labor (DOL) and the Department of Health and Human Services' Administration on Aging.

This approved SCSEP four-year state plan is valid from July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2016. The SCSEP regulations at 20 CFR 641.340(a) require that the Governor or highest government official review the State Plan and submit an update to the Secretary of Labor for consideration and approval "not less often than every two years." The DOL encourages you to review your SCSEP State Plan more frequently and to make modifications as circumstances warrant. For your reference, see SCSEP regulations at 20 CFR 641.345 for conditions which require modifications of the State Plan.

The purpose of the SCSEP State Plan is to foster coordination among the various SCSEP grantees and sub-grantees within the state and facilitate the efforts of the stakeholders, including state and local boards under the Workforce Investment Act, to accomplish the goals of SCSEP. Thank you for your submission and the efforts to coordinate services in your state. If you have any questions, please contact your Federal Project Officer Keeva Davis at [davis.keeva@dol.gov](mailto:davis.keeva@dol.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jane Oates".

Jane Oates  
Assistant Secretary

## Program Year 2012 WIA Agricultural Services Plan

### **I. Summary of Submission Requirements:**

- Part II Assessment of Need
- Part III Outreach Activity
- Part IV Services Provided to MSFWs through the One-Stop Delivery System
- Part V Services Provided to Agric. Employers through the One-Stop Delivery System
- Part VI Other Requirements

### **II. Assessment of Need:**

#### A. Program Year 2011 Agricultural Activity In The State:

According to Professor Vern Grubinger, University of Vermont Extension Program , NASS reports \$ 6.2 million in sales for berry farms in 2010 and \$12 million in sales for apples from 2,800 bearing acres.

The majority of the crop activity in the State of Vermont begins in April when vegetable crops, which had been growing in greenhouses, are transplanted to the fields. The crops continue to intensify through May, June, July, and August with the harvesting of vegetables, strawberries, raspberries and blueberries. In mid-August workers are needed for early apples with the majority of the labor force for apples hired the first of September through the end of October.

#### B. Program Year 2011 MSFW Activity In The State:

There was no MSFW activity in the state with the exception of Dairy Farms where workers do migrate to work; however, they do not meet the U.S. DOL definition of MSFWs because they work for the same employer year round. The majority of the work done by Migrant Education and the WIA Section 167 grantee is done with the employees of the dairy farms. The seasonal crops have not seen MSFWs but rather Vermont seasonal farm workers who are employed in the crop activity on a short term basis. Workers have not traditionally migrated to Vermont to pick the seasonal crops. The referral activity to the employment opportunities comes from local workers and not from workers who can not return to their residences within the same day.

#### C. Level Of Agricultural Activity Expected In The State in Program Year 2013:

The level of crop activity in PY 2013 is expected to remain the same in PY 2012 with 58 Agricultural Job Orders being filed for temporary H-2A workers. The anticipated job order filing will be 10 job orders to start in March 2013, 9 job orders to start in April 2013, 6 job orders to start in May 2013, 6 orders to start in June 2013, 7 job orders to begin in July 2013, 13 job orders to start in August 2013, 4 job orders to begin in September 2013 and 3 job orders to start in October 2013. Based on prior years the majority of the crop activities will be vegetables, strawberries, raspberries, blueberries and apples.

#### D. Projected Number Of MSFWs In The State In Program Year 2013.

There will not be a population of migrant workers traveling to harvest the crops in Vermont between April and September. The workers will come from the local community and they will return to their residence within the same day. Some of the workers may qualify as seasonal farm workers, and the projected number of these workers could be between 50 and 100 working in these seasonal positions. This has been the traditional composite of the temporary agricultural community for a number of years. There was no change from program years 2011 or 2012.

### **III. Outreach Activity:**

#### **A. Assessment of Available Resources:**

The State of Vermont does not have an Outreach Worker. The amount of SWA staff positions the state will assign to outreach activity will be performed part time by the State Monitor Advocate, during the peak harvest season of April through October. This is not a reduction from program year 2011 and it will not have a direct effect on the outreach activity. The vast majority of the outreach activity throughout the year will be performed by the 167 grantee PathStone Corporation, and as of June 30, 2012 they had made 108 contacts.

#### **B. Numerical Goals:**

The State Monitor Advocate plans to conduct outreach activity throughout the State during the peak harvest season of April through October. The Monitor Advocate will utilize 6 staff days and plans on contacting 20 MSFWs or seasonal farm workers. PathStone Cooperation, the 167 grantee will contact approximately 15-27 farm workers per quarter and utilize 24-26 staff days per quarter.

#### **C. Proposed Outreach Activities:**

The State Monitor Advocate will document and maintain a file of on-going and regular reviews of services and protections provided to MSFWs by the VTDOL Resource Centers. The State Monitor Advocate will ensure that the VTDOL Resource Center staff are trained in the requirements of the regulations in respect to services offered to MSFWs. Outreach contacts are conducted by the State Monitor Advocate during the peak harvest season. The Vermont Department of Labor's State Monitor Advocate will conduct MSFW outreach activities to at least 20 MSFWs in order to make sufficient amount of penetration in the temporary farm worker community. As many MSFWs as possible will be made aware of the full range of services, benefits and protection provided under 20 CFR 653, Subpart B. The State Monitor Advocate will continue its MSFW outreach through the peak harvest season and during routine employer visitations. For the quarter ending June 30, 2012 the Vermont Department of Labor State Monitor Advocate conducted 22 outreach contacts and PathStone Corporation conducted 108 outreach contacts. The plan for PY 2013 is to maintain the same level of outreach activity.

**IV. Services Provided To MSFWs Through The Vermont Department of Labor Career Resource/ One-Stop Delivery System.**

MSFWs and seasonal farm workers are provided equal service through the Vermont Resource Centers as non-MSFWs. The registration application is designed to identify MSFWs and all job bank information covers both agricultural and non-agricultural jobs. The Vermont Department of Labor Resource Center staff are available to assist MSFWs as they are all applicants in the effective use of the job order information. The Resource Center have made provisions, such as providing interpreters and post in different languages to assist non-English speaking applicants. The Vermont Department of Labor Career Resource Centers ensure equal access to employment opportunities and the full range of services are provided to MSFWs as to non-MSFWs. The Centers are designed to allow all applicants equal access to career information and staff assistance.

**V. Services Provided To Agricultural Employers Through The One-Stop Delivery System.**

The Vermont Department of Labor will continue providing labor exchange services to agricultural employers through each Resource Center. Employer Resource Consultants, Regional Managers, Veteran staff and staff from Central Office will continue to provide and continue to contact and develop employment opportunities in the communities to include agriculture. The employers most likely to utilize MSFWs or seasonal farm workers are the small fruits, vegetable and apple growers. These employers have a historical timeframe of when they need workers and are contacted when those times arrive.

The H-2A program does operate in the state and the State Monitor Advocate tracks the agricultural openings and the referral of US workers to these positions. The Monitor Advocate is also in contact with the WIA Section 167 grantee and migrant education staff to see if a connection can be made between any of their workers and the job opportunities being offered.

**VI. Other Requirements:**

Monitor Advocate.

The State Monitor Advocate has been afforded the opportunity to review and provide input into the PY 2012 Agricultural Outreach Plan. The State Monitor Advocate comments and recommendations have been incorporated into the plan, and he will be kept informed of further plan development.