

# Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act



Program Year  
2018 Annual  
Report

For Vermont

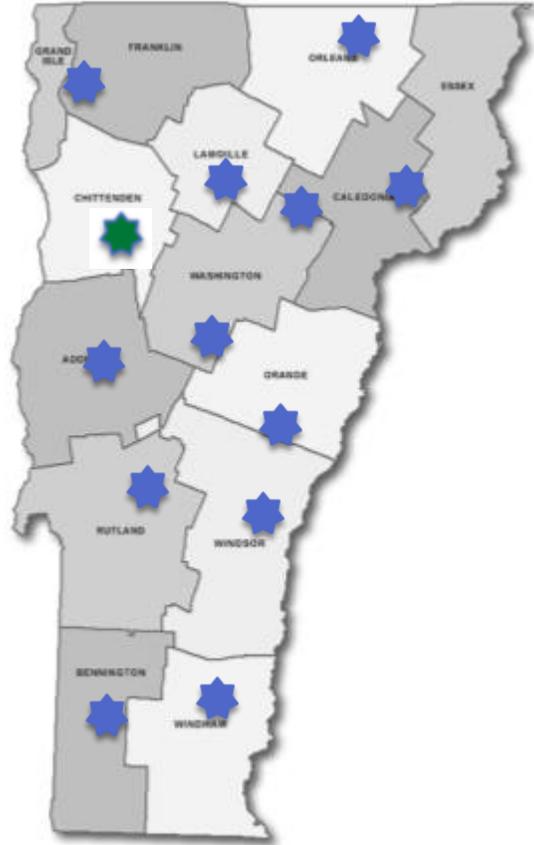
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**One-Stop American Job Center**

**Regional and Affiliated American Job Center**

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## Introduction

In accordance with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), each state that receives funding under WIOA Title I (Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker Programs) and Title III (Wagner-Peyser Labor Exchange Programs) must prepare and submit an annual report of performance progress to the U.S. Secretary of Labor. This narrative provides an opportunity for the Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) to describe progress toward its strategic vision and goals for the state's workforce system under WIOA.

WIOA became effective in 2016 and is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services so they can succeed in the labor force and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. It also established a structure and relationship between national, state, and local workforce investment activities to increase occupational skill attainment, employment, retention and earnings while improving the quality, productivity and competitiveness of the workforce and reducing welfare dependency. This program year (PY) 2018 WIOA Annual Report provides a summary of Vermont's Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Programs from July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019.



The Workforce Development Division within VDOL has adopted a statewide approach to partnership in order to maximize workforce development resources and provide exceptional customer service. Additionally, Vermont's Statewide Workforce Development Board (SWDB) oversees implementation and delivery of WIOA services, ensuring compliance and accountability. Our One-Stop American Job Centers (AJC) are the cornerstone of service delivery for jobseekers and employers – offering services to customers throughout the state and maximizing resources for job development, job search assistance, workforce expansion, and economic development.



Strong interagency partnerships are essential in developing and maintaining a successful workforce development delivery system. VDOL has been working diligently to strengthen interdepartmental collaborations to ensure that all partners are working towards the same goal: to increase the number and skill level of available workers in Vermont.

## Statewide Workforce Development Overview

### One-Stop American Job Centers

Vermont's federally designated One-Stop American Jobs Center and eleven local affiliates (referred to as Career Resource Centers) are located throughout the state. Staff provide WIOA one-stop services to local businesses, as well as to individuals who are employed, underemployed, and unemployed. Our staff work with state agency partners, education and training providers, and community organizations to deliver a variety of employment and training services to meet the needs of each community.



### Vermont's Workforce Mission

Governor Phil Scott has made it a top priority of his administration to expand and strengthen Vermont's labor force. He tasked VDOL with leading a cross-agency labor force expansion effort to meet this aim. The three goals the State has set include: (1) Increasing the labor force participation rate of Vermonters, (2) Recruit and relocate more workers to Vermont, and (3) Assist employers in accessing and retaining skilled workers.

In 2018, the Governor reaffirmed the State's vision to create a workforce development system that is a highly visible and accessible network of programs and strategies designed to increase employment, retention, and earnings for all Vermonters. For program year 2018, the State's workforce goals were:

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.
2. Connect individuals to the training and supports they need to enter an occupation and progress on career pathways resulting in a livable wage.
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.
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.
5. Align the workforce development system to the needs of employers, as well as job seekers, through systematic and ongoing engagement and partnership.
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.

## Vermont JobLink

Vermont JobLink (VJL) is Vermont’s online career, employment, and resource center. It gives our customers – jobseekers and employers – free 24/7 access to many of the same services available through the One-Stop Job Center and regional Career Resource Centers. Users are able to view current labor market information, research training and education opportunities and resources, explore career pathways, access employment preparation tools (like resume writing assistance etc.), and post or explore current job postings. VJL also serves as VDOL’s case management system and performance tracking and reporting tool. VDOL is at the start of comprehensive system analysis in preparation for an upcoming system procurement process in 2021.



