

STATE OF VERMONT

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Annual Report

Program Year 2017

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Vermont Department of Labor
State of Vermont**

**to the United States Department of Labor
Employment and Training Administration**

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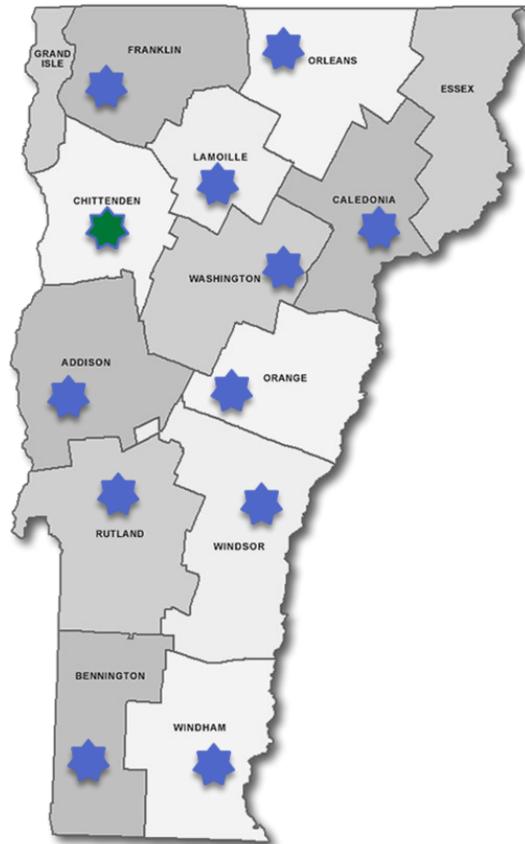
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One-Stop American Job Center



Regional and Affiliated American Job Center

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INTRODUCTION

The Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) is pleased to submit our annual Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) annual report for Program Year 2017.

The Workforce Development Division within the VDOL has adopted a statewide strategy to maximize and leverage workforce development resources through our federally designated one-stop American Jobs Center and 12 regional career resource centers. Additionally, Vermont's Statewide Workforce Development Board also oversees implementation and monitoring of the system as whole, ensuring compliance and system accountability. Our Career Resource Centers and Board act as the cornerstone of service delivery for jobseekers and employers – ensuring that we are serving each cohort with equal energy, and maximizing resources for job development, job search assistance, workforce development and economic development.

Vermont has experienced several years of decline in the number of Vermonters in our Workforce. After taking office, Governor Phil Scott stated that it should be a top priority of all elected officials to expand and strengthen Vermont's workforce. The strategy for doing this was for the Vermont Department of Labor to lead a dynamic, coordinated and cross-agency workforce expansion effort, and develop a labor force expansion plan with strategic efforts to target unemployed, underemployed, and Vermonters who are able to work but are currently detached from the labor force.

Strong interagency partnerships are essential in developing and maintaining a successful workforce development delivery system. The Vermont Department of Labor has been working diligently to strengthen interdepartmental collaborations to ensure that all industry partners are working towards the same goal; to assist individuals in gaining the skills that they need to sustain a prosperous future for them and their families, while supporting and assisting in business and industry growth.

Simultaneous to this interagency strategy, the Vermont Department of Labor and newly appointed Commissioner set out on a path to reinvigorate the Workforce Development Division – both by restructuring and recommitting existing staff to focus on comprehensive service delivery, and by looking critically at program outcomes, and effectiveness of dollars spent.

In addition, the Vermont Department of Labor has prioritized and executed on the following strategies:

A restructuring of the Workforce Development Division's Apprenticeship team. The Apprenticeship team is now a cohesive unit within the Division that is focused on expanding apprenticeship opportunities for Vermonters in more high-demand and growing industries.

The creation of Workforce Expansion Team. Commissioner Lindsay Kurrle and Governor Phil Scott appointed two former legislators, from both sides of the political isle, to lead a dynamic, coordinated and cross-agency workforce expansion effort. Elevating these positions to Cabinet level within the Governor's Office allows the Division of Workforce Development a louder and broader voice on workforce development policy development.

ICAN (Individual Career Advancement Network). The Department's Workforce Development Division provides employment services throughout the state of Vermont in partnership with the Department of Children and Families, the Economic Services Division, and other partner Agencies. Referrals to the program consist of 3SquaresVT (the State's food subsidy program) participants who agree to access employment and training services, participants who are subject to ABAWD time limits and those who need to meet specific work requirements to maintain their benefit.

Utilizing Public Libraries. The Department is utilizing a new strategy that includes a partnership with the local Public Libraries network as a way to access communities and job seekers. Recently, the Department has launched a 6-week Career Workshop Series facilitated by Staff that will be replicated throughout the state.

Opioid Recovery Center Initiatives. In March of 2018, the Department of Labor made a commitment to co-locate case managers in Recovery Centers. By June of 2018, the Department had at least one case manager from each of our 12 regional American Job Centers posted in their local recovery centers. Case managers provide employment orientation sessions, 1-on-1 services and facilitate workshops on employment related topics to individuals receiving recovery services.

Whole Family Approach to Jobs. In collaboration with a team of individuals from Department of Children And Families and other State Agencies, Vermont is working to identify concrete strategies and processes to better support families and employers in achieving economic growth. A key area of focus is to improve how state agencies, in policy and practice, work across agencies and organizations to fully support and help families to thrive. Siloed funding and programs are making it more difficult to support families in education, training, employment and advancement. This tool and strategy will support state Agencies in identifying how they are currently implementing services with a full-family focus in mind; and will support Agencies in identifying concrete strategies to improve how families benefit from services and programs to move towards their goals. We define “family” very broadly – it can include multiple generations, biological parents, and other kinds of caregivers - foster parents, adoptive parents, grandparents, relatives, and others responsible for a child or children.

