

STATE OF VERMONT



**ANNUAL REPORT
WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT
TITLE I-B
JULY 2000 – JUNE 2001**



SUBMITTED BY:

**STEVEN M. GOLD
COMMISSIONER
VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING**

DECEMBER 1, 2001

VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

December 1, 2001

Robert Semler
Regional Administrator
US DOL/ETA
John F. Kennedy Federal Building Room E-350
Boston, MA 02230

Dear Bob:

I am pleased to present you with Vermont's PY 2000 Annual Report for WIA Title I-B.

Throughout its second year of WIA implementation Vermont continued to make great strides in bringing some of the key principles of WIA to fruition. Chief among these is the growing network of partnerships that serve as the foundation of successful implementation. These partnerships have played a pivotal role in the overall success of our flagship one-stop Career Resource Center in Burlington and its on-site Youth Jump Start Center. They also fostered a strong collaborative environment throughout our twelve Career Resource Centers, ensuring that precious resources, both human and fiscal, worked together for optimum customer service.

Importantly, the Report highlights the fact that DET has again exceeded its key performance measures, thereby underscoring the high level of accomplishment by DET staff and their dedication to providing customers with the programs and services they need to succeed.

I would also like to recognize and express my appreciation to the staff at the ETA Regional Office for their technical assistance and general support through our first two years of WIA implementation.

Sincerely,

Steven M. Gold
Commissioner

I. ADVANCING THE ONE-STOP SYSTEM

A central tenet of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) is the establishment of a one-stop career center system. As Vermont ended its second year of WIA implementation, Vermont's flagship one-stop, the Burlington Career Resource Center (CRC), has continued to expand the one-stop concept and evolve into a place where, as one writer put it, "you don't just find a job...you choose your working destiny."

From the technologically sophisticated and well equipped self help center to in-depth employment counseling and job training, the CRC is becoming the place for customers to go to obtain the information and gain the skills necessary to compete in the 21st century labor market.

Continuous Improvement Efforts

The fundamental strategy for the CRC system is simple: Connect all services and programs under one roof and make them easy to access for all customers. While cost efficiency and continuous improvement are an ongoing focus, in an environment of limited resources, they become paramount. During year two, in an effort to improve the workforce system, achieve cost efficiencies, and continue to provide comprehensive, easy to access services to customers, Vermont has sought to bring about a number of significant changes. Three examples include:

1. Waiver Request: Identification of Eligible Providers of Training Services

Prompted by the fact that training providers were opting out of the system due to cost issues related to collecting data, resulting in a decreased number of eligible training providers and diminished customer choice, Vermont applied for a waiver to eliminate the data collection and reporting requirements on all students. Instead, performance information would rest on wage and outcome data for WIA participant students. All other required information from eligible providers would remain the same. Our request maintained that by doing so, Vermont would be able to maintain a customer centered ITA system, increase the number of eligible training providers, provide for maximum customer choice, facilitate informed decision making, and maintain provider accountability. This waiver is pending.

2. Waiver Request: Identification of Eligible Providers of Youth Activities

It is the intent of Vermont's Human Resource Investment Council's Council on Youth to develop the most effective, cost efficient, integrated network of programs and services for WIA eligible youth. As WIA implementation progressed, it became increasingly clear that the competitive provisions related to eligible providers of youth activities was a barrier to such a system. Our waiver argument centered on the fact that in Vermont, which has a sparse population and limited number of service providers spread out over a relatively large geographical area, there is a tradition and current reality of strong collaboration. In order to effectively address Vermont's inherent problems related to economy of scale, it is imperative that program and service providers work as collaboratively as possible in order to provide, in the most cost efficient manner possible, the necessary services to Vermont's

citizens. A competitive process that pits one service provider against another, ultimately, both damages the collaborative climate and forces the creation of additional administrative entities and expenditures, which currently are not necessary. This waiver is pending.

3. Vermont's One-Stop Enhancement Project

Vermont was the first state to have its WIA unified state plan approved by the Department of Labor. An early implementation state, Vermont has worked hard since enactment of WIA in 1998 to develop a comprehensive workforce development system. This has largely occurred by bringing multiple programs and agencies together in order to provide customers with easy access to services through a one-stop career center system. Midway through this third year of WIA implementation, Vermont is planning to develop an electronic information hub that will provide easy access to information, services, and programs for CRC customers, both job seekers and employers, as well as CRC partners.