## Core Program Updates

### Dislocated Worker Program

The VDOL staff served 95 Dislocated Worker participants during Program Year 2018. Career and training services are offered to Dislocated Workers to assist them in becoming employed in a high-demand occupation offering a competitive wage. With many paths to reemployment, VDOL staff work one-on-one with the Dislocated Worker, mapping out the best way to become reemployed in a permanent, full-time position.

WIOA Performance Measures	PY 2017 Actual		PY 18 Goals	PY 18 Actual
<b>WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker</b>				
Participants Served	81			95
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	89.6%		78.0%	88.9%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	75.6%		73.0%	78.1%
Median Earnings	\$ 10,606.00		\$ 8,051.00	\$ 10,493.00
Credential Attainment Rate	81.3%		61.0%	73.2%
Measurable Skills Gains	34.5		baseline	73.9%

VDOL maintains a WIOA Eligible Training Provider List that showcases 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 require different skills to become reemployed in a different occupation or to advance in their career pathway.

There was a wide array of occupational skills training Dislocated Workers chose to participate in using WIOA funds. These trainings helped participants land employment in positions with labor market growth, including: information security analyst, bookkeeper, accountant, 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 more.

## Vermont Youth Employment Program (VYEP)

VDOL conducted a soft launch of its Vermont Youth Employment Program (VYEP) this summer. In collaboration with community partners, training providers, and employers, VDOL funded and supported approximately 350 youth in paid work opportunities across the state. Youth between the ages of 16-24 enrolled in occupational and workforce readiness skills trainings, participated in experiences to help them improve their social, civic and leadership skills, and were matched with paid work experiences with local employers.

WIOA Performance Measures	PY 2017 Actual		PY 18 Goals	PY 18 Actual
<b>WIOA Title I Youth</b>				
Participants Served	302			337
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	62.3%		50.0%	72.4%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	57.1%		50.0%	59.2%
Median Earnings	\$ 3,138.00		baseline	\$ 4,209.00
Credential Attainment Rate	35.0%		35.5%	56.4%
Measurable Skills Gains	20.5		baseline	52.3%

VDOL is excited to continue this work year around in PY 2019, in collaboration with community partners and employers and the young people of Vermont. In state fiscal year 2020, VDOL was awarded \$150,000 to help serve youth through this program who aren't WIOA eligible. We anticipate this braided funding will help us reach more WIOA eligible youth and serve more employers in the current federal program year.

### Vermont Barn Painting Collaboration



Under the new VYEP, VDOL developed a barn painting project in partnership with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture in an effort to beautify the barns of Vermont. In collaboration with VTYouthWorks, VDOL paid eligible youth to paint the Morgan Horse Barn in Weybridge, VT. This youth cohort were given the opportunity to develop skills, receive industry certifications, get paid to work, and be part of something bigger than themselves. Another collaboration took place in Cambridge, VT, involving partnerships with YouthBuild, the Vermont Youth Conservation Corp (VYCC), Agency of Agriculture, and the local high school and career and technical education center.

In Lamoille County, the VYEP program combined the efforts of VDOL, ReSOURCE VT, Vocational Rehabilitation, Lamoille Restorative Center, Vermont Association for Business, Industry, and Rehabilitation (VABIR) to provide an action packed, seven-week summer program in both Morrisville and Hardwick. Participants benefitted from classroom learning, an experiential 'Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program', professional guest speakers, company tours, and work experiences at local businesses.

In the southern region of Vermont, a robust program was developed for youth in Windham County. The program offered a diverse opportunity to include an enhanced teen driver's safety course, a Governors Career

Readiness Certification, job readiness workshops, and a summer work experience with a local employer. The program allowed youth to have hands on experience while receiving related instruction. This effort was born from a collaboration between VDOL, the Community College of Vermont (CCV), Windham County Sheriff's Department, and local employers.

## Adult Program

VDOL WIOA staff served over 275 Adult participants during program year 2018. Working with employers to create work experiences for individuals, paying the individual an hourly wage while they are working onsite, VDOL is developing stronger partnerships with employers in helping to create successful, long-term employment outcomes.

WIOA Performance Measures	PY 2017 Actual		PY 18 Goals	PY 18 Actual
<b>WIOA Title I Adult</b>				
Participants Served	282			275
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	74.1%		70.0%	72.7%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	60.0%		64.0%	63.5%
Median Earnings	\$ 5,045.00		\$ 4,530.00	\$ 6,154.00
Credential Attainment Rate	73.8%		61.0%	64.5%
Measurable Skills Gains	40.8		baseline	71.7%

During a paid work experience, individuals are learning how to perform the occupational tasks required, navigate the workplace, troubleshoot challenging workplace experiences and relationships, recognize and seize professional growth opportunities, and build a resume and references to market themselves for future unsubsidized employment.