Progress Update: Vermont’s One-Stop American Job Center

Co-located Partners: Vermont’s State Workforce Development Board (“SWDB”); the Vermont Department of Labor (“VDOL”); Northlands JobCorps; ReSOURCE A Nonprofit Community Enterprise, Inc. (“ReSOURCE”); the Vermont Agency of Education (“AOE”); the Vermont Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (“DVR”); the Vermont Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living, Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired (“DBVR”); the Vermont Department for Children and Families, Economic Services Division (“ESD”); Vermont Associates for Training and Development (“Vermont Associates”); PathStone; Maquam Bay of Missisquoi, Inc.; and Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (“CVOEO”), as required one-stop partners under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014, 29 U.S.C. §3151(b) and (c).

In designing and implementing a “one-stop” system of service delivery, these program partners have become connected to one another in ways that will continue to promote integration, innovation, and better employment outcomes for Vermont businesses and job seekers. A closely aligned system of workforce development programs will help all of Vermont’s jobseekers and businesses access the broad array of services and supports available to them through a more robust and personalized delivery system. More than a year after full implementation, partners believe the system will grow stronger as the network embraces best practices, makes evidence-based decisions, and stays accountable to customers by focusing on continuous improvement and soliciting feedback.

The full Vermont AJC Network continues to support the alignment of workforce investment, education, and economic development systems to create a comprehensive, accessible, and high-quality workforce development system. It will continue strengthen the quality and labor market relevance of workforce investment, education, and economic development efforts to provide Vermont’s workers with the skills and credentials necessary to secure and advance in employment.

Vermont Regional Updates and Progress Reports

Recovery Center Initiative. Out posting at the Recovery Center in St Johnsbury weekly to provide VDOL orientation sessions, 1-on-1 services and facilitate works on employment related topics.

VERMONT'S SOUTHWEST REGION

The Southwestern Region serves Bennington, Rutland and Addison counties. With landmass covering 2,431 total square miles (Bennington square miles, Addison 808

region's labor force is 64,228

TOTAL CLIENTS: 2,870
VETERANS SERVED: 178
WEGNER-PEYSER SERVICES: 11,389
JOB REFERRALS: 1,297
EMPLOYERS SERVED: 800
JOB LISTINGS: 408
ADULT SERVICES: 77
DLW SERVICES: 11
YOUTH SERVICES: 75

678 square miles, Rutland 945 square miles), the tri-county and has experienced an overall low unemployment rate consistent with the Vermont state average this past annual reporting period. This region hosts three American Jobs Centers (AJC).

BENNINGTON: The Bennington American Jobs Center office is co-located with Vermont Vocational Rehabilitation within the State of Vermont office complex. Also co-located are: Vermont Associates, serving low income Vermonters over the age of 55, and the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation. This co-location model affords a unique client and staff experience. Clients jointly working with agencies, and receive collaborative wrap around services. Cross agency referrals are simplistic and provide opportunities for agencies to better guide service delivery on behalf of client.



With active participation in Bennington County Workforce & Ed (Regional Workforce Investment Board), Bennington County Industrial Corporation, Bennington County Regional Commission, Bennington County Economic Development Partners, Alliance for Community Transformations, and the Bennington County Regional Chamber, the American Jobs Center office has remained an integral part of the Workforce Development system. Vermont Department of Labor staff support two Career and Job Expo events per year and an array of projects such as: April Career Month, Sophomore Summit, Middle School career fairs, the regions Financial Reality Fair, Emerging Leaders workshops, the Workforce Investment Matters Summit, an employment transition fair, a mock Interview fair, and various school related activities upon request that support personal learning plan development, as well as job and career pathway exploration. The Bennington office also supported two summer youth employment projects funded through WIOA serving a number of at-risk youth in Bennington county.



RUTLAND: The Rutland American Jobs Center is located in the State Office building in the town of Rutland, a space that also houses strategic workforce development partners that includes: Vermont Vocational Rehabilitation, Economic Services and Department of Children and Families, Vermont Adult Learning staff serving TANF recipients, a Vermont Student Assistance Corporation Outreach Co-

ordinator, Vermont Associates staff serving low income Vermonters over the age of 55, and a Northland Job Corps Outreach coordinator.

The Rutland American Jobs Center and staff have been an integral part of the workforce development system in the county. Department of Labor staff have remained actively engaged with Refugee Resettlement program, the Rutland Regional Workforce Investment Board, the Stafford Technical Center Regional Advisory Board, the Rutland Economic Development Corp., and the Rutland Regional Chamber of Commerce and Project Vision. The Rutland American Jobs Center office supports two large job fairs per year, the Sophomore Summit, the “Your Journey Starts Here” program, an employment transition Fair, a Financial Reality Fair, the Castleton University Career and Job Fair, and various workshops and hiring events. In addition, the Rutland American Jobs Center office has been heavily involved in supporting a pilot initiative by the Rutland Regional Workforce Investment Board entitled “*Real Careers at Rutland*”. Partially funded by the Vermont Department of Labor, this pilot initiative is designed to serve in school youth of Mill River and Otter Valley whom have been identified by guidance counselors as students that may be on a path towards graduating from high school without an employment or education transition plan.

This pilot allows those identified student to work directly with a coordinator who helps them identify a career pathway and potential training opportunities within the greater Rutland County area. The other component of the pilot project works with young adults who have already left school and are currently unemployed or underemployed. As this pilot rolls out further, those individuals will be provided intensive mentoring and career pathway mapping that enables them to engage in training and jobs that are in demand.