To accomplish this, DET plans to establish an Internet based information system that will support multiple programs including WIA, the Employment Service, Unemployment Insurance, Labor Market Information, other DOL programs, and one-stop partner programs. This will be a two-year project and involve a substantive, cooperative partnership with seven other states. The system is called America's Job Link.

Innovative Programs

In addition to continuous improvement measures, WIA funding has been instrumental in establishing **innovative initiatives** that have gone beyond traditional programming parameters to meet the vital needs of special populations:

1. The Dale Project

The Morrisville Career Resource Center has recently partnered with the Vermont Department of Corrections to provide career and work related transitional services to residents being furloughed from the Dale Correctional Facility in Waterbury, VT.

The new correctional facility, which was designed specifically to house women, opened in February of 2000 with 45 beds and has been at capacity since the beginning. The facility follows a rehabilitative model and offers comprehensive treatment and education services. Residents have access to substance abuse and mental health counseling, and a variety of support groups. They are also able to finish high school or participate in beginning level college courses with the help of a full-time, on-site instructor.

CRC personnel have been working with the Department of Corrections, specifically the Superintendent of the Dale Correctional Facility, for over a year to develop a collaborative project. As a result, and in partnership with Northern New England Tradeswomen, the CRC developed a modified Step-Up program. The program offers women the opportunity to learn skills in non-traditional trades, such as carpentry, plumbing and electrical. Because of its reputation, a high percentage of Step-Up graduates move into high paying jobs and often advance to participation in the Registered Apprenticeship Program, which helps ensure additional strong job skills and good wages.

In addition to the Step-Up initiative, the CRC began offering, both on-site and across the state, a wide array of career guidance and employment services including those related to transitioning back to community life. Today there is a designated transitional worker in each of Vermont's twelve one-stop Career Resource Centers who meets with Dale residents upon their release to continue supportive assistance in job placement and career development.

The partnership between the CRC, Step-Up, and Corrections has gained attention by receiving the Effective Partnering Award by the Regional Department of Labor Office.

2. St. Johnsbury Public/Private Corrections Project

To help mitigate high recidivism rates, a collaborative project between the St. Johnsbury CRC, the Vermont Department of Corrections Education Unit, a private sector contractor, and the St. Johnsbury Correctional Center established a vocational education program that provides experiential worksite activity in the building trades.

Case managed by CRC and Corrections staff, participants are assessed, provided the opportunity to learn soft skills and on-the-job industry related skills, and develop long range employment plans.

One of the crew chiefs at a training site shared his thoughts:

“When the project started, these participants had few carpentry skills, their attitudes were poor, and there seemed to be a low level of motivation. Now, after only three short weeks, productivity is high and their attitudes are really turning around. You can see they take pride in their work. They could hold their own with any entry-level position in the trade. All they needed was a chance to try and see that someone actually cared about them.”

One of the participants remarked:

“I learn something new every day. Each day I feel better about myself and my skills as a worker. I couldn't have come so far, so quickly without this opportunity.”

3. Jump Start

In the spring of 2001, the John L. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University, in sponsorship from the Department of Labor, selected the Burlington CRC for a Promising Practices award in the category of “One-Stop Design and Management” for its Jump Start Youth Center. Jump Start is an initiative that has evolved over a two year period from designating one staff member to serve youth into a separate youth one-stop career resource center within the Burlington CRC. The concept was based on the premise that a highly visible youth initiative was necessary in light of increasing gang activity, drug abuse, and dropout rates among Burlington youth. Now staffed by two full-time professionals, the Jump Start Center provides a focus and serves as a clearinghouse for

almost all youth workforce initiatives in Chittenden County. **The key working principle is to provide a youth-friendly environment and a focal point for the many diverse community groups that serve youth.** In addition to the mandated partners required by WIA, Jump Start has attracted many volunteer partners, all sharing a common mission centered on youth development.