Sometimes, VDOL works with the participant and an employer to deliver an On-The-Job Training (OJT) for a set duration of time. In this case, the employer is reimbursed by for the extra cost of training an individual- often about 50% of the set wage. This arrangement is beneficial for both jobseekers 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 are a wide array of occupational skills training Adult participants may elect to participate in using WIOA training funds (see Attachment A, Eligible Training Provider List). Participants who have completed these trainings are now working as heating and air conditional mechanics and installers, welders, insurance consultants, tractor trailer truck drivers, home health assistants, LNAs, bookkeepers, accountants, teacher assistants, EMTs, medical records and health information technicians, chefs, machine tool operators, dental assistants, computer programmers, and more!

## Labor Exchange Services (Wagner-Peyser Program)

Vermont’s one-stop service delivery system provides self- and staff-assisted services so that workers, jobseekers, and businesses can locate and access resources to fulfill their employment needs in easy-to-find locations. Services are available virtually at VermontJobLink.com or in one of our twelve regional career resource centers.

Staff at our centers assist customers by determining current labor market information, job seeker assessment of skill levels, abilities, aptitudes, career guidance when appropriate, job search workshops and referral to training may be available. Veterans receive priority referral to jobs and training as well as special employment services and assistance. In addition, the system provides specialized attention and service to individuals with specific barriers and disabilities, migrant and seasonal farm-workers, ex-offenders, youth, minorities and older workers

### Serving Individual Jobseekers

The types of labor exchange services individuals can access include viewing local labor market information, career pathway exploration, job search assistance, job referrals, placement assistance, resume and cover letter writing assistance, mock interviews and interview preparation, work readiness and employment tips, and specific reemployment services for unemployment insurance claimants. Screenings and assessments are also available to determine appropriate service referrals and help individuals enroll in available employment, training, education, and social assistance programs.

In 2018, VDOL served 5,857 individuals in staff-assisted labor exchange services.

WIOA Performance Measures	PY 2017 Actual		PY 18 Goals	PY 18 Actual
<b>WIOA Title III Labor Exchange</b>				
Participants Served	9188			5857
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	64.7%		65.0%	65.1%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	5805.0%		58.0%	57.5%
Median Earnings	\$ 4,927.00		\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,326.00

### Serving Employers

Staff are also available to help employers meet their workforce needs. Services provided to business customers include: taking and posting job orders, reviewing and editing job descriptions, referring or “matching” job seekers to available job openings, recruitment services like targeted job fairs and customized hiring events, screening of qualified applicants, referrals in creating job accommodations and use of assistive technologies, providing regional industry and occupational wage information, developing trainings and customized skills development opportunities, creating or expanding internship and registered apprenticeship opportunities, assistance in managing reductions in force and coordinating rapid response activities, accessing relevant workforce tax credits and fidelity bonds, and more.

In program year 2018, the federal Departments overseeing WIOA began piloting three approaches to measuring the effectiveness of state’s in serving employers through WIOA programs. States may choose to report on two

of the three indicators selected: (1) retention with the same employer in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarter after exit (the percentage of participants who exit a service and are employed with the same employer in the second and fourth quarters after exit), (2) employer penetration rate (percentage of employers who use core program services out of all the businesses represented in the state), and (2) repeat business customer rate (the percentage of businesses who receive services that use core program services more than once).

WIOA Performance Measures	PY 2017 Actual		PY 18 Goals	PY 18 Actual
<b>Effectiveness in Serving Employers</b>				
Retention with Same Employer in the 2nd and 4th quarters after Exit Rate	57.9%		baseline	58.2%
Employer Penetration Rate				
Repeat Business Customers Rate	51.1%		baseline	24.8%

In program year 2018, Vermont selected “retention with the same employer” and “repeat business customer rate” as the indicators we would report. We are working to establish data sharing agreements with the Agency of Education and the Department for Vocational Rehabilitation or capture and report on their employer service outcomes through WIOA Title I and III programs in the next year.

### **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.

VDOL reached out to all trade-impacted workers and offered assistance with retraining 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**

VDOL 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 benefit application assistance, 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.

VDOL 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. VDOL received a total of five WARN Letters during the 2017 program year. In addition, the Rapid Response Teams responded to an additional 15 layoff/closures events. 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. 53 Trade-affected dislocated workers were provided with re-training or wage support, 60% of whom were earning wages within 6 months.