MIDDLEBURY: The Middlebury American Jobs Center continues to collaborate with community partners that include Vermont Vocational Rehabilitation, Resource, Vermont Adult Learning, the Hannaford Career and Technical Education Center, Northland Job Corp Center, Addison County Economic Development Corp. and Economic Services. This American Jobs Center receives staffing support for specialized services from the Rutland American Jobs Center as well. Larger scale community-based workforce development projects have been in a planning phase over the past year, except one project. The Addison County Workforce Stakeholders group (acting as the regional Workforce Investment Board) has started to develop a stronger cohesion for which the staff at the American Jobs Center remain heavily involved. Hannaford Center and VT Adult learning in collaboration with VDOL has been developing a program concept entitled “VT Youth Works”

VERMONT’S NORTHEAST REGION

The Northeast region, also known in Vermont as the “Northeast Kingdom”, serves Essex, Orleans and Caledonia counties. This region of Vermont contains some of the last remnants of a rural, undeveloped New England. The forests provide income for loggers and serve as a resource for furniture and other wood product manufacturing. Residents of “the Kingdom” report income levels among the lowest in the state and poverty rates among the highest. The regional economy is centered on tourism, manufacturing, medical and farming sectors. With a landmass covering 2,054 square miles (Essex 675 miles, Orleans 721 square miles, and Caledonia 658 square miles) this region hosts two American Jobs Centers.

TOTAL CLIENTS: 1,424
VETERANS SERVED: 96
WEGNER-PEYSER SERVICES: 7,670
JOB REFERRALS: 474
EMPLOYERS SERVED: 108
JOB LISTINGS: 207
ADULT SERVICES: 19
DLW SERVICES: 6
YOUTH SERVICES: 35

Newport: The Newport Resource Center is co-located in the Emory Hebard State Office Building with the VT Department of Children and Families - Economic Services Division, VT Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and partnering staff from VT Association of Business Industry and Rehabilitation (VABIR), VT Department of Health, Community College of Vermont and VT Department of Motor Vehicles. The VT Department of Corrections – Probation and Parole, Northeast Kingdom Community Action (NEKCA), Northeast Kingdom Learning Services (Adult Basic Education) and the Journey to Recovery Center are all located within close walking distance to the Office. One-stop services are available to individuals due to the close proximity of our locations. Literature and brochures marketing partner services are available at each office and staff frequently escort individuals to appropriate agencies within the building.



The Newport Resource Center staff is stationed at the Journey to Recovery Center on a weekly basis to provide employment related activities including resume writing, job referrals, interview coaching, goal setting, and referrals to additional resources that may aid them in recovery. Additionally, the staff visits the Probation and Parole Office bi-weekly and presents an orientation to services session with individual follow-up.



St. Johnsbury: The St Johnsbury Resource Center is located in the center of town and is easily accessible on the Rural Community Transportation bus line. The Office is co-located with Community College of Vermont. The State Office Building is located approximately three miles out of town. The Northeast Kingdom Community Action (NEKCA), Northeast Kingdom Learning Services (Adult Basic Education), VT Associates for Training and Development and the Recovery Center are all located within close walking distance to the Office. VT Student Assistance Corporation and VT Office of Veterans Affairs utilizes space in the VDOL Office on a scheduled monthly basis. Literature and brochures marketing partner services are available at each office.

Literature and brochures marketing partner services are available at each office.

The St Johnsbury Resource Center staff is outstationed at the Recovery Center on a weekly basis to provide employment related activities including resume writing/interviewing workshops, job referrals, coaching, goal setting, and referrals to additional resources that may aid them in recovery. Additionally, the staff visits the VT Associates for Training and Development monthly and presents an orientation to services as well as workshops on employment related topics.



Northeast Kingdom, Vermont

VERMONT'S CENTRAL REGION

The Southwestern Region serves Washington and part of Windsor counties. With landmass covering over 700 total square miles the region's labor force is reported to be 64,228 and has experienced a slightly higher than average unemployment rate consistent with the Vermont state average this past annual reporting period.

TOTAL CLIENTS: 1,568
VETERANS SERVED: 132
WEGNER-PEYSER SERVICES: 8,563
JOB REFERRALS: 107
EMPLOYERS SERVED: 53
JOB LISTINGS: 271
ADULT SERVICES: 59
DLW SERVICES: 24
YOUTH SERVICES: 73

BARRE: The Barre American Jobs Center shares building space with the Office of Economic Services, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation and partnering staff from VABIR, Divisions of Fish & Game and Environmental Conservation. The Department of Education and the Department of Corrections share building space in the downtown area and are not co-located.



The Barre Region has developed a relationship with the Turning Point Recovery Center, and is actively assisting with employment related resources including resume writing, job referrals, interview coaching, goal setting, and referrals to additional resources that may aid them in recovery. Staff presence at the Turning Point Recovery Center also introduced the Vermont Department of Labor to one of the 5 treatment court programs run in Vermont.

MORRISVILLE: The Morrisville American Jobs Center is not co-located with the Agency of Human Services but shares walls with the Department of Corrections/Probation & Parole Division, Community College of Vermont, and a local community action council. The Agency of Human Services is housed in one-location within a short walk or commute to the office location as well.



WHITE RIVER JUNCTION: The White River American Jobs Center is co-located with the Agency of Human Services including Department of Economic Services, Department of Health, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, Veterans Outreach Center, Department of Motor Vehicles, and Department of Corrections. Staff participate in a variety of work groups including local Workforce Development workgroups, Economic Development planning committees, partner workgroups with Department of Education, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, VABIR, Youth Build, Diversion Boards and recovery centers.