These partnerships demonstrate that pooling resources, skills, and ideas among partners, both public and private, can succeed even when working with the hardest to serve.

4. Apprenticeship Enhancement

This year Vermont enrolled 153 incumbent workers in an innovative, revamped four year Registered Apprenticeship program for electricians and plumbers/pipefitters. In partnership with Vermont Technical College, The Department of Employment and Training developed an entirely new delivery system for classroom instruction that was paid for, in part, with WIA statewide funds. Comments from both apprentices and sponsoring employers have been very favorable. **The resulting improvements in the quality of instruction won high praise when several of the sponsoring employers provided public testimony before a Vermont legislative committee.** Graduates of the new electrical program are eligible to receive thirteen college credits, and the plumbing program will be evaluated this year for similar college credit status.

II. COST BENEFIT AND EVALUATIONS

A. Cost benefit analysis

Vermont is a single workforce investment area state and all 85% monies were allocated to the local area. Each Career Resource Center is given an annual allocation, which is used in accordance with customers' identified needs rather than through a preselected mix of activities.

In Program Year 2000, two hundred and twenty six adults received core or intensive services at an average cost of \$800 apiece. One hundred and twenty eight adults received training services at an average cost of \$2,276 apiece. Table D shows that those adults who received only core and intensive services and retained employment at six months averaged an earnings increase of \$2,250 while those who received training services averaged an increase of \$3,676, a good return on investment.

Dislocated workers who received training services experienced a much higher income replacement level of 97% versus 79% for those who received only core or intensive services (see Table G). During the year, 157 dislocated workers received intensive services and 94 received training at an average cost of \$486 and \$3,287 respectively. While most dislocated workers have marketable skills, their income replacement rates are significantly enhanced through the provision of training.

Recruiting and serving youth, particularly out-of-school youth, has proven to be a very staff intensive effort. To bring out-of-school youth into the service delivery system requires a heavy investment in outreach and building partnerships with other youth service providers.

Teamwork to get out-of-school youth involved and to keep them involved is crucial. Costs related to outreach, intake, assessment, case management and follow-up exceed direct payments on behalf of participants by approximately 65%. The greatest demand for direct participant payment is for work experience and summer employment opportunities.

COST EFFECTIVENESS	C-E Ratio	Total Obligation	Total Individuals Served
Overall, All Program Strategies	\$3,443	\$4,920,206	1429
Adult Program	\$6,273	\$2,063,837	329
Dislocated Worker Program	\$4,626	\$ 846,688	183
Youth Program	\$2,191	\$2,009,681	917

B. Evaluations of workforce investment activities

The Department of Employment and Training has not conducted a formal evaluation of workforce investment activities as we feel it would be premature. However, we now have two years of experience to work with and plan to arrange for an evaluation to begin in year three, which would be conducted by an outside organization.

III. PERFORMANCE MEASURES

After completing year two of WIA implementation, and the first full year of WIA programming, there were generally only minor fluctuations in the performance measures between the two program years. However, there were a few areas where percentage changes were in excess of 6% and we thought it might be beneficial to point those out:

		<u>PY2000</u>
Adult:	Entered employment	+ 7%
	Retention rate	+ 10%
Dislocated Worker:	Retention rate	- 7.5%
Older Youth:	Retention rate	+ 22%
	Earnings gains	+ \$1,000

In years three forward we plan to begin looking closely at trends with consideration for how policy and allocation shifts might affect those trends.

Tables

TABLE A - Workforce Investment Act Customer Satisfaction Results

Customer Satisfaction	Negotiated Performance Level	Actual Performance Level-ACSI	Number of Completed Surveys	Number of Customers Eligible for The Survey	Number of Customers Included in The Sample	Response Rate
Participants	76%	84%	75	433	433	17%
Employers	66%	82%	38	47	47	80%

Note: We are working on perfecting the customer satisfaction survey process. We acknowledge that our response rate is low and attribute this to two primary reasons: 1) There was a large number of exit records that were post-dated. This resulted in not being able to include those individuals in the 60-day survey timeframe. 2) Currently, we conduct the surveys in-house during normal working hours making it difficult to contact former participants, most of whom are working. To alleviate these problems, we will be contracting the survey activity to a private entity in the very near future. Contracting the survey function will alleviate current problems and dramatically increase the sample. Nevertheless, we feel the number of respondents in our current survey effectively reflects customer response to WIA services and we are confident that the 84% customer satisfaction rate will be maintained and surpassed in future years. Our confidence stems in part from a point-of-service customer survey conducted in April 2001 related to overall Wagner-Peyser/WIA services. With 1160 survey respondents, DET had a 98.06% satisfied to very satisfied rate.