## **Apprenticeship Program**

The Vermont Registered Apprenticeship Program is housed in the Workforce Development Division of VDOL. The apprenticeship program continues to expand with more than 375 employer sponsors participating in the program with an enrollment of more than 1,700 registered apprentices. The largest apprenticeship program is the Electrical Apprenticeship followed closely by the Plumbing Apprenticeship. In partnership with Vermont Technical College, classes are offered to students throughout the State of Vermont. Most classes are facilitated in a traditional, in-person class setting, however, some of the plumbing classes are delivered over the Vermont Technical College telepresence model to less populated areas of the state.



This fall there were approximately 750 students enrolled in the electrical and plumbing classes. Vermont has registered apprenticeship programs in over thirty different occupations. Some of the occupations include Child Care Development Specialist, Utility Line Worker, Tramway Maintenance Technician, Advanced Machinist Toolmaker, Maintenance Electronic Technician, VT State Trooper, VT Correctional Officer, Police Officer and Phlebotomist.

The VDOL received a State Apprenticeship Expansion grant that promotes collaboration with our partners to expand the registered apprenticeship program. VDOL partners include CCV, Vermont Technical College, Vocational Rehabilitation, Agency of Education, and Agency of Commerce and Community Development. New programs have been developed for the following occupations: LPN, Advanced Manufacturing, Certified Production Technician, Medical Assistant and Pharmacy Technician. This partnership trains Vermonters for high-demand occupations and allows them to earn college credits at little to no-cost to the apprentice.

## **Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) Incentive Program**

As of October 1, 2019, VDOL developed a fair and equitable performance incentive awards program. The performance incentive awards program brings attention to veterans and other eligible individuals as a group with special employment needs and is intended to reinforce federal regulations which support priority of services to veterans. Eligibility is interpreted to best recognize Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialist, Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) staff, local Workforce Centers and any other individual who provides employment and training services to veterans under WIOA, to include labor exchange staff funded by the Wagner-Peyser Act or staff of One-Stop partner agencies which put forth extraordinary and commendable efforts on behalf of Veterans.

The Veterans Performance Incentive Awards Program will encourage an increase in employment services to veterans and other eligible individuals, innovative approaches to serving them, expanded program integration, increases in performance outcomes and more advocacies within the employer community.



Vermont as well as The Job for Veterans State Grant designated approximately \$4,919.63 to be available for performance incentive awards, with no additional cost to the state or taking funds away from the JVSG grant. Approximately \$3,000.00 will be used for individual cash awards and approximately \$1,919.63 to select for regional AJC winners.

**Hilton Honors Program-**The VDOL is partnering with Hilton to offer up to 100,000 Honors Points, on an “as needed, lifetime” basis, via its Honors Program, for qualified veterans (including spouses) actively seeking employment in the state of Vermont. These points can be used in 24 states across the nation for free night stay while job searching, interviewing or attending job fairs. Veterans will be military-connected members such as active duty transitioning service members, active National Guard/Reserve members, and military spouses, as well as, any era of military service. The Hilton Honors program which will become effective October 1, 2019, and the VDOL are working together to provide military veteran jobseekers lodging.

## Vermont Regional Updates and Progress Reports

### Vermont’s Southwest Region (Bennington, Rutland, and Middlebury)

The Southwestern VDOL region serves Bennington, Rutland and Addison counties. With landmass covering 2,431 total square miles (Bennington 678 square miles, Rutland 945 square miles, Addison 808 square miles), the tri-county region boasts 64,228 total labor force numbers and has experienced an overall low UI rate consistent with the VT State Average this past annual reporting period. All VDOL offices in this region are a proud partner of the American Job Center network.

<b>Bennington, Rutland &amp; Middlebury</b>	
<b>TOTAL CLIENTS:</b>	<b>2229</b>
<b>VETERANS SERVED:</b>	<b>167</b>
<b>WAGNER-PEYSER SERVICES:</b>	<b>5929</b>
<b>JOB REFERRALS:</b>	<b>791</b>
<b>EMPLOYERS SERVED:</b>	<b>986</b>
<b>JOB LISTINGS:</b>	<b>434</b>
<b>ADULT SERVICES:</b>	<b>335</b>
<b>DISLOCATED WORKER SERVICES:</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>YOUTH SERVICES:</b>	<b>505</b>

Bennington county’s labor force is served by VDOL’s office conveniently located in the State Office Complex in the town of Bennington and serves 2 distinct labor market areas totaling annual average labor force numbers of 23,433. The first is the defined Bennington Micropolitan NECTA with labor force numbers of 11,793 and Manchester defined labor market area with labor force numbers of 11,640.

Rutland county and defined Micropolitan NECTA labor market area, is served by a VT Department of Labor office centrally located in the city of Rutland with annual average labor force numbers totaling 22,237. The office is located within the downtown business district in the state office complex on Merchants Row.