VERMONT'S NORTHWEST REGION

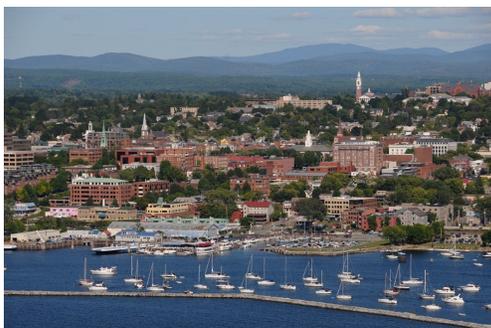
The Northwest Region of Vermont consists of three counties: Chittenden, Franklin, and Grand Isle. This region hosts the Vermont Department of Labor's only federally recognized One Stop American Job Center in Burlington, and another regional American Jobs Center in St. Albans City. This portion of the state is known to many as Vermont's economic driver – with the lowest combined unemployment rate (approximately 2%) and highest rate of labor force participation. Vermont's total population is 625,741 with 156,545 living in Chittenden County, 47,746 residing in Franklin and an additional 6,970 calling Grand Isle county home.

TOTAL CLIENTS: 2,682
VETERANS SERVED: 206
WEGNER-PEYSER SERVICES: 11,874
JOB REFERRALS: 394
EMPLOYERS SERVED: 34
JOB LISTINGS: 652
ADULT SERVICES: 75
DLW SERVICES: 26
YOUTH SERVICES: 67

BURLINGTON & ST. ALBANS: The American Job Centers for the Northwest Region are in Burlington and Saint Albans cities. Burlington's Job Center serves as the only recognized One Stop for the State of Vermont. As the Vermont Department of Labor works to implement the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) our goal is to connect with as many partner agencies, mandatory and not, allowing us to best serve Vermonter's. Services offered by the staff of the Workforce Development Division at VDOL are a priority and we work diligently to keep educated about our communities. Our focus in the Northwest Region is to provide opportunities for employers and job seekers to come together.

The Northwest Region is unique in the sense that there is an Employer Resource Consultant and a Local Veterans Employment Representative who specialize in working with employers in these community. It is our goal to meet and discuss the trends of employment in the local area and develop ways in which we can make the connection between the job seeker and employer. Both roles are responsible for orchestrating job fairs and hiring events held in a local office or the community as well as meeting one on one with job seekers and advocating for their recruitment.

In 2019 the Northwest Region plans to continue focusing on marketing and outreach highlighting the services we offer for job seekers and employers. We plan to continue developing the relationship we established in 2018 with substance abuse treatment centers, alternative education programs whose focus is career development with at-risk youth, pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship, and supporting Veterans.



BURLINGTON, VT



ST. ALBANS CITY, VT

VERMONT'S SOUTHEAST REGION

The southeast region of Vermont hosts two American Job Centers in the towns of Brattleboro and Springfield. With growing community partnerships, Vermont Department of Labor staff in these offices help to serve both Windham and Windsor Counties.

TOTAL CLIENTS: 1,248
VETERANS SERVED: 60
WEGNER-PEYSER SERVICES: 8,137
JOB REFERRALS: 111
EMPLOYERS SERVED: 340
JOB LISTINGS: 431
ADULT SERVICES: 61
DLW SERVICES: 18
YOUTH SERVICES: 92

BRATTLEBORO & SPRINGFIELD: In April of 2018 the Brattleboro American Job Center moved locations. This new site offers an expanded resource center with additional computers and services to support area job seekers and businesses with their needs. Additionally, significant work has been done on the Springfield center to create a more welcoming and comfortable space. Job Seekers in our center now have new desks, a waiting area, and new signage.

In addition to more accessible office spaces, several special projects are underway in this region as well. In partnership with the Community College of Vermont (CCV) and Brattleboro Memorial Hospital, the Department's WIOA team assisted in developing and implementing the first collaborative training to assist job seekers in gaining specialized skills in environmental services which lead to direct employment opportunities with Brattleboro Memorial Hospital.

Employer engagement has also increased in these two offices. After recognizing the number of unfilled openings for fuel burner technicians, the Department's Springfield team assisted in coordinating and funding a training with the Community College of Vermont to support a group of job seekers in obtaining this industry recognized credential. The training was followed by a hiring event featuring 6 Vermont fuel companies which resulted in employment for over 16 previously unemployed across the state.



BRATTLEBORO, VT



SPRINGFIELD, VT

Core Program Updates

DISLOCATED WORKER PROGRAM: The Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) served over 70 Dislocated Worker participants during Program Year 2017. Career and Training Services are offered to Dislocated Workers to assist them in becoming employed in a high demand occupation offering a suitable, livable wage. There are many paths to reemployment. VDOL staff work on a one on one basis with the Dislocated Worker mapping out the best way to become reemployed in permanent full-time.

The Vermont Department of Labor offers a WIOA Eligible Training Provider List which lists approved training providers and individual programs that are eligible for WIOA funding. While the Dislocated Workers may have an extensive work history reflected in their resume, they may find the skills required in their job are no longer current and they need to update their skills to become reemployed.

There was a wide array of occupational skills training Dislocated Workers chose to participate in under WIOA. For example, some Dislocated Workers are now working as Information Security Analysts, Bookkeeping/Accounting, Structural Metal Fabricators and Fitters, Tractor Trailer Truck Drivers, Medical Assistants, Teacher Assistants, Registered Nurses, Web Developers, Network and Computer Systems Administrator, Occupational Therapy Assistants, and the list goes on. This is a sampling of the opportunities chosen by the WIOA Dislocated Worker Population through the Vermont Department of Labor.