TABLE B - Adult Program Results At-A-Glance

	Negotiated Performance Level	Actual Performance Level	Numerator/Denominator
Entered Employment Rate	72%	73%	N=129 D=176
Employment Retention Rate	82%	85%	N=169 D=199
Earnings Change in Six Months	\$3000	\$3224	N=\$641,602 D=199
Employment & Credential Rate	50%	51%	N=87 D=171

TABLE C - Outcomes for Adult Special Populations

Reported Information	Public Assistance Recipients Receiving Intensive or Training Services		Veterans		Individuals With Disabilities		Older Individuals	
Entered Employment Rate	77%	N=34 D=44	84%	N=16 D=19	63%	N=29 D=46	100%	N=5 D=5
Employment Retention Rate	82%	N=32 D=39	82%	N=18 D=22	84%	N=31 D=37	100%	N=6 D=6
Earnings Change in Six Months	\$2789	N=108,782 D=39	\$3172	N=69,787 D=22	\$2612	N=96,649 D=37	\$1465	N=8,790 D=6
Employment & Credential Rate	51%	N=21 D=41	58%	N=11 D=19	23%	N=7 D=31	50%	N=1 D=2

TABLE D - Other Outcome Information for the Adult Program

Reported Information	Individuals Who Received Training Services		Individuals Who Received Only Core and Intensive Services	
	Entered Employment Rate	73%	N=81 D=111	74%
Employment Retention Rate	87%	N=118 D=136	81%	N=51 D=63
Earnings Change in Six Months	\$3,676	\$499,873 316	\$2,250	\$141,729 63

TABLE E - Dislocated Worker Program Results At-A-Glance

	Negotiated Performance Level	Actual Performance Level	Numerator/Denominator
Entered Employment Rate	78%	78%	N=65 D=83
Employment Retention Rate	87%	82%	N=53 D=65
Earnings Replacement in Six Months	89%	94%	N=\$683,246 D=\$727,156
Employment & Credential Rate	50%	59%	N=39 D=66

TABLE F - Outcomes for Dislocated Worker Special Populations

Reported Information	Veterans		Individuals With Disabilities		Older Individuals		Displaced Homemakers	
	Entered Employment Rate	76%	N=13 D=17	71%	N=5 D=7	60%	N=9 D=15	100%
Employment Retention Rate	85%	N=11 D=13	80%	N=4 D=5	56%	N=5 D=9	0%	N=0 D=1
Earnings Replacement Rate	102%	N=\$130,895 D=\$127,878	111%	N=\$63,605 D=\$57,111	64%	N=\$75,770 D=\$118,224	349%	N=\$4,958 D=\$1,422
Employment & Credential Rate	53%	N=8 D=15	57%	N=4 D=7	42%	N=5 D=12	100%	N=1 D=1

TABLE G - Other Outcome Information for the Dislocated Worker Program

Reported Information	Individuals Who Received Training Services		Individuals Who Received Only Core and Intensive Services	
	Entered Employment Rate	79%	N=52 D=66	76%
Employment Retention Rate	83%	N=43 D=52	77%	N=10 D=13
Earnings Replacement Rate	97%	N=\$574,907 D=\$590,756	79%	N=\$108,339 D=\$136,400

TABLE H - Older Youth Program Results At-A-Glance

Reported Information	Negotiated Performance Level	Actual Performance Level	Numerator/Denominator
Entered Employment Rate	72%	75%	N=18 D=24
Employment Retention Rate	79%	92%	N=24 D=26
Earnings Change in Six Months	\$2255	\$3346	N=\$87,003 D=26
Employment & Credential Rate	50%	45%	N=15 D=33