With average annual labor force numbers of 18,655, Addison county and the defined Middlebury labor market area is served by a VDOL office located on Route 7 in the town of Middlebury. The Middlebury VDOL office is not co-located within a state office complex. The office is however, located in the same building as the Addison County Economic Development Corp, the designated regional development corporation.

### **BENNINGTON Career Resource Center**

The Bennington VDOL office has remained uniquely co-located with Vermont Vocational Rehabilitation in the same suite within the State of Vermont office complex. The Association for Training and Development (A4TD), a required WIOA partners, serves low-income Vermonters over the age of 55 and is also co-located with VDOL in the Bennington office. VSAC adult outreach counselor for the region regularly utilizes the office on a scheduled basis. Northland Job Corp



outreach and admissions counselor has also enjoyed the benefit of working out of the Bennington VDOL office on a scheduled basis. This co-location model affords a unique client and staff experience. Clients jointly working with agencies, receive collaborative wrap around services nearly on demand as needed. Cross agency referrals are simplistic and provide opportunities for agencies to better guide service delivery on behalf of clients. A direct result of co-location, agency staff working in the suite experience natural teaming synergies greatly impacting effectiveness of forging professional working relationships for the benefit of clients and employers in a positive way.

With active participation in Bennington County Workforce & Ed (Regional WIB), Bennington County Industrial Corp / Bennington County Regional Commission, Bennington County Economic Development Partners, Alliance for Community Transformations, and the Bennington County Regional Chamber, the VDOL office is an integral part of the local workforce development system. Staff support two career and job expo events per year and an array of projects such as: April Career Month, Sophomore Summit, MAU Middle School career fair, Financial Reality Fair, Emerging Leaders, Junior Experience (transitional pathways event), Transition Fair, Mock Interview Fair, and various school related activities upon request that supports personal learning plan development under ACT 77 – as well as job and career pathway exploration. The Bennington VDOL office also provided weekly onsite career and job exploration services with Junior and Senior students of Mount Anthony Union High School upon the request of the high school guidance department. In addition, the Bennington VDOL staff hosted several hiring events in the office.

## **RUTLAND Career Resource Center**



The Rutland VDOL office is centrally located in the state office building in Rutland that also houses strategic workforce development partners that includes VT Vocational Rehabilitation, Economic Services and Department of Children and Families. Co-located within the VDOL office are VT Adult Learning staff serving TANF recipients, VSAC Outreach Coordinator, A4TD staff, and Northland Job Corps Outreach coordinator. VDOL and VT Vocational Rehabilitation remain committed to move towards a co-located model in effort to replicate the model that exists in Bennington.

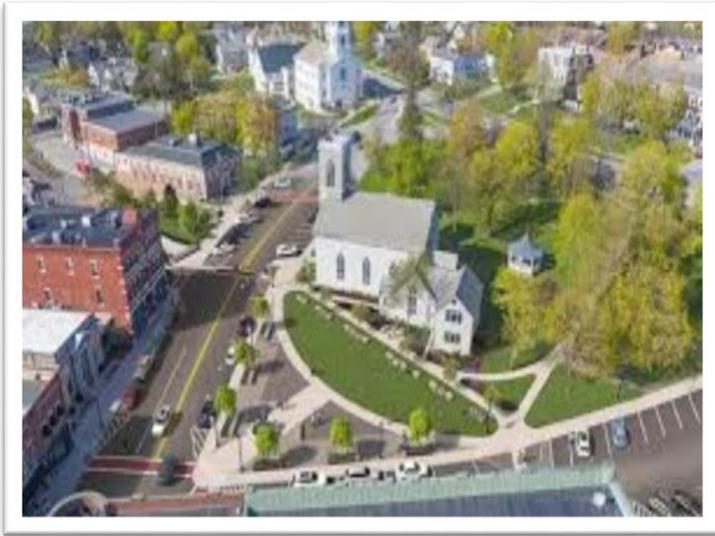
Rutland VDOL has been an integral part of the local workforce development system in the county. VDOL staff have remained actively engaged with Rutland Regional WIB, Stafford Technical Center Regional Advisory Board, Rutland Regional WIB, Rutland Economic Development Corp., Rutland Regional Chamber of Commerce and Project Vision. The Rutland VDOL office supports 2 large job fairs per year, Sophomore Summit, Your Journey Starts Here, Transition Fair, Financial Reality Fair, Castleton University Career and Job Fair, workshops, and various hiring events in the AJC office.

The Rutland VDOL AJC office continues to be heavily involved in supporting a pilot initiative by the Rutland Regional WIB entitled “Real Careers in Rutland County” and funded by VDOL. 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 graduate from high school without a transition plan. They will work directly with a coordinator whom will help them identify a career pathway and potentially training within the greater Rutland area. The other component of the pilot project will work with young adults whom have already left school and are currently unemployed or underemployed. Those individuals will be provided intensive mentoring and career pathway mapping that enables them to engage in training and jobs that are in demand.