YOUTH VISION PROGRAM: Vermont's WIOA Youth Program provides a comprehensive array of high quality services, including career exploration and guidance, continued support of educational attainment, and training in-demand industries and occupations. Vermont's goal is for youth to obtain employment along their career pathway, enrollment in post-secondary education or a registered apprenticeship prior to the end of participation. The youth program provides services to youth with barriers to employment, with special focus on supporting the educational and career pathway of out of school youth.

The Vermont Youth Vision Team is comprised of 8 case managers located across the state. In collaboration with partner agencies and employers, case Managers help to provide opportunity and planning to at-risk youth in order for them to meet their individual goals. Vermont served 300 youth in PY 2017 and 249 in PY 2016. The chart below demonstrates the number of youth served that fell into each of the identifying barriers. Case Managers collaborate with partner agencies and employers to provide youth with wrap around services that will support them during their career pathway. In 2018, the Vermont Department of Labor launched a robust outreach to partner agencies to strengthen its commitment and collaboration to providing all at risk youth with a teaming approach. The teaming approach brings in a variety of support for the individual youth to provide them with opportunities that can change their lives.

**See Appendix A for identified barriers to employment.*

ADULT PROGRAM: The Vermont Department of Labor served over 250 Adult participants during Program Year 2017.

The Vermont Department of Labor collaborates with employers in creating work experiences for individuals and pays the individual an hourly wage while they are working onsite in a job actively. During this time individuals are learning how to work, how to navigate the workplace experience, and build a resume to market themselves for unsubsidized employment.

The Vermont Department of Labor may collaborate with the applicant and an employer to provide On-The-Job Training for a specific period of training time. If this is the case, the employer is reimbursed by for the extra cost of training an individual they otherwise would not have hired. This collaboration is beneficial for both job seekers and employers because the individual is hired into employment, gaining job training and skills and earning a livable wage, while employers can fill vacancies.

There was a wide array of occupational skills training Adults chose to participate in under WIOA based on the opportunities available on the WIOA Eligible Training Provider List. Some adults are now working as Heating and Air Conditional Mechanics and Installers, Tractor Trailer Truck Drivers, Home Health Aids, bookkeeping/Accounting, Teacher Assistants, Medical Records and Health Information Technicians, Cooks, Computer Controlled Machine Tool Operators, Dental Assistants, Computer Operation, and the list goes on. This is a sampling of the opportunities chosen by the WIOA Adult Population through the Vermont Department of Labor.

TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE: The Vermont Department of Labor filed petitions on behalf of adversely affected workers who lost their jobs due to foreign imports or a shift in production to another country. Although the majority of companies were located in Vermont (Windsor, Bennington, Derby, Williston, Essex, and Vernon) employees who were adversely impacted are from every region in Vermont, and beyond Vermont borders into the states of New York, New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Maine.

The Vermont Department of Labor reached out to all trade-impacted workers and offered assistance with re-training in the classroom, distance training, and on the job training. Each training program offered the opportunity to obtain suitable employment at the successful completion of the training program. In TAA situations, VDOL staff work one on one with the individual in creating the path to reemployment and covering the costs of the training programs.

RAPID RESPONSE PROGRAM: The Vermont Department of Labor Rapid Response Teams are available statewide to conduct informational sessions for the adversely affected workers facing a layoff. The available services and benefits include unemployment benefits, job search assistance, and training opportunities. Information is also made available on health insurance options, community services, and local agencies that provide help, advocacy and support to dislocated workers and their families.

The Vermont Department of Labor's staff organize Rapid Response Teams and a response strategy upon receipt of a Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Letter from the employer providing the mandatory notice of layoff or closure. The Rapid Response Team will respond in the same manner to other layoffs and closures which do not warrant a WARN Letter. The Vermont Department of Labor received a total of five WARN Letters during the WIOA 2017 Program Year. In addition, the Rapid Response Teams responded to an additional 20 layoff/closures events. The Vermont Department of Labor Rapid Response Teams respond and provide information to help ease the impact of layoffs and to assure that workers are offered a full range of benefits and services.

MIGRANT SEASONAL FARM WORKER PROGRAM: Vermont has seen an increase in H-2A visa requests within the program year. The state has approximately 52 employers participating in the program currently, up from 47 the previous program year. These employers placed 89 job orders resulting in the certification of just over 600 foreign workers.

Outreach to Agricultural employers in Vermont has increased significantly by expanding the partnership with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture to provide overall improved service to the farming community. Continuing to develop a strong working relationship with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, has resulted in relationships with other Agencies including: Department of Health, Division of Fire Safety; Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development, staff from the Vermont Congressional delegation, the UVM Extension Service, and the Vegetable, Berry, and Fruit grower's associations.

VDOL also conducted initial pre-occupancy housing inspections and assisted employers with the identification and resolution of any problems discovered. Unresolved issues are reported to the Chicago National Processing Center (CNPC).

Waivers

Vermont had no waivers in place during Program Year 2017.

Effectiveness in Serving Employers

The two approaches the State of Vermont has chosen for measuring the Effectiveness in Serving Employers are:

1. Retention with the same employer in Quarter 2 and Quarter 4

Method—this measure is calculated using wage records uploaded to Vermont JobLink, identifying those with wage records in both quarters with the employer FEIN.

2. Repeat Business Customers Rate

Method—This measure is calculated in Vermont JobLink. Employer contacts and services are recorded in the employer's account and the Employer Contact Tracking notes section. Staff enter a detailed description of the service provided, along with dates and follow-up info.