TABLE I - Outcomes for Older Youth Special Populations

Reported Information	Public Assistance Recipients Receiving Intensive or Training Services		Veterans		Individuals With Disabilities		Out-of-School Youth	
	%	N/D	%	N/D	%	N/D	%	N/D
Entered Employment Rate	71%	N=5 D=7	0%	N=0 D=0	77%	N=10 D=13	71%	N=12 D=17
Employment Retention Rate	100%	N=5 D=5	0%	N=0 D=0	92%	N=11 D=12	95%	N=18 D=19
Earnings Change in Six Months	\$5,315	N=\$26,576 D=5	0%	N=0 D=0	\$2,528	N=\$30,331 D=12	\$3,513	N=\$66,755 D=19
Employment & Credential Rate	29%	N=2 D=7	0%	N=0 D=0	53%	N=8 D=15	36%	N=9 D=25

TABLE J - Younger Youth Results At-A-Glance

Reported Information	Negotiated Performance Level	Actual Performance Level	Numerator/Denominator
Skill Attainment Rate	66%	93%	N=142 D=152
Diploma or Equivalent Attainment Rate	50%	50%	N=23 D=46
Retention Rate	55%	63%	N=37 D=59

TABLE K - Outcomes for Younger Youth Special Populations

Reported Information	Public Assistance Recipients Receiving Intensive or Training Services		Individuals With Disabilities		Out-of-School Youth	
	%	N/D	%	N/D	%	N/D
Skill Attainment Rate	96%	N=25 D=26	95%	N=98 D=103	90%	N=18 D=20
Diploma or Equivalent Attainment Rate	50%	N=4 D=8	55%	N=11 D=20	13%	N=5 D=38
Retention Rate	43%	N=3 D=7	50%	N=10 D=20	65%	N=24 D=37

TABLE L - Other Reported Information

	12 Month Employment Retention Rate		12 Mo. Earnings Change (Adults and Older Youth) or 12 Mo. Earnings Replacement (Dislocated Workers)		Placements for Participants in Nontraditional Employment		Wages at Entry Into Employment for Those Individuals Who Entered Unsubsidized Employment		Entry Into Unsubsidized Employment Related to the Training Received of Those Who Completed Training Services	
Adults	72%	N=189 D=261	+\$3,161	N=\$825,135 D=261	6%	N=13 D=199	\$9.12	N=\$684 D= 75	44%	N=25 D=57
Dislocated Workers	84%	N=138 D=165	98%	N=\$1,482,459 D=\$1,519,033	6%	N=4 D=65	\$11.81	N=\$425 D=36	60%	N=23 D=38
Older Youth	73%	N=41 D=56	+\$2,101	N=\$117,635 D=56	3%	N=1 D=26	\$7.46	N=97 D=13	N/A	N/A

TABLE M - Participation Levels

	Total Participants Served	Total Exiters
Adults	329	140
Dislocated Workers	183	43
Older Youth	102	34
Younger Youth	815	216

TABLE N - Cost of Program Activities

Operating Results	Available	Expended	Pct.	Balance Remaining
Total All Funds Sources	\$6,515,876	\$6,060,925	93%	\$454,951
Adult Program	\$1,850,354	\$1,843,076	99%	\$ 7,278
Carry In	\$ 220,761	\$ 220,761	100%	-0-
Dislocated Workers	\$ 841,750	\$ 841,750	100%	-0-
Carry In	4,938	4,938	100%	-0-
Youth Program	\$2,009,681	\$2,009,681	100%	-0-
Carry In	-0-	-0-		-0-
Out-of-School Youth	\$ 602,905	\$ 602,905	100%	-0-
In School Youth	\$1,406,776	\$1,406,776	100%	-0-
Summer Employ Opportunities	(included above)	\$ 346,519		
Local Administration	\$ 353,417	\$ 212,218	60%	\$141,199
Carry In	\$ 100,294	\$ 100,294	100%	-0-
Rapid Response	\$ 84,398	\$ 84,398	100%	-0-
Carry In	-0-	-0-	n/a	-0-
Statewide Activity	\$ 906,989	\$ 600,515	66%	\$306,474
Carry In	\$ 143,294	\$ 143,294	100%	-0-