Bennington and Rutland counties encountered mass layoffs this past program year. Southern Vermont College in Bennington County, Green Mountain College as well as College of St. Joseph’s in Rutland County, permanently closed their facilities at the end of the Spring 2019 semester. This impacted approximately 133 workers in Bennington county, and 255 workers in Rutland county. Rapid Response sessions were facilitated in all 3 closures with small numbers of impacted workers continuing to work with their local AJC. Impacted worker groups were largely professional faculty members, whom quickly found employment with other institutions of higher education. WIOA services were offered to all of those impacted by their permanent facility closure.

## **MIDDLEBURY Career Resource Center**

The Middlebury VDOL AJC office continues to collaborate with community partners that include VT Vocational Rehabilitation, Resource, VT Adult Learning, Hannaford Center, Northland Job Corp Center, Addison County Economic Development Corp. and Economic Services. This AJC receives staffing support for specialized services from the Rutland VDOL AJC. Northland Job Corp. regularly brings students to the AJC to learn more about services and the labor market of Addison county. In addition, staff were asked to support a resume and interview day for groups of students that were completing their programming with Northland Job Corps.



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 (WIB) has started to develop a stronger cohesion for which VDOL remains heavily involved. Hannaford Center and VT Adult learning in collaboration with VDOL has been developing a program concept entitled “VT YouthWorks”. It is expected that collaborative projects will start to launch next year as a result. This past year, Resource successfully launched their summer employment opportunity funded through WIOA whom served a number of at-risk youth in Addison County.

Hannaford Center and VT Adult learning in collaboration with VDOL, developed a program entitled “VT Youthworks.” The VT YouthWorks program largely targets WIOA eligible youth populations funded through WIOA. The program provides opportunities for youth to build work readiness skills and obtain certifications in ServSafe, Toyota/OSHA Forklift Certification, CPR (American Heart Association), NCCER Core Curriculum Modules 3 ,4, 7 and 8. In effort to explore additional career pathway options, VTYouthWorks students participate in work experience services while they complete the last 8 weeks of their training. Two cohorts completed Youthworks training this last program year.

### **Vermont’s Southeast Region (Springfield, White River Junction, and Brattleboro)**

The southeast region of Vermont hosts three American Job Centers in the towns of Springfield, Brattleboro, and White River Junction. With growing community partnerships, VDOL staff in these offices help to serve both Windham and Windsor Counties.

#### **BRATTLEBORO Career Resource Center**

The VDOL AJC in the Brattleboro area has been working diligently to foster and grow connections with community and State partners such as Vermont Youth Services, CCV, Vocational Rehabilitation, Brattleboro Memorial Hospital, Creative Workforce Solutions, Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation Northland Job Corps, and ReSOURCE. In partnership with CCV and Brattleboro Memorial Hospital, the Department’s WIOA staff has again assisted in implementing the collaborative training assisting job seekers in gaining specialized skills in environmental services

<b>Brattleboro, Springfield &amp; White River Junction</b>	
<b>TOTAL CLIENTS:</b>	<b>1408</b>
<b>VETERANS SERVED:</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>WAGNER-PEYSER SERVICES:</b>	<b>5243</b>
<b>JOB REFERRALS:</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>EMPLOYERS SERVED:</b>	<b>157</b>
<b>JOB LISTINGS:</b>	<b>169</b>
<b>ADULT SERVICES:</b>	<b>317</b>
<b>DISLOCATED WORKER SERVICES:</b>	<b>82</b>

leading to direct employment opportunities with Brattleboro Memorial Hospital.

A new collaborative project has been designed to assist with a recognized need of employees for local employers. In partnership with CCV and ReSOURCE, a new non-profit to the area, local employers and the Brattleboro WIOA staff have designed and launched a targeted customer service training. This training will consist of educational components, part time work experiences, both subsidized and unsubsidized allowing participants to gain hands on skills leading to direct employment opportunities with local employers.

Labor exchange staff have worked hard to connect with local employers struggling to fill positions, arranging hiring events of up to 6 or 7 employers weekly in the center.

## **SPRINGFIELD and WHITE RIVER JCT Career Resource Centers**

In Springfield, the focus this past year has been to reconnect with our partners. We have worked hard to build relationships with partners serving job seekers within the greater Springfield area. We offer resume & interview workshops weekly in the center. Our renewed focus on WIOA youth had an exciting summer. Following is the workshops available to the youth participating during the summer component. This model was so successful that our WIOA youth case manager is working with SEVCA to offer a similar opportunity to job seekers in another underserved area in the Region, Bellows Falls, VT and all organizations that have come to the table are very excited to tweak this to offer to all unemployed, underemployed, at risk adults & youth in the area. This will be a great opportunity for the jobseekers in the area as well as the employers that are struggling to find employees.