Research Projects

The Vermont SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) Employment and Training Pilot Study, known as Jobs for Independence (JFI), is a statewide program. The program is designed to target eligible 3Squares VT applicants or current recipients who are mandatory work registrants with significant barriers to employment including homelessness, addiction, and/or mental health issues or prior criminal convictions. This Pilot Study was commissioned by the US Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service and is being offered in ten states throughout the United States. The study team is being led by Mathematica Policy Research. The pilot was developed to test whether new types of job search, training, education, intensive case management, clinical support, barrier reduction and other supportive services would impact recipients ability to obtain good jobs and moving them toward self-sufficiency.

Individuals are referred to a 3Squares VT Orientation at VDOL and are introduced to the Jobs for Independence Program which provides enhanced employment and training services. Those individuals electing to participate in the program are randomly computer assigned to one of two research groups. The Treatment group will receive enhanced and comprehensive clinical assessments, counseling and supportive services which are provided by the VT Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Assistance Program counselor. The participant and counselor develop an individualized work plan based on assessment and participants are referred to community partners for barrier reduction services. The Control Group will participate in the regular 3Squares VT Employment and Training Program only. If the individual is interested, they may access some of the enhanced services through community partners that would normally be available to them if they meet eligibility requirements.

The program design included collaboration among community partners including: Vermont Department of Labor, Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Vermont Department of Children and Families-Economic Services Division, Community College of Vermont, Vermont Community Action Agencies and Vermont Adult Learning in addition to other supporting organizations. Each of twelve regions in the State established a JFI Team that met monthly to collaborate on outreach efforts, enrollments, case management activities and

positive outcomes for the region.

The Jobs for Independence Program enrolled more than 3000 individuals in the pilot study. The initial phase of the program began in 2016 and the service delivery period will end in December 2018. The next phase of the pilot study is data collection and reporting which will last through 2021. The goal is to identify if the enhanced services impacted participant employment and self-sufficiency.

Customer Satisfaction

Continuous efforts to understand business needs through surveys and direct contact help VDOL better connect workers with available jobs. One of VDOL's Veterans representatives devotes 95% of his time building relationship with local area businesses. We are working with our VT Division of Vocational Rehabilitation partners to develop a stronger relationship with employers through a system that enhances both our organizations ability to nimbly react to employer needs in a real time fashion.

Progress Update: Achieving the State's Strategic Vision and Goals

Vermont has made progress in each of the state's six goals described in the WIOA state plan.

Goal 1. *Maximize equitable access to workforce development services through a seamless, coordinated delivery system that provides a quality, consistent experience for any jobseeker or Vermont employer.*

The Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) maintains an inventory of all workforce and education training opportunities across state government and community partners. As the designated workforce leader of the state and One-Stop Operator, VDOL has been able to identify areas of duplication and potential inefficiencies across all partners to focus efforts. Stronger partnerships and alignment with Vocational Rehabilitation have helped meet employers' needs faster and maximize the successful participation of all Vermonters in available education and training programs leading to employment or advancement in employment. VDOL has also led efforts to develop common intake forms among one-stop partners and joint referral processes. In several regional offices, VDOL and VR have physically co-located in order to provide more seamless service delivery.

Goal 2: *Connect individuals to the training and supports they need to enter an occupation and progress on career pathways resulting in a livable wage.*

VDOL has expanded partnerships with state agencies and community programs serving those with the highest economic need and those individuals with barriers to employment, including people with disabilities, new Americans, women in poverty, displaced homemakers, people who are homeless, offenders, lower-skilled adult learners, and Vermonters in recovery. In partnership with state TANF and SNAP programs, the Department of Corrections, and Agency of Human Services, VDOL has developed more effective approaches to connect those living in poverty to the workforce development system. For example, our partnership with the Department for Children and Families (DCF) to provide adult education and training services for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) beneficiaries, non-custodial parents who owe child support, and Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) has been extremely successful, often with performance measures exceeding 90%. Another example of success is our partnership with local addiction recovery centers, resulting in regularly scheduled on-site workshops and counseling for participants looking to become employed in the near future.

The Department of Labor has worked to expand the availability of sector-based training programs in manufacturing, construction, and health care through apprenticeships, internships, class-based training, and other on-the-job opportunities. These are sectors with occupations in high-demand that pay relatively high wages com-

pared to other in-demand occupations in the state. In partnership with the Agency of Education, Adult Education and Literacy Programs, and Adult Career and Technical Education providers, VDOL has helped ensure that career pathways have entrance points for lower-skilled adults and are connected to adult education programs with outreach specific to this population.

Goal 3: *Strengthen the Vermont economy by working with state and private partners to make data-driven changes that increase the number of women and other under-represented populations employed in the skilled trades, STEM fields, advanced manufacturing and other Vermont priority sectors.*

Nearly all labor force support programs regularly collect, analyze, and report on labor market, workforce development, and training data by gender. VDOL works with other state agencies, departments and community partners to identify and support education, training, or economic development initiatives to reduce occupational segregation in priority sectors. Vermont Works for Women was recently awarded a federal grant to expand electrical apprenticeship opportunities for women. VDOL supported that grant application and is committed to helping to ensure the program is successful.

The Agency of Education has been working extensively with schools on expanding career exposure and work-based-learning opportunities for students in grades 7-12. This includes outreach and alignment with Career Technical Education (CTE) providers, postsecondary education providers, and employers to ensure that student personalized learning plans are informed by broad exposure to a full range of careers, including STEM fields and non-traditional careers for women.

Goal 4: *Ensure all students who graduate from high school are able to pursue and complete post-secondary education, training, apprenticeships or career opportunities, with the education and skills necessary to keep Vermonters competitive in the economic sectors critical to the Vermont economy.*

VDOL and the Agency of Education (AOE) have worked together to establish and promote career pathways, focusing on priority pathways and in-demand industries and occupations. A great deal of progress has been made in connecting skills learned in school with their application in the workplaces of the future.