The WRJ center is focused on revitalizing the collaborative partnerships with other state agencies located within AHS in the building. We share many customers and have developed a co-case management agreement specifically with VR. Employer outreach has increased over the last year, and we are hosting a few to several hiring events within the office assisting employers with their recruitment needs. We offer resume & interviewing workshops weekly. We have returned to weekly onsite visits at the Turning Point recovery center offering up to date labor market information, resume & interview assistance as well as individualized WIOA services.

In collaboration with Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center's workforce development staff, CCV, and VDOL, programs are being developed to train individuals in pharmacy tech, environmental services leading to direct employment opportunities with DHMC. White River Junction AJC staff have also worked in collaboration with other partners to bring back the Upper Valley Employment Fair, with 45+ employers participating this year.

## Vermont's Northwest Region (Burlington and St. Albans)

The Northwest Region of Vermont is home to two AJCs and serving three Vermont counties and over 218,000 individuals more than a quarter of Vermont's population.

Over the last 12 months the Northwest Region has worked diligently to communicate and align our services and dismantle silos between partners. Vocational Rehabilitation, Vermont Student Assistance Corp (VSAC), Burlington Multi-Cultural Center, Job Corps, A4TD, Individual Career Advancement Network (ICAN) – our SNAP E&T program, Labor Market Information, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult, Dislocated Worker, Trade, and Youth are all housed under one roof and we continue to seek other partners.

Burlington & St. Albans	
<b>TOTAL CLIENTS:</b>	<b>1890</b>
<b>VETERANS SERVED:</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>WAGNER-PEYSER SERVICES:</b>	<b>2578</b>
<b>JOB REFERRALS:</b>	<b>254</b>
<b>EMPLOYERS SERVED:</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>JOB LISTINGS:</b>	<b>407</b>
<b>ADULT SERVICES:</b>	<b>314</b>
<b>DISLOCATED WORKER SERVICES:</b>	<b>106</b>
<b>YOUTH SERVICES:</b>	<b>212</b>

In both regions we have established relationships with recovery centers (Turning Point) and others are reaching out requesting the same partnership. Our Jobs for Veterans staff (JVSG) which includes a full-time Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) and a full-time Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) have also connected with employers and support service providers resulting in veterans receiving the support services they need to include housing, counseling, veteran benefits, and employment.

In our region the local Dress for Success Program closed resulting with the Burlington Multi-Cultural Center reaching out to VDOL seeking approval to work together to continue the mission of the program. Job ready individuals can schedule an appointment and shop at no fee for work clothing. Donations from local businesses, government representatives and leaders are received on a consistent basis.



This summer we also continued our efforts of outreach by partnering with Franklin County Restorative Justice Center (RJC), Department of Corrections (DOC), Vermont Adult Learning (VAL), and Northwest Tech Center. Eligible WIOA Adults were enrolled in a NCCER Construction Program where they earned nationally recognized credentials in NCCER and OSHA 10 as well as offered the opportunity to earn their high school diploma through VAL. Individuals were provided with class and practical time with the goal of building two sheds for the community. This program provided DOC/RJC affiliated individuals an opportunity to learn skills, earn industry recognized

credentials, and give back to their community. The program and efforts of the participants and support service providers human interest story featured on two local television stations.

## Vermont's Northeast Region (Newport and St. Johnsbury)

Newport & St. Johnsbury	
TOTAL CLIENTS:	1202
VETERANS SERVED:	77
WAGNER-PEYSER SERVICES:	2597
JOB REFERRALS:	288
EMPLOYERS SERVED:	193
JOB LISTINGS:	144
ADULT SERVICES:	82
DISLOCATED WORKER SERVICES:	44
YOUTH SERVICES:	56

The Northeast region of Vermont, also known as the “Northeast Kingdom” serves Caledonia, Orleans and Essex counties. The “kingdom”, known for its undeveloped land and sparse population, is home to two American Job Centers in the population hubs of St. Johnsbury and Newport. The regional economy is centered on hospitality, home to Jay Peak, Burke Mountain and Kingdom Trails. Additional industry sectors include manufacturing, healthcare and agriculture.

Both the Newport and St. Johnsbury AJCs have become a key partner in supporting the local Recovery Centers in the region. Staff from these resource centers are key partners in the development and implementation of a comprehensive plan to serve individuals receiving medically assisted and other treatment options. In addition to VDOL, the regional “recovery team” consists of staff from Vocational Rehabilitation, Kingdom Recovery, Journey to Recovery and BAART. With the infusion of some additional funding, BAART was able to hire a regional Employment Specialist to support jobseekers in recovery. WIOA and ICAN case managers work closely with that person and have realized many successful outcomes for their participants.