VDOL has increased outreach to youth who are leaving school to engage them in workforce development opportunities, specifically WIOA youth and adult activities. In a few regions of the state, VDOL is supporting demonstration projects that involve some form of job coaching available to students transitioning from secondary to post-secondary education, or secondary to direct employment.

As the designated Apprenticeship Agency for the state, VDOL has worked hard to expand apprenticeship programs and opportunities over the last year. These efforts resulted in 60% increase in new apprentices.

Goal 5: *Align the workforce development system to the needs of employers, as well as job seekers, through systematic and ongoing engagement and partnership.*

A number of efforts are underway to support Goal 5, including:

- Establishing protocols for VDOL and DVR to coordinate outreach and candidate referral to employers.
- Promoting the coordination of services from VDOL and DVR offered to employers to support a successful placement.
- Expanding joint VDOL and DVR marketing and outreach efforts to the employer community, including jointly sponsored career fairs and business recognition events and regular meetings between VDOL and DVR employment staff to share contacts and local outreach activities.
- Expanding partnerships with the local workforce development leaders to identify skill gaps and develop training programs to meet the staffing needs of local businesses.

- Elevating the use of work experiences (progressive employment; on-the-job-training (OJT), internships, pre-apprenticeship, etc.) to help job seekers build skills that meet the local employer workforce demand.
- Ensuring that K-12 and Adult Education and Literacy providers are aware of State workforce needs, high-priority industries and employment sectors, and sectors with high employer demand so that they may incorporate this information into their ongoing work on personalized learning plans and career development with adult learners.

Goal 6: *Expand Vermont's labor force by helping more Vermonters enter the labor market and relocating out-of-state workers to meet employer's needs.*

VDOL has increased focus on at-risk youth, ex-offenders, individuals in recovery, and other individuals with barriers to employment to support their initial, continuing, and extended participation in the labor market. VDOL has also prioritized activities that retrain and retain older workers in the labor force after traditional retirement or temporary exit from the workforce. In December of 2018, VDOL will launch the state's Returnship Program that will connect individuals who have work experience, but have been out of the labor force, with limited duration work experiences as a means for promoting successful re-employment.

VDOL continues to work with the Agency of Commerce and Community Development to create and promote strategies to convert visitors, tourists, out-of-state college students and Vermonters living outside of the state to full-time residents and workers.

Progress Update: Implementing Sector Strategies and Career Pathways

With the assistance of a DWG Sector Partnership Grant, VDOL has helped make significant progress in the development and implementation of sector strategies. VDOL's Labor Market Information (LMI) division produced region-specific reports that show how jobs are distributed by industry, occupational demand, and other types of relevant labor market information. Unlike similar reports in the past, these were created by Career and Technical Education (CTE) Center Regions instead of by economic development region. This allowed for a more natural analysis of where gaps and opportunities existed in secondary and post-secondary education and training programs. The funding also supported regional convenings of employers, training providers, and workforce service delivery providers to present and discuss these reports. In a few cases, action plans for bolstering career pathways in specific sectors were developed locally. Additionally, the grant supported outreach material for employers and participants to facilitate the inclusion of new Returnship opportunities into existing career pathways. Finally, Vermont's Talent Pipeline Management Project was supported, to further engage businesses in the construction, healthcare, and manufacturing sectors in developing better defined pipelines that lead to in-demand jobs in their industry.

The Agency of Education is responsible for coordinating the development of career pathways in Vermont. This year, the legislature defined Career Pathways in Act 189, and directed the State Workforce Development Board to oversee the formal recognition of Career Pathways developed by the agency. The Board created a Career Pathways Committee and charged it with reviewing and approving state-endorsed Career Pathways that reflect a shared vision across multiple sectors and agencies for improving employment outcomes, meeting employers' and workers' needs, and leveraging available State and federal funding. Members of the Committee represent stakeholders across the business community, higher and career technical education, veterans' services, and state government, and is chaired by Eileen Illuzzi (North Country Career Center) and vice chaired by Melissa Hersh (Answers Within LLC). The full Committee has met twice since its appointment to examine and define its charge and scope in reviewing, and approving Career Pathways, and is undertaking work to establish additional minimal criteria for all Career Pathways beyond the statutory definitions in H.919 (Act 189). The Committee will also establish an official approval process, better define its collaborative relationship with

the Agency of Education in developing Career Pathways, and create strategies to publicize approved Career Pathways.