This program year, VDOL has implemented an intentional and structured partnership with the Vermont Department of Corrections to support inmate re-entry. AJC staff make a quarterly visit to the Northern Counties Correction Facility to meet with inmates that are soon to be released. They provide employment related activities including labor market information, resume writing support, interview coaching, job referrals and referrals to additional resources that will support their transition back to the community. Additionally, we have piloted a joint “orientation” of services at these sessions, that includes WIOA and Vocational Rehabilitation staff.

The VDOL Regional Manager sits on the Regional Advisory Board for the North Country Career Center, the largest Career and Technical Education center in the region. In this role, she provides labor market information and general occupational information that informs decisions around specific program development, expansion and retention. Additionally, the North Country Career Center Adult Education was the recipient of a state-funded internship grant to support the availability of Child Care Workers, which are in high demand. Resource Center staff assisted in recruiting both participants and childcare centers who provided the internship opportunities.



The American Job Centers in the region host staff from partners on a regular basis including: Vocational Rehabilitation, Northeast Kingdom Learning Services (Adult Basic Education), Vermont Student Assistance Corporation, Vermont Associates for Training and Development and Vt. Office of Veterans Affairs.

## Vermont's Central Region (Barre and Morrisville)

The Central Vermont region serves the heart of Vermont with AJCs in Barre and Morrisville. Encompassing the state capital of Montpelier and several larger ski resorts including Stowe, Sugarbush and Smuggler's Notch, the Central Vermont region offers employment opportunities in the hospitality, manufacturing, healthcare and government services. The Barre Resource Center shares space in a vibrant state office building with the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, Office of Economic Services and the Department of Health. Other key partners including Department of Corrections, Capstone (CAP), Central Vermont Adult Basic Education and Turning Point Recovery Center are located just a few blocks away in downtown Barre. As a satellite office, the Morrisville Resource Center is housed in close proximity to all local community partners and organizations.

Barre & Morrisville	
TOTAL CLIENTS:	1124
VETERANS SERVED:	65
WAGNER-PEYSER SERVICES:	1886
JOB REFERRALS:	23
EMPLOYERS SERVED:	68
JOB LISTINGS:	156
ADULT SERVICES:	125
DISLOCATED WORKER SERVICES:	94
YOUTH SERVICES:	448
YOUTH SERVICES:	225

Highlights from the region for this program year include location participation in the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Central Vermont Job Fair. This annual event is one of the largest in the state, hosting 75 local businesses and partners at the Barre Auditorium in downtown Barre. This event receives significant publicity and is well attended by job seekers from around the state. VDOL staff play a key role in the planning and staffing of this event. Each year has seen growth and it is anticipated that the 2020 event will be the largest ever.



The region offers a unique training opportunity through partnership between Capstone Community Action and the Vermont Foodbank called Community Kitchen Academy. This program offers 4 sessions per year with an average enrollment of 12 students. The Central Vermont Resource Centers play a key role in recruiting students, assessing them and providing funding and case management under WIOA or ICANas appropriate. The students who complete this comprehensive 12-week program learn high end culinary skills, critical employability and team-work skills, Serve Safe Manager's Certification and volume food production. They receive labor market exposure

and are often highly recruited into local hospitality and culinary jobs. Many students receive highly collaborative support and case management from WIOA, ICAN, Vocational Rehab and Adult Basic Education.

The Central region is home to an active WIOA Leadership group that meets bi-monthly to support on-going collaboration and continuous improvement around workforce development. Key partner involvement includes VDOL, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Basic Education and Capstone Community Action. This group has tackled streamlining interagency referrals, creating efficiency in business engagement, studying and implementing sector strategies, and reviewing common performance measures and outcomes. A common referral form is being tested to improve continued participant engagement and reduce participant departures.

## Waivers

Vermont had no waivers in place during Program Year 2018.

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

*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.*

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

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 particular, we have partnered with local addiction recovery centers, resulting in regularly scheduled on-site workshops and counseling for participants looking to become employed in the near future.



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***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.***

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VDOL 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 compared 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.

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***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.***

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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.

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***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.***

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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.

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

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A number of efforts are underway to support Goal 5, including: (1) coordinating from VDOL and DVR offered to employers to support a successful placement; (2) expanding joint VDOL and DVR marketing and outreach efforts to the employer community, (3) expanding partnerships with the local workforce development leaders to identify skill gaps and develop training programs to meet the staffing needs of local businesses, (3) 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, and (4) ensuring that K-12 and postsecondary education and training providers are aware of State workforce needs, high-priority industries and employment sectors, and sectors with high employer demand. We support them in incorporating this information into ongoing work on personalized learning plans and career development with adult learners.

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***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.***

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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 launched the state's Returnship Program that connects individuals who have work experience, but have been out of the labor force, with short-term 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.