Progress Update: Use of Governor's Reserve and Related Activities

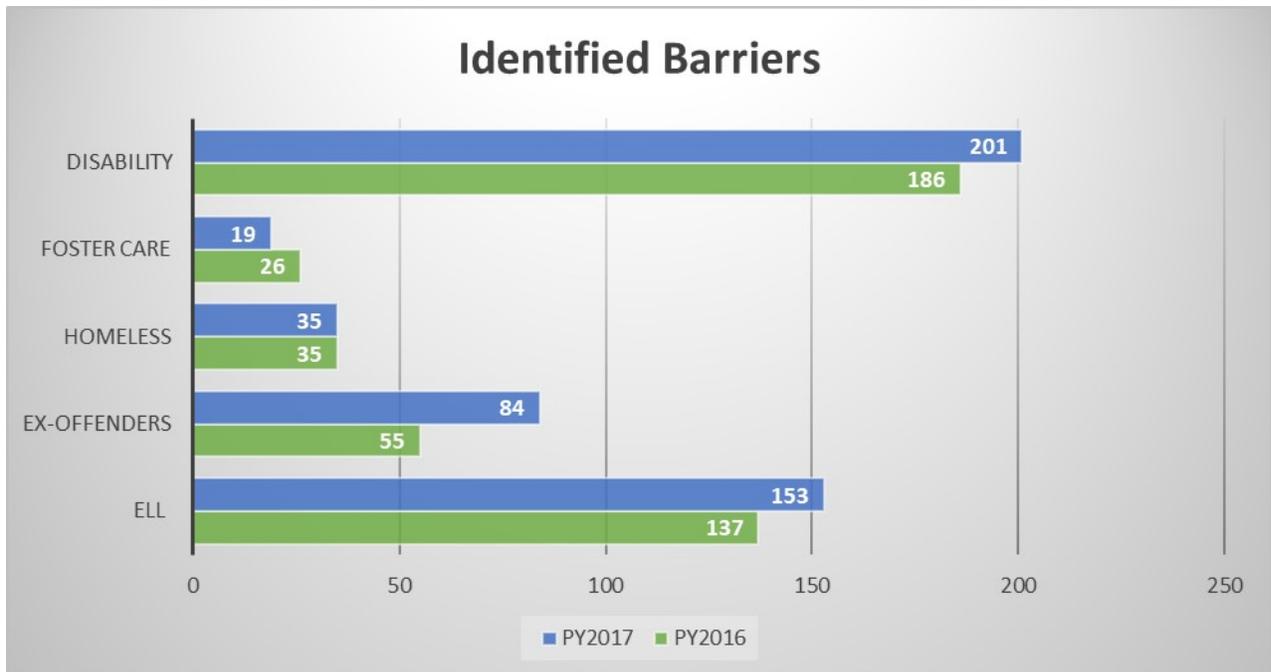
As a single-region state receiving funding according to the small-state formula, Vermont's 15% reserve isn't very robust. Most of the money was used to support required statewide activities, including:

- Required rapid response activities;
- Disseminating training, apprenticeship, and employment information;
- Distributing examples of effective service delivery strategies and promising practices to serve workers and job seekers;
- Updating information of physical and programmatic accessibility for individuals with disabilities;
- Providing technical assistance to one-stop partners in carrying out activities described in the State Plan and required activities under WIOA; including coordination and alignment of data systems used to carry out the requirements of this Act;
- Assisting local areas by providing information on and support for the effective development, convening, and implementation of industry and sector partnerships; and
- Operating a fiscal and management accountability information system, based on guidelines established by the Secretary.

In order to meet federal requirements concerning the role of the One-Stop Operator, funding for that contract comes from the 15% reserve. The substantial progress in coordinating and aligning workforce services to jobseekers and employers that Vermont has achieved through comprehensive One-Stop Operation development was paid for with these funds.

Appendix

A. The Vermont Department of Labor's Youth Program assess annually the barriers to employment clients identify.



B. WIOA Performance Measures, Goals and Outcomes (2016 & 2017)

WIOA Performance Measures	Negotiated Goals PY 2016	Final Outcomes PY 2016	Negotiated Goals PY 2017	Final Outcomes PY 2017
WIOA Title I Adults		Data not yet available		
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	72.00%		72.50%	74.10%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	60.30%		63%	60%
Median Earnings	\$4,509.00		\$4,600.00	\$5,045.00
Credential Attainment Rate	59.20%		61.00%	73.80%
Measurable Skill Gains	Baseline		Baseline	40.80%
WIOA Title I Dislocated Workers		Data not yet available		
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	69.00%		73.00%	89.60%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	70.30%		72.00%	75.60%
Median Earnings	\$7,200.00		\$7,250.00	#####
Credential Attainment Rate	60.00%		61.00%	81.30%
Measurable Skill Gains	Baseline		Baseline	35%
WIOA Title I Youth		Data not yet available		
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	40.00%		41.00%	62.30%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	50.00%		51.00%	57.10%
Median Earnings	Baseline		Baseline	3,138
Credential Attainment Rate	35.20%		36.00%	35.00%
Measurable Skill Gains	Baseline		Baseline	20.50%
WIOA Title III Labor Exchange (LEX)*		Data not yet available		
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	60%		62.00%	64.70%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	55.10%		58.00%	58.50%
Median Earnings	\$5,111.00		\$5,200.00	\$4,927.00
Effectiveness in Serving Employers				
Retention with Same Employer in the 2nd and 4th Quarters After Exit Rate	Baseline		Baseline	58%
Repeat Business Customer Rate	Baseline		Baseline	51%

B. WIOA Performance Measures, Goals and Outcomes (2018 & 2019)

WIOA Performance Measures	Negotiated Goals PY 2018	Negotiated Goals PY 2019
WIOA Title I Adults		
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	70.0%	71.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	64.0%	66.0%
Median Earnings	\$ 4,530.00	\$ 4,620.00
Credential Attainment Rate	61.0%	62.0%
Measurable Skills Gains	Baseline	Baseline
WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker		
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	78.0%	\$ 79.00
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	73.0%	\$ 74.50
Median Earnings	\$ 8,051.00	\$ 8,212.00
Credential Attainment Rate	61.0%	62.0%
Measurable Skills Gains	Baseline	Baseline
WIOA Title I Youth		
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	50.0%	55.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	50.0%	55.0%
Median Earnings	Baseline	Baseline
Credential Attainment Rate	35.5%	38.0%
Measurable Skills Gains	Baseline	Baseline
WIOA Title III Labor Exchange		
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	65.0%	66.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	58.0%	59.0%
Median Earnings	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,200.00
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Baseline	Baseline